

Remote, hybrid & virtual work: Policy implications

Remote work, hybrid working and virtual assignments have become major areas of importance within global mobility. This has led to the need for policy design by global mobility professionals.

SETTING PARAMETERS

It is important to set parameters around work location arrangements within policy. This is because a written policy aids transparency, helps to support equity, and enables clear communication to take place between line managers and individuals for whom they hold responsibility.

REMOTE WORK

Remote work refers to when international assignees request to work in different country from their assignment location. They may wish to extend visits to family members, vacation, home leave, or simply prefer to be based elsewhere for a period of time.

Enabling assignees to work remotely requires careful thought. Employers will need to consider whether they have an entity in the country in which the employee proposes to work remotely for compliance reasons. Data protection must also be considered.

A further issue concerns how long international remote working will be allowed. Employers may use cumulative day caps and/or consecutive day caps. Cumulative day caps refer to a maximum number of days of remote work allowed during a year; the total number of days

does not have to be taken in one block. Consecutive day caps refer to the number of days allowed within a defined period, taken as one block. Tracking technology is needed to record time spent in the international remote work location.

Policy should also state whether support is to be given for tax and visa compliance and who will meet any associated additional costs. If any other costs are to be covered, such as housing, flights, medical expenses and per diems, these should be addressed.

VIRTUAL ASSIGNMENTS

Virtual assignments mean that employees remain in their home country but service the international role from there rather than relocating. Home country terms and conditions are likely to apply. Nonetheless, employers must give consideration to compliance, particularly any taxation and social security ramifications. It is important to take specialist advice in this respect.

Employers might wish to consider designing a policy to apply to virtual assignments, covering aspects such as working time and hours (if those in the host location differ from those in the home country) and how work-life balance will be addressed (such as working across time zones).

Policy implications might also include the requirements for cultural and language training. Policy also should address performance management and career development implications.

HYBRID WORKING

Assignees who request hybrid working will wish to work part of their time from home and part on site. Employers should consider having a policy to address when these arrangements are appropriate and whether the job demands enable this approach.



Any data protection implications of holding and managing employer data from home should be addressed. In addition, employers should consider equity – whether local employees are similarly empowered to work from home. Policy should also address when assignees are required to be on site, for example, for team meetings and for training and development.

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