

Working from home during the current situation

This guide is to support you during the current period, when you may be working from home.

What you need to do in order to work from home

Please read [our advice](#) on setting up IT systems, to enable home working.

- Check whether you will need to use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) and, if so, follow the instructions to set up this service
- Make sure you have access to Box, our cloud-based storage application, and copy any files you need onto your department/section. Make sure you then know how to access files stored on Box from your home computer
- Make sure you can access [Zoom video conferencing](#). Zoom is an application we use for remote meetings.
- Does your phone need [transferring to another number](#), or will another member of your team be answering this in your absence?
- Update your voicemail message. You can access your voicemail remotely by:
 - Dialling 01206 873467
 - During your greeting message dial 9 followed by your extension number
 - Follow the instructions

It's also important that teams find efficient ways of working remotely:

- Agree with your manager what your priorities will be when working from home and have an open conversation about any aspects of your role that you would not be able to undertake when working from home. Have a plan with your manager about how these parts of your role will be completed.

- Agree how best to communicate with your manager and team
- Agree what contact with your manager will look like in terms of frequency or format. How will you stay in touch or hold meetings?
- If appropriate, share your contact details with your line manager and colleagues, ensuring that you set some ground rules on when you can be contacted and who else can have access to them.
- Complete the risk assessment for working at home and discuss the outcome with your manager.

Practicalities

- It is best, if possible, to try to work in the same space each day. See if you can identify a space in your home where you can do this. If possible, use a room to work in that will enable you to distance yourself from home distractions. Ideally it should be a room with daylight that will enable you to replicate your office set-up at home. Please use a table and chair, rather than sitting on the sofa or in bed. If you are using a dining table or similar, ensure that you take regular breaks every 30 minutes. We understand that you may not have an office desk and office chair at home. If you have been provided with ergonomic equipment by the University, speak with your Line Manager regarding taking items home to help you to carry out work from home.
- When you have decided on your space, please complete your home working risk assessment of this space. If you need further advice, or find you experience any discomfort or pain when working from home, contact your DSE Facilitator.
- Should you have a computer problem, please contact the IT Helpdesk.
- Be mindful of working on any confidential data and the challenges faced from working at home; make sure you lock your computer when leaving it, exactly as you would in the office.

Looking after yourself when home working

- If you have a current Occupational Health referral, please contact the Occupational Health team (ohquery@essex.ac.uk) any discuss your concerns.
- Make sure you schedule regular breaks to move, re-hydrate and get some fresh-air.
- If you normally commute, consider using some of the time you are saving to do something healthy, like going for a walk or reading a book.
Remember also that one of the most significant contributors to physical and emotional well-being is sleep.
- Take a lunch break away from your home working set-up.
- Don't become isolated. Keep in touch with others via phone and Zoom and try and come up with new ways to keep in touch, like virtual coffee breaks.
- Try to structure your day; have set times for set tasks, be realistic about what can be achieved.
- Try to pack away your work things at the end of the working day, ideally keeping some definition between working hours/space and your own time.
- Where possible try to keep to normal working hours, make sure your team know the hours you will be keeping.
- Be mindful that other colleagues may not be keeping the same hours as you; try to limit the sending of emails to within normal business hours.
Should you be working early mornings or late nights for ease, delay the sending of the emails until a more reasonable hour. In your email options, there is the functionality to delay the delivery of emails, think about how this can be used to help colleagues.
- For colleagues that have complex DSE needs, please contact the Health and Safety Advisory Service (safety@essex.ac.uk) for support and advice on home working with DSE. The Health and Safety team will be able to support colleagues on a case by case basis.
- During the current situation, you may experience stress, depression and anxiety due to the pressures experienced by yourself or members of your family and friends. If you find it difficult to access the University's Occupational Health service when working remotely, you can also access the following resources:
- SilverCloud is an online Cognitive Behaviour Therapy service, which uses clinically proven tools and techniques to help you if struggling with these

issues, offering activities to help you overcome these. SilverCloud can be accessed from your computer, tablet or mobile phone, 24/7.

- Validium is a professional and independent employee assistance and offers access to information services such as counselling support (i.e. signposting and online resources), legal guidance, financial advice and wellbeing information.
- Coaching for success the University's coaching service are able to offer coaching either on the telephone or via Zoom. Email coaching@essex.ac.uk
- If you feel you need a referral to Occupational Health, we are still able to offer appointments onsite, via telephone or Zoom. To do this you will need to have your line manager or Employee Relations Advisor complete a referral form. You can also make direct contact with us by emailing ohquery@essex.ac.uk or telephone on 01206 872399 if you have any wellbeing questions