

## Best Practices for Working from Home

During this time, you may find yourself working remotely. This might be a workstyle that you are unfamiliar with so here are some tips that may be helpful during the transition.

### GETTING STARTED

#### Set up a dedicated workspace at home, if possible



When working from home or other locations, set up your space to minimize distractions and help you to stay focused. This can look different for everyone so experiment with what makes you feel productive and comfortable.

It is usually helpful to have a dedicated workspace. This may be a dedicated room or just a space you fashion into a workspace. Make sure you have a comfortable, supportive chair and space for your essentials. Your bed or couch may seem like a good idea but in the long run, a desk or table is probably better.

#### Communicate your work hours to others in your household so you are not disturbed

Ensure that anyone you share your home/space with understands and respects your workspace and hours. If you have children or pets at home, you may have more interruptions, however, try to take steps so you aren't distracted or interrupted during meetings or calls.

#### Prepare for your day as if you were going into the office

Keep or adapt your typical morning routine before work. This can help you mentally transition from home to work in the absence of a morning commute. Dress comfortable yet professional so that you feel like you are at work and start your workday at a scheduled time.

#### Sign out and turn off notifications at the end of the day

It can be difficult for people working remotely to switch off at the end of the day. You may also find yourself working outside of your normal working hours. However, it is important to maintain a separation between work and home.



#### Experiment with what makes you productive

What works for one person may not work for you. Recognize that this is a different way of working and it may take some time for you to find what works for you and everyone on your team.

#### Define your working hours with your supervisor

You are expected to maintain your regular work hours. If you need to adjust your hours, agree on a work schedule with your manager to meet core hour requirements while also managing work-life balance.



### Take breaks!

Take your breaks and keep your normal routine as if you were on campus. Go make yourself a coffee or a tea, go for a short walk, call a friend, or enjoy some time on your social media etc.

## STAYING CONNECTED

Remember we want to be physically distant but still socially connected to our colleagues and teammates. Use tools such as **MS Teams** to maintain (or improve!) your office culture.

### Consider turning on video when doing meetings

Your team is working in many different locations and may feel isolated. Turning on your video and requesting that your team does the same will allow for some face-to-face connection. As facial expressions will be visible, it may normalize the experience and help keep everyone connected.

### Stay in contact with your team

Utilize the tools available to you to connect to your team and keep your office culture alive. Here are some ideas:

- Forward your work phone to your home or mobile device to make it easy for people to reach you using your existing contact details
- Schedule virtual coffee breaks to connect with the people you normally chat with during the day
- Leave time at the beginning of meetings to check in with how people are doing outside of the work being done
- Use instant messaging tools like **MS Teams** if it is available to you for an informal chat at the beginning of the day
- Do you or your teammates have pets? Take turns introducing your pet at the start of a video meeting. Things are challenging right now and this may help make your teammates smile.

### Communicate, communicate, communicate

Without the daily face-to-face daily interactions that you may be used to, your communication needs will change. It may be best to overcommunicate so that the team knows what you are working on and how it is going since you won't be able to check in person.

You may need to document and *share* more than you normally would. For example, you may need

to write down an outline of your ideas or your thoughts on next steps for an assignment or project. **MS Teams** can allow for multiple people to work together on the same document in real time.



### **Managers check in with your team!**

If your team is new to working remotely, they may need a bit more support and understanding about the shift in workstyle. Check in with them to see how they are doing. Remember, this is a check IN not a check UP. Trust your team and check if they need some support or additional guidance during this transition.

## **VIDEO/ONLINE MEETINGS**

### **Continue to engage in standard meeting practices**

A virtual meeting is still a meeting. As such, standard meeting practice and etiquette apply:

- Prepare and distribute an agenda in advance
- Outline at the beginning of your meeting how people should indicate they would like to speak. For example, should a person use the chat feature to ask a question or use the 'raise hand' feature if available in your meeting?



### **Again, consider turning on video for meetings**

Video helps ensure people are engaged in the meeting and aren't distracted. Check that the part of your workspace visible on camera is clean and work appropriate.

### **Be present**

Even if you don't have video capability where you are, attend the meeting virtually as you would in person. Don't multi-task during the meeting; listen and participate as appropriate.

### **Use headphones for conference calls**

This is especially useful if other members of your household are working from home or just at home with you. You may also find you can hear better with headphones during calls or meetings.

### **Mute your microphone unless you are speaking**

When your microphone is live, the background noise can be distracting to all in the meeting. If you are not speaking, please mute your microphone to reduce noise.

### **Additional Resources**

There are a number of links on the University of the Fraser Valley's Information Technology [website](#) that can assist you with how to [access email](#), [connect remotely](#) to your UFV computer, and set up [call forwarding](#) for your office phone, among other helpful guides for using remote working technologies.

Please also check [UFV's Secretariat website](#) for resources for managing records and protecting privacy in accordance with BC's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

## Remote Work Tools



**Outlook Webmail Access** – a web-based email client with the look and feel of Outlook. Users can access their personal mailbox from any internet connection regardless of whether or not their computer is equipped with Outlook.



**File Gateway / myFiles** – enables you to securely access and manage your UFV network folders and drives remotely from off-campus.



**Remote Desktop Connection** – connect to your work computer from your personal computer. This allows you have to full access to your network drives, Banner, FAST, and any other locally hosted software solutions that are essential to your role.



**Direct Access Connection** – allows for remote users to connect to UFV’s network resources, directly from a UFV device such as a laptop. With Direct Access Connections, remote UFV devices are always connected to the UFV network.



**MS Teams** – is a collaborative tool that allows for instant messaging within your department and across departments. You can use Teams on your computer or using the app on your smartphone to make and receive audio and video calls, schedule virtual meetings, share your screen and collaborate in real time both in meetings or by uploading a file using Sharepoint. Teams can help your team continue to feel connected while physically separated.



**BlueJeans Video Conferencing** – is an online meeting tool. Like MS Teams, BlueJeans allows for virtual meetings with the choice to use video or just audio. Unlike MS Teams, if someone in the meeting does not have an account or work at UFV, they can call into the meeting using any phone and the code provided in the meeting invitation. While you can share your screen in a BlueJeans meeting, you cannot collaborate on a document in the same way that MS Teams allows. *When sending virtual meeting invitations, please be aware that the links can be forwarded. Anyone with the link is able to join your meeting.*



If you are working with third-party vendors, they may hold meetings using other tools, such as Zoom. Please be aware that UFV does not support Zoom, and while you are able to attend meetings, we ask that you do not set up meetings using Zoom. Please use BlueJeans for meetings with outside vendors.

