

**A REVIEW OF REMOTE WORK POLICIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION:**

In accordance with Rule G5.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise/dissertation/thesis is my own work and that I have not previously been submitted to another University or for another qualification

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'N.D.' with a flourish extending to the right.

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## ABSTRACT

The shift to remote work in HEIs increased rapidly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This study reviews the remote work policies in HEIs internationally and in South Africa. The primary objective is to review remote work guidelines and policies adopted by these HEIs. The literature identifies the advantages and challenges of remote work and discusses the importance of implementing remote work policies and key elements to be found in remote work policies. The findings reveal that most of the HEIs include similar elements in the remote work guidelines and policies. The study recommends that these guidelines and policies should clarify on key elements specifically eligibility criteria, communication channels and training on digital tools and platforms.

**Keywords:** Remote work; Remote work policies; Remote work guidelines; Higher Education Institutions.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have a social responsibility of providing guidance to faculty, administrators, staff and students, and the decisions that are made have an impact on the economic, social and environmental elements of the communities (Bantanur, Mukherjee & Shankar, 2015:323). According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2025), HEIs have a unique ability to acquire skills and knowledge, as well as the capability to gather resources for education and provide learning opportunities to a wide range of communities. This includes a significant shift from merely training young secondary school pupils to encouraging learners from diverse backgrounds to pursue higher education at various ages and stages of their personal and professional lives (UNESCO, 2025).

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the nature of employment, forcing individuals from different industries to shift to remote work (Parham & Rauf, 2020:385). HEIs are not an exception, and the rapid transition has had a significant impact on all key stakeholders (Parham & Rauf, 2020:385). Swarts (2023) study defines remote work as a work arrangement in which employees work outside of the usual environment, by using technology to communicate with colleagues and complete work-related tasks. Remote work requires online communication tools namely video conferencing, email and messaging applications (Karle, 2024). This work arrangement relies on information and communication technology (ICT) and steady power supply to be operational. Remote work is not a new concept; however, the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown procedures have led to the trend of enabling employees to work remotely (De', Pandey & Pal, 2021:1). The evidence in literature indicates that countries that invested in ICT prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, were able to cope with the shift to remote work during the lockdowns and develop support mechanisms for academics and administration staff (Li & Lalani, 2020). However, countries such as South Africa with poor ICT and electricity infrastructure were slow to adopt or failed to migrate to remote work, this led to significant challenges for the institutions (Hlatshwayo, 2022:2).

The sudden shift to remote work created challenges for HEIs, where both academic and administrative staff struggled to adjust to new methods of teaching, engaging students, conducting research, and managing related responsibilities (Parham & Rauf, 2020:385). In order to manage effective performance to staff members, management practices have had to

adjust to the new norm of remote work (Mabaso & Manuel, 2024:2). According to Saurombe and Barkhuizen (2020:86), managing performance is essential in a workplace, this assists line managers and organisations to assess whether workers are meeting the standards required to achieve towards the organisation's goals. In the context of HEIs, the pandemic has impacted the working environment particularly regarding the rise in remote work arrangement. Therefore, these challenges have revealed the critical need for HEIs to develop and implement structured remote work policies that effectively support staff (Chiromo, Khosa & Kalitanyi, 2023:170).

## **1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Historically, HEIs play an important role in transforming societies through training, skill development and promotion of positive human behaviour (Vahdati, Naghayi, Vaezi & Sharifzadeh, 2023:353). However, the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, a global health crisis, affected different spheres of society including HEIs (Bozkurt, 2022:2). In response to the outbreak of the pandemic, governments around the globe instituted various lockdown measures to slow the spread of the virus and flatten the curve (Bozkurt, 2022:2). Strict social distancing measures were implemented and required HEIs to offer programs, courses and services off campus with no physical contact to avoid the spread of the virus between students, lecturers and administrative staff (Santandreu-Calonge, Connor, Hultberg, Shah & Medina-Aguerrebera, 2022:19). Consequently, the teaching methods adopted by academics shifted from traditional face-to-face to remote teaching and learning (Bozkurt, 2022:2). A concern was that many academic staff lacked the required digital skills and had to undergo training to facilitate effective online learning (Sonn, Du Plessis, Van Vuuren, Marais, Wagner & Roman, 2021:3). Although some HEIs had invested in technological infrastructure these institutions still faced challenges due to limited technical readiness (Siddiquei & Kathpal, 2021:812). However, these challenges brought by remote work did not affect academic staff only. Administrative staff in HEIs were also affected by the shift to remote work. These staff members play a crucial role in supporting and monitoring academic activities within HEIs (Garraiol, Freitas, Magalhaes & Matias, 2022:2). During the pandemic, administrators had to adapt to working in a different environment while facing also facing numerous challenges. (Ndevu, 2023:27).

