



**C.2**

**TITLE: POLICY ON HYBRID, REMOTE AND FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS**

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Rev. 1	Policy	C.2	December 2025
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## Index of Contents

<b>Description</b>	<b>Page Nr</b>
1. Purpose	3
2. Scope of Policy	3
3. Definition(s)	3
4. Principles/Conditions for Hybrid, Remote or Flexible Work Arrangements	4
5. Eligibility Criteria	5
6. Roles and Responsibilities	6
7. Work Arrangement(s)	8
8. Technology and Equipment Requirements for Hybrid, Remote or Flexible Work	8
9. Monitoring and Compliance	9
10. Application and Approval Process	11
11. Appeal Procedure	11
12. Periodic Review	11

Rev. 1	Policy	C.2	December 2025
--------	--------	-----	---------------

## **POLICY ON HYBRID, REMOTE AND FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENT**

### **1. PURPOSE**

This policy provides clear guidelines for hybrid, remote, and flexible work arrangements to ensure a consistent, fair, and effective practice across the Institution. It supports a high-performing academic, administrative, and operational environment that advances institutional goals, promotes staff wellbeing, and maintains continuity of excellence. The policy aligns with the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997, as amended), the Hugenote Kollege’s personnel policy framework, and reflects the Institution’s commitment to responsible flexibility, accountability, and collaborative engagement in pursuit of its mission.

### **2. SCOPE OF POLICY**

This policy applies to all staff members of Hugenote Kollege across all levels and will be applied in a non-discriminatory manner without any prejudice and/or favouritism.

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- 3.1 **Working hours:** The ordinary hours of work that an employee is contractually required to work as per his/her Contract of Employment and as defined in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA).
- 3.2 **Hybrid work:** A flexible work arrangement, structured by mutual agreement between the staff member and his/her Head of Department, focusing on the location in which work is undertaken, with some work being undertaken in the workplace (i.e. on-campus) and some work being undertaken in an approved remote workspace for one (1) day a week and in accordance with a predetermined work schedule balancing institutional presence and off-site productivity.
- 3.3 **Remote work:** A work arrangement, structured by mutual agreement, where normal work duties and responsibilities are performed entirely off-campus, typically from home or another approved location. Remote work can also apply to administrative duties and responsibilities in exceptional circumstances.

Rev. 1	Policy	C.2	December 2025
--------	--------	-----	---------------

- 3.4 Flexible work arrangement:** A work arrangement that allows employees to vary their start and end times within agreed parameters, while still fulfilling their contractual working hours and core responsibilities.
- 3.5 Office workspace:** The office, desk and/or other such space in/at which the individual normally works in their principal place of work stated in the Contract of Employment.
- 3.6 Remote Workspace:** The place where remote working is undertaken in a dedicated, uninterrupted and safe, hygienic and hazard-free manner.
- 3.7 Staff:** For the purpose of this Policy, 'staff' includes all permanent and/or contract Hugenote Kollege staff (i.e. lecturers, researchers, campus supervisors, programme coordinators, administrative and support staff).
- 3.8 On-Campus Presence:** Physical presence of a staff member at their designated workplace (i.e. office, classroom, or any other approved worksite) at Hugenote Kollege for scheduled teaching, meetings, student consultations, or other institutional activities.
- 3.9 Off-campus:** A place that would ordinarily be an employee's residence and must be specified and confirmed during the application process.

#### **4. PRINCIPLES/CONDITIONS OF HYBRID, REMOTE OR FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS**

- 4.1** Certain roles may not be eligible for hybrid or remote work due to operational demands. A position that does not qualify for hybrid or remote work must be identified through a formal task and functional analysis, based on the inherent requirements of the position, service delivery obligations, student interaction, and safety and/or operational necessities. An integrated exception list, motivated and approved by Senior Management, must be reviewed annually and made available to staff. No job may be excluded from hybrid or remote arrangements without an objective, documentable and job-based motivation, in order to ensure equality, equity and the principle of no discrimination in terms of relevant labour legislation.
- 4.2** Employees working in hybrid, remote, or flexible modes must continue to meet all contractual obligations, including applicable work requirements and expectations, working hours (i.e. 40 hours per normal work week, (Monday to Friday) and leave provisions.

