

International Working

Support for Personal Requests – of more than 90 days

Background

Where a role has been established as UK-based, it is expected that the employee undertaking that role should work in the UK. The University's identity and culture are shaped by staff being physically present at work. Some of these benefits cannot be replicated remotely, whether it be the special nature of our student experience or the innovation that arises from casual conversation with colleagues.

There may however be occasions where an employee requests an International Working arrangement for personal reasons, rather than International Working for operational/business reasons (where there is a specific requirement for research/fieldwork to be conducted in the overseas location).

It is expected that a majority of personal requests for International Working should be managed under the [Short-term Remote Working Guidance](#), which allows for up to 90 days remote working in any 12-month period. However, in line with the [International Working Policy](#) it may be possible to support longer term International Working for personal reasons.

Any decision as to whether International Working for personal reasons is supported in principle should be taken at Institutional/Departmental/Faculty level, prior to the submission of any formal application for International Working (which will then be subject to formal review and approval in line with the processes set out in the Guidance). Institutions are best placed to identify the most appropriate ways of working for their staff and ensure these arrangements are productive and beneficial on both an Institutional and individual level.

This Guidance is intended to assist Institutions in making fair and consistent decisions as to whether a personal remote working request should be supported in principle.

It may also be helpful to consult the [Hybrid Working Policy](#).

Review

Due to the different nature of each case (the individual's personal circumstances, role, responsibilities, countries concerned, duration etc.), the Institution will need to consider each request for International Working for personal reasons on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request should not therefore set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar arrangement.

Support for personal requests for International Working should only be given where there is a benefit to the Institution or exceptional personal circumstances *and* the arrangement is feasible, practicable and affordable.

The Manager/PI/Institution may wish to support International Working for personal reasons to facilitate:

- **Retention of a Specialist Skill Set** - the employee has a specialist skill set not widely available, which would be difficult to replace or the employee is working on a time-limited project, therefore recruitment to replace their skill set would not be feasible prior to completion of the project (the Institution should look at other ways of managing the requirement, such as a handover of work to a colleague or engaging the individual as a consultant for occasional specialist advice);
- **Recruitment** – there is a proven shortage of suitably experienced candidates, necessitating recruitment of an individual from outside the UK who does not wish/is not able to relocate to the UK (this may be particularly relevant for short-term or part-time contracts).
- **Network Building and Collaborations** – the employee will be able to foster collaborations and build networks with local Institutions/academics/research facilities (particularly where they are being hosted at or have a concurrent employment with an overseas Institution);

The following exceptional circumstances may also be considered as a justification for International Working:

- **Medical/Health grounds** - as a reasonable adjustment to accommodate a disability or long-term, chronic health condition, the Line Manager will need to consider what reasonable adjustments may be needed and how these can be provided – noting the remote work location. The Institution will be responsible for any additional costs arising from reasonable adjustments. For further guidance see [Disabilities and Reasonable Adjustments](#));
- **Compassionate grounds** – to manage an urgent family need for a short period, such as illness or caring responsibility (International Working should not, as a rule, be considered to be a solution to childcare or other caring responsibilities where dependants need active and regular involvement).

However, the Institution will also need to consider if International Working is feasible, practicable and affordable in terms of the:

- Components/tasks/responsibilities of the role;
- Importance of face-to-face interactions;
- Requirements for physical presence onsite to teach, carry out research, support or protect others;
- Needs of and effect on any staff, students or other groups and individuals they support;
- Ability to meet customer demand (for example, the ability to meet student demand);
- Need for specialist equipment that can only be housed in the University's environment;
- Requirement to support employee's needs (particularly employer duty of care and health & safety responsibilities);
- Impact on the quality of the employee's work and performance of the role and the ability to supervise them appropriately;
- Requirement and feasibility of reorganising work amongst other UK-based staff;
- Institution's policy in relation to hybrid working arrangements;

- Additional costs and administration incurred as a result of ensuring employer compliance (such as overseas payroll, social security, mandatory work placed accident / health insurances, pension, health and safety compliance obligations etc.). Depending on the specific circumstances of the case, these costs can be significantly over and above the normal costs of UK-based employment. The [Global Mobility HR Team](#) can provide guidance on expected costs and compliance actions so that the Institution can make an informed decision. It may also be helpful to consult the guidance on the [Central Fund for International Working Employer Compliance Costs](#).

Note that the option to request remote working for personal reasons under the International Working Policy is not designed to enable the employee to hold additional employment overseas, either on a full or part time basis. Such employment might affect the ability of the individual to fulfil their duties and responsibilities to the University of Cambridge and may result in additional compliance obligations and costs for the University. The employee should discuss any proposal to take additional employment with their Line Manager in advance of accepting any other role. Any existing or intended additional overseas employment should also be declared when applying for International Working (on the International Working Form: HR56).

Support in Principle

If having reviewed the request, the Institution agrees that International Working for personal reasons would be of benefit to the Institution/addresses an exceptional personal need and is feasible, practicable and affordable, full approval can then be sought via the [International Working Approval form: HR56](#) in line with the processes set out in the [International Working guidance](#). The benefits/exceptional circumstances (in line with the above) should be clearly set out on the HR56 form together with confirmation of feasibility and affordability.

Please note that International Working for personal reasons should normally be temporary, for a fixed-term of 12 months or less. This should allow time for a longer-term solution to be sought where possible (for example recruitment of a UK-based employee). However, longer term arrangements could be considered for very exceptional reasons, for example where an employee who has previously worked for the University in the UK for some years, now has health or compassionate grounds for working overseas. Dual country working, for example working in the UK during term time, and in the overseas location outside term-time, may also justify a longer term arrangement; however, consideration would need to be given to the [University's sustainability policies and strategies](#).

In the situation where the Institution does not consider the request to be beneficial, feasible, practicable or affordable, attempts should be made, where possible, to look at alternative options with the employee which may be acceptable due to the reduced compliance obligations / time spent overseas etc. This could include alternative working patterns (dual country), unpaid leave, career break, short-term remote working etc.

We recommend that the Institution (Institutional Administrator/HR) keep records of all discussions to ensure fairness and transparency.