INSTITUTE OF TOURISM STUDIES

Policy and Procedure: Telework & Remote Work

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Definitions

Institute	Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS)
Leave of absence	Refers to all types of days off including vacation leave, study leave, sick leave, urgent family leave and special paid leave
Remote working	Employees working remotely outside of Malta, in one of the countries where ITS has satellite campuses.
Telework	Employees who apply and are eligible of telework may work the teleworking hours or part thereof.
Territory	The country the employee is working in.

Abbreviations

ITS	Institute of Tourism Studies
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer

A. Introduction

This Policy for Telework & Remote work issued by the Institute of Tourism Studies explains telework/remote working entitlements and provides guidelines, administrative requirements, and operational procedures for processing the Telework & Remote work policy.

B. Scope

This policy for Telework & Remote work is created by the Institute to explain the procedure where an employee can work from a location other than ITS premises through communications technology. Depending on the details of the arrangement, telework/remote work constitutes either a part of the employee's work schedule or its entirety.

This policy encourages and allows the use of telework/remote work arrangements within the bounds of good public practice, the institute's operations, and resource limitations.

The determination of whether an employee is eligible to participate and/or is approved for telework/remote work, will be made in accordance with this policy and the department's needs as well as ITS exigencies, which may change from time to time.

Issues or questions not covered by this policy shall be referred to the HR Department, who shall review, make recommendations, and refer the matter to the Executive management for decision on a case-by-case basis.

C. Administrative Telework/Remote work

The below Telework and Remote work are eligible to all administrative staff with the exception of the following department/teams as the nature of their work cannot be performed virtually:

a. Food handlers,
b. Housekeeping Department,
c. Kitchen assistants,
d. Maintenance team,
e. Reception team,
f. Security Department
g. Stores.

i. One-day telework

1. One-day telework will allow employees to work at a location other than ITS premises for one day per week, excluding Mondays, to promote flexibility, and enable employees to balance career and family responsibilities more effectively.
2. This arrangement will be available to administrative employees and management whose duties can be conducted outside campus and who apply to avail of a one-day telework.
3. Head of departments, whose team members wish to avail themselves of the one-day telework should:
   3.1. Coordinate with their team to establish a schedule for one day telework or on a rotation basis between employees of the respective department.
   3.2. Make sure that the department can function and is suitably staffed before granting employees one-day telework.
4. Employees who wish to avail themselves of the one-day telework should be aware that:
   4.1. Telework is to be conducted only during the official working hours as established by the Institute.
   4.2. They are expected to make ad hoc changes, if the need arises, and if requested by the head of department, such as to attend a meeting on campus or other official activity of the Institute.
   4.3. Approved telework may be cancelled if the head of department cannot fulfil staffing requirements, e.g. due to employees on sick leave.
5. Overtime is not to be availed of during the one-day telework.
6. One day telework cannot be taken adjacent to any public holiday or a vacation leave. Employees who are on their one-day telework cannot apply for leave of absence covering only a part of the day. An employee will be required to take the entire day off and not avail of the one-day telework.
7. If the one-day telework is not utilized in any one week, for any reason, it cannot be accumulated and used in future periods.

Procedure to apply for one-day telework

1. Prior to the day of telework, the employee is to apply for one-day telework through the Dakar employee portal https://its.dakarhr.com/ by choosing the absence marked as “work from home special reason”.
2. One-day telework arrangement is to be approved by the respective head of department.

ii. Three (3) months Telework Agreement

1. Telework agreement is a teleworking arrangement whereby employees may work a number of their weekly working hours at a location outside ITS premises. Beneficiaries of this telework agreement may work the teleworking hours or part thereof, outside their normal hours of work.
2. Employees, eligible for telework agreement must have been holding their position at the institute for at least the last three (3) months and whose job can be conducted outside campus.
3. The eligibility for this telework agreement is intended, but is not limited to the following reasons:

   3.1. Employees who have children up to sixteen (16) years that need to be taken care of.

   3.2. Employees who have dependent elderly parents, sons and daughters, or spouse/partner in a civil union.

   3.3. Employees who have a valid medical/humanitarian reason. In this case the employee is required to produce a medical specialist's certificate certifying that for medical or serious humanitarian and/or family reasons, they may not attend their duties fully from the office.

   3.4. Other exceptional cases, at the discretion of the CEO.

   The Institute of Tourism Studies will request supporting documentation prior to approving requests for telework.

   In cases where due to work exigencies the Management cannot accept all applications from amongst employees within the same department, the Management reserves the right to request the employees' reason for such a request. In such cases, the evaluation of granting such concession is to take into consideration the reason behind such a request thus establishing priority, whilst ensuring continuation of the service provision.

Procedure to apply for telework agreement

1. The request is to be sent to the respective head of department and the respective COO using the telework request form, for their approval. Following their approval, the request is to be submitted to the CEO for final approval. Following the CEO's approval, a copy of the request will be submitted to the HR Department.

iii. Remote Work

1. While employment at the Institute of Tourism Studies occurs primarily at the Malta and Gozo campuses, the Institutes reach extends to locations outside Malta and Gozo where the Institute holds satellite campuses.