Rev. 1	Policy	C.2	December 2025
--------	--------	-----	---------------

- 4.3 Hybrid and remote work is not an automatic benefit, but a work arrangement awarded on objective criteria, operational requirements, and fair consideration. All decisions on such arrangements must be applied consistently, transparently, and post-based.
- 4.4 Decisions about hybrid, remote and flexible working arrangements will not rely solely on managerial discretion, but will be made within a set framework of objective, testable and job-based criteria. HODs and Deans must rationally motivate any decision to approve, disapprove, or amend a work rule with reference to these criteria, including the nature of the position, operational requirements, impact on students, the individuals' performance history, and the respective departmental capacity. By strictly applying these principles, it is ensured that a fair procedure, rational decision-making, and consistent application of decisions are applied. At the same time, such an approach will eliminate any form of preferential treatment, and perceptions of unfair discrimination. This approach ensures fair procedure, rational decision-making, and consistent application, and prevents arbitration, preferential treatment, and any perception of unfair discrimination in terms of the Labor Relations Act and Employment Equity Act.
- 4.5 Any change to an approved hybrid, remote, or flexible work arrangement requires a minimum of fourteen (14) days' written notice, unless an urgent operational reason provides otherwise. In such exceptional cases, a minimum of seven (7) days' notice must be given. No change may take place without the written motivation by the HOD/Dean and approval by Senior Management.
- 4.6 Employees must attend on-campus meetings or commitments if required, even on designated off-campus workdays.
- 4.7 Hybrid or remote work implies an extension of the employee's on-campus workspace. As such, an employee's "Off-campus" workspaces must meet reasonable health and safety standards and the Institution accepts no liability for incidents and/or claims arising from non-compliant environments. (Please refer to par. 9.2 for more detail).

## **5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Hybrid and remote working arrangements may be considered for staff members who:

- 5.1 Holds a permanent or fixed-term academic appointment with clearly defined duties and responsibilities;

Rev. 1	Policy	C.2	December 2025
--------	--------	-----	---------------

5.2 Has demonstrated the ability to meet performance expectations and deliver outcomes aligned with departmental and Institutional goals and without compromising student experience, academic quality, or operational efficiency.

5.3 Maintains regular availability for on-campus duties and responsibilities;

5.4 Maintains reasonable responsiveness to students, colleagues and line management during agreed working hours.

5.5 Have provided evidence of an appropriate workspace that can be utilised to perform work on a remote/hybrid basis; a work space free from undue interruption, and complying with reasonable health and safety requirements/standards and having access to proper office equipment, inclusive of Wi-Fi, and email facilities.

## **6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

6.1 The Head of Department/Dean or Line Manager is best positioned to understand the dynamics of his/her respective Department and the capacity of everyone to do their job. As such the Head of Department/Dean or Line Manager will need to consider hybrid/remote or flexible work arrangement requests whilst considering the impact on the delivery of the job and the effect on their Department.

### **6.2 THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT/LINE MANAGER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

6.2.1 Considering and approving a hybrid/remote or flexible work arrangement only after a formal application has been submitted by a staff member to this effect after a proper assessment of the potential remote work environment is undertaken

6.2.2 Considering, deciding and communicating the appropriate level of hybrid/remote or flexible work expectation to their respective Department;

6.2.3 Communicating and monitoring a staff member's adherence to applicable Institutional/Departmental expectations and requirements :

- Academics : Quality of Lecturing, Research, Supervisory, and Student consultation hours; On-campus attendance of Institutional events, meetings and working hours.
- Administrative and Support Staff: Work responsibilities, Institutional events, and working hours.

Rev. 1	Policy	C.2	December 2025
--------	--------	-----	---------------

6.2.4 Ensuring that an application for hybrid/remote or flexible work arrangements are considered with due consideration of the principles outlined in section 5 above.

6.2.5 Determining who are able to work on a hybrid/remote or flexible basis;

6.2.6 Ensure that any non-compliance is timeously addressed with the respective employee(s);

6.2.7 Ensuring employees working in a hybrid/remote way are provided with a fair opportunity to undertake career development opportunities, access support and training.

