Best Practices: Working Virtually

Creating Your Workspace
- Comfortable Seating
- Ample light
- Limit distractions to ensure productivity
- Keep a supply of notebook paper, pens, pencils, paper clips, etc.
- Learn how to use video conferencing tools (Zoom, MS Teams) and wear earbuds or a headset (ask your manager for one if needed)

Managing your workday
- Begin your workday at your normal start time
- Take periodic breaks
  - Short breaks will help keep you energized throughout the day
  - Example: stretching and taking deep breaths
- Have lunch
  - It’s easy to work through lunch, especially when working from home
  - It’s important to stop and have a healthy lunch
  - Staying hydrated helps maintain focus throughout the day

Additional important information
- Refer to HARVie’s Coronavirus Workplace Policies page for special workplace policies that are in effect during the COVID-19 emergency.

Conference call best practices
- Dial in to meetings five minutes before start time
- Put dial in number on speed dial (when the same number is used regularly)
- Place your phone on mute to limit background noise
  - Remember to take phone off mute when speaking
  - Remember typing, coughing, whispering, etc., can be heard
  - Never put the conference call on hold! Music may be playing
  - Speak up and clearly so everyone can hear you
  - Stay concise and on topic
Best Practices: Managing Teams with Flex Work Arrangements

Use communication tools
- Tools like Zoom and Microsoft Teams or other University supported tools give your virtual team an efficient way to communicate when working remotely
- Ensure you and your team are educated on using the tools

Schedule regular team meetings
- Maintaining routines is essential
- Hold team meetings and one-on-one check-ins as scheduled
- Effective routines give the team something they are used to and familiar with, which puts the whole team at ease and reduces stress.

Define clear and detailed expectations
- Sharing detailed descriptions of what is expected is much better for staff working remotely

Leading virtual conference calls
- Send out the meeting agenda and any files that will be discussed in advance
- Use Microsoft Teams or other University supported tools whenever possible; make it easy for staff to locate relevant files
- Dial in 10 minutes prior to start of the call (ensure equipment is working and troubleshoot if needed)
- Welcome meeting members, paying special attention to announce staff participating virtually
- Be sure to ask virtual participants for their input periodically throughout the meeting
- Summarize decisions and action items
- Don't be afraid to pause in order to give those on the phone an opportunity to speak