2. Employees who wish to work remotely outside of Malta and Gozo, may only do so if they are working in the same country as that of the institute's satellite campuses and for reasons related to work at the respective satellite campuses.
3. Employees who will be working remotely will be asked to present:
    3.1. The address of where they will be residing together with official proof of address (example rental agreement).
    3.2. Main contact details where the Institute will be able to reach them if necessary.
    3.3. Confirmation of next of kin while working outside of Malta and Gozo.
4. Remote work will only be approved for a maximum of 3 months following which it may be renewed for a further period of maximum 3 months (a total of 182 days).
5. The cost of travel to and from the remote work location is the sole responsibility of the individual employee.
6. Employees who may have to travel outside the territory they are residing in, are to seek the approval of the CEO before travelling.
7. Employees will only be entitled for per diem when they are travelling, on duty, outside the territory that they are working remotely in.
8. Employees who will be permitted to work remotely abroad, must note that they are responsible and liable for addressing and resolving any compliance obligations that may be associated with their time abroad, including, but not limited to, income and social taxes, health and other types of insurance, foreign bank account reporting, and immigration/appropriate visa requirements. Employees may be required to sign an acknowledgement that they understand these obligations, and their obligation to return to ITS after the designated period to continue employment. ITS is unable to provide any personal legal or tax advice.
9. If the employee is injured during their work hours, the employee should inform the Manager (Safety and Security) who should follow the usual injury on duty procedure.
10. In case of time zones that differ from the Malta time zone (GMT+1), the employee must be available for a minimum of five (5) hours during ITS official winter working hours. The employee must also be available for any meeting, as and when required, even if the meeting falls outside of five (5) hour time window.
11. Working hours for staff working remotely are as follows:
    11.1. If staff are working in countries that with time zones GMT -2 to GMT+2 will need to work in parallel to the ITS Malta work hours

11.2. If the employee is living in a country outside the time zones mentioned in 11.1, employees must make sure to be available for a minimum of five (5) hours during ITS official winter working hours and a for a minimum of four (4) hours during ITS official summer working hours.

The employee must also be available for any meeting, as and when required, even if the meeting falls outside of five (5) hour time window.

12. If the employee who is performing remote work wishes to resign, the employee shall have to return to Malta to work their notice period. The notice period may be extended by a maximum of double the notice period owing.

Procedure to apply for remote work

The request is to be sent to the respective head of department and the respective COO for their consideration. The respective COO is to provide his/her recommendation to the CEO, for his final approval.

D. Telework Academic staff

i. Virtual Teaching

2. According to the 2017-2021 Academic Collective Agreement the following framework was created for Academics to have the facilities and the opportunity to implement digital technologies for virtual teaching.
   a. According to the collective agreement the Academics shall be provided with:
      i. Reliable Internet access throughout the campus.
      ii. A VLE.
      iii. An online collaboration suite.
      iv. Access to online academic literature and resources.
      v. Other essential digital tools necessary to support virtual teaching and learning as an integral component of the academic programmes at ITS.
   b. Academic staff may use online based learning. However, blended learning (both online and physical in the same module) shall be limited to a maximum of 20% of the total contact time dedicated to online learning. Such teaching will be included in the individual Academic's timetable.
   c. ITS shall provide adequate technical support and, pedagogical training and support to use virtual teaching.

d. Academics shall make full use of the tools described in the above clause. The pedagogical application of these tools should be left at the professional discretion of the academic and up to the quality standards prescribed by MFHEA.

e. Academics may utilise the Academic Work Resources to satisfy individual professional requirements and to complement the tools and facilities provided by ITS as explained above.

f. Online contact hours are to be considered as part of the total contact hours.

g. The Management shall provide all ITS students with access to the VLE, online collaboration tools and other hardware/software resources that complement those of the Academics and enable the latter to provide virtual teaching.

ii. Working from home

As per 2017-2021 Academic Collective Agreement, Academics must be present at the place of work during lecturing duties, scheduled meetings, invigilation and compulsory continuous professional development. Academics must also include 3 timetabled hours per week which are outside the contact hours during which period the academic must be present on campus. For the rest of the working hours, Academics may work from home.

E. Use of communication and collaboration tools

1. Heads of department are to ensure that employees have access to the necessary communication and collaboration tools to work effectively remotely.
2. Employees who are performing work remotely/ teleworking must keep their MS Teams on during working hours for ease of communication.
3. The Institute's workstations should be used during remote work.
4. Employees who are required to connect to SITS, DAKAR and/or Business World Unit 4, or other government systems must have an active @gov.mt email and FORTICLIENT VPN software.
5. Employees are responsible for the hardware provided by the Institute.
6. In case of issues with the hardware, an employee must inform IT Department immediately on it@its.edu.mt.
7. In the case of faulty hardware, the one-day of telework arrangement is to be postponed until the hardware issues are solved. In the case of remote working the employee must communicate with the IT department to find an alternative solution.
8. Employees are to ensure that they have a functionable and secure internet connection during their telework/remote working hours.

9. The office telephone line is to be diverted to the employee's personal mobile phone. The office line is not to be diverted on the office line of other employees of the department. In case of remote work, MS Teams is to be used instead of telephone line.

F. Reporting

1. Administrative employees who avail themselves of one-day telework, telework agreement, or remote work are to report their work hours and activities on the telework log sheet.
2. Log sheets are to be filled-in and signed electronically by the employee and respective line manager and sent to HR Department on telework@its.edu.mt by Monday of the following week in which remote work is availed of.

G. Adherence

1. Employees not adhering to the guidelines repeatedly may have their Telework/remote work arrangements revoked.
2. Employees must ensure that during Telework/remote work, Maltese GDPR regulations are adhered to and ensure they work within a secure location. Employees who are working remotely will be asked to sign an agreement before travelling, committing to following Maltese GDPR regulations carrying out their duties.

H. Document Retention

Category	Retention Period
Logbook	8 years
Telework/ Remote work Request forms	8 years

I. Review

The terms of this policy will be reviewed after its first year of operation and regularly thereafter.

J. Document Control

Version	Purpose of Review/ Changes	Date Published	Date of Next Review
V1	Initial Document	09/07/2024	09/07/2025