6.2.8 Ensuring that a staff member working in a hybrid/remote way, meet all academic, administrative and Institutional expectations and requirements.

### **6.3 THE EMPLOYEE:**

The Employee must understand that any agreement/arrangement regarding hybrid/remote or flexible working is agreed to in the mutual interest of the employee and the Hugenote Kollege. As such, due consideration must be given to the operational requirements as an accredited private residential tertiary institution. It will therefore be expected of an employee to:

6.3.1 Provide proof of a suitable remote working environment should he/she want to work in a hybrid and/or remote manner and must inform the respective HOD/Dean of any change(s) to that environment.

6.3.2 Ensure that the quality and delivery of their work are not negatively impacted by hybrid and/or remote working.

6.3.3 Comply with the relevant Data Protection Policy of the Hugenote Kollege and the relevant Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA).

6.3.4 Ensure that the respective HOD/Dean and his/her colleagues are aware of their working location on a day-to-day basis, in particular to ensure the continuation of the health and safety of the staff member, associated with remote working.

6.3.5 Comply with all Hugenote Kollege policies and procedures where applicable when working on a hybrid/remote basis, such as those covering absence reporting, conduct, academic integrity, contact/liaison with students and health and safety.

Rev. 1	Policy	C.2	December 2025
--------	--------	-----	---------------

## **7 WORK ARRANGEMENTS**

7.1 All staff are obliged are required to work their contractual hours as stated in their individual contract of employment, albeit on-campus or off-campus.

7.2 Employees may be permitted to work remotely under a flexible arrangement of one day per week, without any compromise to the expectations of Hugenote Kollege regarding staff's regular physical presence, effective team collaboration, and student-centred service delivery. This arrangement could be adapted where the nature of the role, departmental requirements, or individual circumstances justify any adjustment. Any such arrangement shall not be construed as a staff entitlement, but a special concession by Senior Management after due consideration (an approval) of an employee's functional responsibilities, performance record, or legitimate accommodations for medical conditions, disabilities, complicated pregnancies, or other equitable considerations.

7.3 Should a staff member require more than one (1) day a week to work remotely (as specified in par. 7.2), a formal application (inclusive of a relevant motivation) must be submitted to his/her Head of Department/Dean for consideration and approval.

## **8 TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR HYBRID/REMOTE WORK ARRANGEMENT**

8.1 Before an application to work on a hybrid/remote basis will be approved, the employee will need to submit valid proof of a suitable remote working space.

8.2 Such a remote working space must have a reliable internet connection, appropriate furniture and necessary office equipment to perform all duties in a professional manner.

8.3 Employees must notify their HOD/Dean and colleagues of any changes to the remote work setup to enable a health and safety reassessment if needed.

8.4 Hugenote Kollege will not reimburse remote work-related expenses (e.g. electricity, connectivity, consumables, travel) unless explicitly agreed in advance.

Rev. 1	Policy	C.2	December 2025
--------	--------	-----	---------------

## 9 MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

To uphold academic standards and institutional accountability, this Policy will be strictly enforced and monitored so as to ensure full compliance at all times.

### 9.1 Performance Management:

- 9.1.1 Staff must perform their agreed duties and will be expected to attend Hugenote Kollege activities and/or meetings on-campus as/or when requested by the respective Dean/HOD with reasonable notice.
- 9.1.2 Remote working and/or any other hybrid working arrangement will not be allowed for purposes of an individual pursuing his/her own private business (of any nature) interests.
- 9.1.3 Performance in hybrid and remote arrangements will be measured against predetermined, objective, and position-based metrics, including work quality, responsiveness, timely completion of tasks, student support, participation in team and institutional activities, and adherence to policies and professional standards. The employee's individual performance contract is established prior to granting approval of the work arrangement, and quarterly reviews are conducted only on the basis of these documented metrics. No employee may be disciplined or harmed for performance that has not been assessed against pre-clear and objectively measurable standards.
- 9.1.4 Subject to work commitments and responsibilities, staff working remotely must remain contactable during normal working hours as stated in their Contract of Employment and/or as agreed with his/her respective HOD/Dean regardless of whether he/she is working on campus or in a remote working environment.

