Imperial College Union Policy
Remote Working Safety Policy

Audience: All Staff
Owner(s):   Leadership Group
Created Date: December 2020
Review Date: December 2022

1. Policy statement

Imperial College Union is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its members, staff, customers, suppliers, visitors and all others who may be affected by its activities.

Imperial College Union recognises that good management of health, safety and welfare is essential to the success of the organisation and is a sign of a well-managed organisation. Imperial College Union is committed to ensuring that procedures are in place to identify hazards, assess risk and set objectives to improve the management of health, safety and welfare.

Imperial College Union acknowledges its duty to ensure that all relevant legislation regarding health, safety and welfare is adhered to and that resources are made available to ensure health, safety and welfare.

Imperial College Union is committed to developing a positive safety culture, based on the involvement of staff and volunteers in health and safety management. Imperial College Union will therefore use consultative forums and mechanisms to involve staff and volunteers in health and safety management, and will endeavour to provide relevant training to all staff and students.

Imperial College Union commits to reviewing this policy at least every 2 years, or as and when necessary, with approval for the policy to take place at the Board of Trustees.

2. Introduction

This policy is intended to provide an overview of the health and safety aspects associated with remote working. Please note that this includes home working.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA) places a duty on the Union as an employer to protect the health, safety and welfare of all its employees irrespective of where they may be working. This will include those working from home.

Definition of Remote Working

Remote working occurs when a member of staff has prior agreement with their line manager to undertake work at a desk or site that is not known as their primary place of work.

Remote working is a way of working "at a distance", using information communications technology (ICT) that allows us to undertake work away from the employers' premises. Remote workers can be based at home, occasionally work from home, or be mobile and connected from anywhere in the world.

Due to the nature of the Union staffing arrangements and contractual obligations the Union adheres to the College flexible working policy: flexible working typically includes regular home-working, job-sharing, staggered hours, reducing hours or shift working. Changes are usually permanent, but temporary changes may be agreed.

The nature of the remote working arrangement e.g. whether it is temporary, permanent, full-time etc should be agreed between an individual and their line manager with reference to the

flexible working policy. However, it is likely that for most cases, occasional work from home, rather than full-time working from home will be more beneficial and appropriate for certain staff.

Typical examples may include:
- Where a special project requires completion and it is practicable to undertake this work away from College premises.
- Where there are predicted transport difficulties.
- Where a temporary difficulty needs to be overcome such as recuperation from an injury or illness or as part of a return-to-work programme. However, it should not be used where medical opinion states that the person is still considered unfit for work or where individuals would benefit from rest to recover from an acute illness/infection.

Working from home may be considered a reasonable adjustment to support individuals with a disability or long-term condition which renders it difficult for them to travel to work. Specific guidance for managers can be found here.

3. Responsibilities

Board of Trustees
The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a statutory duty on organisations to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of its employees at work and other people who may be affected by their activities, e.g., membership, volunteers, members of the public.

The Board of Trustees, as the governing body of the Union, has overall and final responsibility for Health and Safety matters within the Union and for ensuring that Health and Safety legislation is complied with.

The Managing Director
The Managing Director has delegated responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the Health and Safety Policy and associated policies. As required by the 'Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1993' the Managing Director is named as the 'competent person' who will ensure compliance with Health and Safety. In particular the MD is responsible for:

- The setting of Health and Safety standards and objectives.
- The allocation of the necessary financial resources.
- Identifying and allocating Health and Safety responsibilities to Senior Managers / Departmental Heads.

Leadership Team Lead
The Managing Director will delegate to a membership of the leadership team the following responsibility:
- Ensuring general risk assessments are undertaken and made available to all employees.
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of Health and Safety activities and the Union's Health and Safety Policy and associated policies and procedures, and for ensuring that, at the strategic level, performance standards and timescales are adhered to.
- Ensuring accidents are investigated and reported to the Board of Trustees.
- Putting in place arrangements to monitor the maintenance of the premises and equipment.

- Chairing the Students' Union's Operational Health and Safety Committee and ensuring it has the time, facilities and resources to carry out its business effectively.
- Keeping under review this Health and Safety Policy and the Health and Safety performance of the Students' Union.