### 9.2 Institutional oversight:

- 9.2.1 Hugenote Kollege recognises that the Institution has a statutory responsibility in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) to ensure safe working conditions, including where an employee operates in an approved remote or home workplace. The Hugenote Kollege cannot and will not write off or exclude its legal duties through internal policy. Therefore, Hugenote Kollege, in collaboration with the employee, will carry out an appropriate risk assessment, provide safety guidelines, and where appropriate provide the necessary equipment, training and

Rev. 1	Policy	C.2	December 2025
--------	--------	-----	---------------

support to ensure a safe working environment. However, the Employee remains responsible for maintaining the approved workspace, adhering to safety guidelines, and promptly reporting any changes or risks to the HC. Nothing in this policy limits the employee's right to file a COIDA claim for any injury that arises while performing contractual work duties.

- 9.2.2 Prior to any approval being granted for any form of remote and/or hybrid work, an appropriate health and safety audit and assessment will need to be undertaken at the relevant remote/hybrid work space so as to ensure that the remote working environment is suitable for the level of hybrid working and types of tasks that would be undertaken.
- 9.2.3 Home workplace inspections may only be carried out by an authorised Hugenote Kollege representative and with the employee's prior written consent, following a clearly defined procedure that ensures limited access, professional conduct and full respect for the employee's right to privacy. Any such inspection shall be limited strictly to an inspection of the workspace and shall be conducted with notice.
- 9.2.4 The Dean/HOD will monitor adherence to approved work schedules, responsiveness to students and participation in Institutional activities.

### **9.3 POPIA Compliance:**

- 9.3.1 Hugenote Kollege acknowledges its responsibility as a responsible party under the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) and commits to protecting the integrity, confidentiality and security of all personal and sensitive information. For this purpose, hybrid and remote work will only be allowed if the employee's work configuration meets the Institution's requirements for secure data handling.
- 9.3.2 Employees may only use HK-approved devices, software, and communication platforms; private devices and cloud storage may not be used without prior written approval from IT. All HK information must be stored on HK-approved systems, and data transmission must take place via secured networks and encrypted channels.
- 9.3.3 Any suspected or confirmed data leak, loss of a device, or unauthorized access must be reported immediately (within two hours) to the Head of Operations Management. HK will provide the necessary guidelines, training, and security measures, while the employee is responsible for keeping the approved workspace safe and complying with all POPIA requirements.

Rev. 1	Policy	C.2	December 2025
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## **10 APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES**

To ensure consistency, transparency, and alignment with institutional priorities, hybrid, remote and/or flexible working arrangements must follow a formal application and approval process.

The following application and approval process shall apply:

10.1 Application by Employee: An employee must submit a written application to the respective Dean/HOD, outlining:

- The nature and scope of proposed remote/hybrid or flexible work;
- Justification based on current responsibilities and deliverables;
- Proposed schedule and availability for on-campus engagements

10.2 The employee's HOD/Dean will evaluate the application against operational needs, student support requirements, departmental performance goals.

10.3 The employee's HOD/Dean will approve or decline the application for remote, hybrid, or flexible working after giving due consideration to the Formal Workspace Audit (as completed by the employee), and will communicate the decision in writing to the employee.

10.4 Should an employee apply for any additional days of remote/hybrid work, such application will be forwarded to the Senior Management of the College for final approval.

## **11 APPEAL PROCEDURE**

Any employee whose application for hybrid, remote or flexible work is rejected has the right to a fair, clear and independent appeal process. A written appeal may be lodged with Senior Management within ten (10) working days of the decision, at which point an independent reconsideration will be conducted, based on the objective criteria of this policy. The final decision is made jointly by the Rector and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and communicated to the employee in writing. No employee should be harmed for using the appeal process, and all decisions should be transparent, rational, and documentable for purposes of equity, no discrimination and compliance with the Labour Relations Act of South Africa.

## **12 PERIODIC REVIEW**

The Management of Hugenote Kollege reserves the right to amend this Policy from time to time and/or to revoke any agreement with an employee after due consideration of operational requirements and/or any non-compliance.