Line Managers

Health and Safety is a delegated line management responsibility requiring managers to undertake operational Health and Safety duties identified in this policy. Line manager responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that departmental activities are conducted in accordance with Union policy, legislative, and other formal standards and that those hazards having the potential to cause harm are risk assessed and identified controls are implemented.
- Ensuring that employees receive sufficient information, training and supervision on Health and Safety matters.
- Producing safe systems of work and the means for complying with this Policy and other individual policies and procedures associated with Health and Safety.
- Where necessary, organising supervision to control the working environment and the maintenance of safe standards.
- Investigating accidents, or near misses, to establish causes and prevent recurrence.
- The Health and Safety induction of new staff, volunteers and students and ensuring that information, instruction and training are provided to meet individually identified needs.
- Identifying and monitoring the adequacy of the specific Health and Safety responsibilities of staff and students.
- Reviewing the above arrangements at regular intervals, making adjustments as necessary.

Individual Members of Staff, Volunteers, Students and Visitors

Individual members of staff, students and visitors have a legal duty to co-operate and comply at all times with the Health and Safety information, instruction and training provided. They must bring to the attention of their line manager or duty manager, without delay, any hazards identified, or improvements identified as necessary. If a hazard is seen, it should be removed or dealt with as soon as possible if it is safe to do so. It should also be reported using the Unions incident reporting system as a matter of priority.

Individual members of staff and students have a duty to take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of themselves and for other persons whom their actions or omissions may affect. Specifically, no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare. Serious breaches of the Health and Safety Policy (e.g., misusing equipment, deliberately putting someone else's safety in danger) will be dealt with through the Union's Disciplinary Procedure.

Individuals must take responsibility for being aware of fire hazards, knowing the location of fire exits, the assembly point and the fire drill instructions. All new employees to the organisation will be inducted in Fire Safety and the Evacuation Procedure immediately upon commencing employment.

Health and Safety matters may also be raised by any employee at 1-2-1 meetings, team meetings and at Town Hall meetings, which occur regularly.

4. Arrangements

Workstation set up
A home working zone should include:

- A table / desk
- Chair
- Surface / laptop or PC
- Peripherals e.g. mouse, keyboard

Adequate space should be used to set up a suitable working zone. There should be sufficient light, ventilation and no trailing cords.

Resources for working zones can be found via the following links Know your ergonomic working zone workstation set up and Posturite homeworking solutions infographic pdf

Electrical equipment should be checked to ensure it is safe to use. Sockets should not be overloaded and daisy chain extension leads must not be used.

Staff should become familiar with all escape routes in case of a fire.

Regular contact with an individual's line manager and team should be undertaken to ensure the Union remains informed that staff are safe and well.

If staff have specific ergonomic issues they should contact their line manager.

Reporting
Incidents, near misses and ill health should still be reported via the Union reporting system for incidents and accidents.

Wellbeing
It is important that staff take regular breaks and maintain positive wellbeing when working. Guidance for staff to maintain their wellbeing whilst working remotely:

- Take a micro-break (2-3 minutes) every 20 minutes
- Take a break (5 minutes) every hour e.g. make a hot drink or walk around the room.
- Do simple workstation exercises
- Keep hydrated and drink water
- Enjoy healthy snacks and avoid sugary or fatty foods
- Stay connected and maintain social connections with your team, family, friends and community. Plan lunch or coffee breaks on Teams or Skype.

If a staff member feels anxious or stressed during these situations they can contact their line manager or Employee Assistance Program for free and confidential help.

Ergonomic Equipment
Using workstation accessories such as a laptop stand, separate mouse and keyboard can optimise staff workspace and reduce ergonomic risks associated with home working. If staff already use specialist ergonomic equipment such as a vertical mouse and compact keyboard it will be important to try to maintain this setup while working at home to avoid aggravating an existing injury. All purchases for any equipment must be authorised by line managers.

5. Review

The Policy Owner is responsible for conducting a comprehensive review of their policies at a minimum of every 3 years or as required to stay current with applicable laws and/or Imperial College Policies.

The purpose of the review is to determine:
- if the policy is still necessary and accurate;
- if the policy should be combined with another policy or if it should be rescinded;
- if the policy is up to date with current laws and regulations and Imperial College policies;
- if changes are required to improve the effectiveness or clarity of the policy.

6. Training

All staff will receive adequate training and guidance on the Union's remote working policy and subsequent arrangements as part of their induction process.