The development and implementation of remote work policies in HEIs have presented both challenges and opportunities. According to Bond (2020:192), these policies are essential for creating adaptive, effective, and efficient work environments. They must balance flexibility

with accountability, allowing staff to perform the roles assigned to them effectively, while enhancing student engagement and success (Andrew, Cattan, Costa, Farquharson, Kraftman, Krutikova, Phimister & Sevilla, 2020:4). In addition, it was noted that most of the public universities in South Africa were ill equipped because no policies were implemented for remote work apart from the University of South Africa (UNISA), which is an open-distance learning institution (Chiromo *et al.*, 2023:170). Therefore, this study seeks to review remote work guidelines and policies implemented in HEIs and highlight key issues where improvements may be needed to enhance remote work in these policies.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The section to follow presents the primary, secondary and methodological objectives.

#### **1.3.1 PRIMARY OBJECTIVES**

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a review of remote work guidelines and policies implemented in HEIs, both internationally and in South Africa.

#### **1.3.2 SECONDARY OBJECTIVES**

To achieve the primary objective, the following secondary objectives were established:

- SO<sup>1</sup>: To identify HEIs, both internationally and in South Africa, that have implemented remote work guidelines or policies.
- SO<sup>2</sup>: To analyse the remote work guidelines or policies adopted by these HEIs.
- SO<sup>3</sup>: To identify the issues of remote work guidelines or policies that are included most in such guidelines and policies of the HEIs included in the analysis.

#### **1.3.3 METHODOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES**

A number of methodological objectives have been formulated to assist in achieving the main objective of the study, namely:

- MO<sup>1</sup>: To conduct a literature review on remote work guidelines and policies, including defining the concepts, describing the importance thereof, identifying what these guidelines or policies should include, and the challenges of remote work.
- MO<sup>2</sup>: To provide the most suitable research methodology for guiding data collection and analysis to answer the main research question of this study.

MO<sup>3</sup>: To analyse remote work guidelines and policies implemented in HEIs to identify the issues included in these guidelines and policies.

MO<sup>4</sup>: To draw conclusions and recommendations based on the data analysis findings, highlighting issues to be included in remote work policies of HEIs in South Africa.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main research question is: What is covered in remote work guidelines and policies that have been implemented by HEIs to effectively manage remote work?

Subsequently, a number of sub-questions are formulated:

RQ<sup>1</sup>: Which universities have remote work guidelines or policies in place?

RQ<sup>2</sup>: What are the main issues contained within these remote work guidelines or policies?

#### **1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a review of remote work guidelines and policies implemented in HEIs as adopted by international and national HEIs. The research strategy that will be used is archival research to review remote work guidelines and policies that have been implemented by HEIs.

#### **1.6 KEY CONCEPTS**

This section will provide a brief explanation of the following concepts:

##### **1.6.1 REMOTE WORK**

The term remote work, also referred to as working from home (WFH) or telecommuting, is a flexible working arrangement that enables employees to operate from locations other than corporate offices with no personal contact with colleagues but can communicate using technology (Gartner, 2025). This working arrangement can be temporary or permanent and pertains to employees' readiness to work in environments that are adaptable and flexible (Gartner, 2025).

##### **1.6.2 REMOTE WORK GUIDELINES AND POLICIES**

According to Michalsons (2025), remote work guidelines give a broad direction with additional advice and support for policies, standards and procedures. Al-Shameri, Omarl, Alzoraiki and Abkar (2024:2) define remote work policies as an agreement, procedures or roles specified by

the employer to assist the process and lay the groundwork for conditions such as when and how employees should work outside the office environment.

### **1.6.3 HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIS)**

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), also known as colleges or universities, are establishments that provide education beyond secondary level (Thelma, 2024:588). These institutions offer undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in various fields of study (Chanda 2024:434). According to Thelma (2024:588), HEIs prepare students for successful professions in a competitive global economy. Furthermore, the institutions foster social mobility by providing individuals from various backgrounds with opportunities for personal and professional development (Thelma, 2024:588).

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is beneficial to HEIs by helping them understand the role of remote work and the challenges it presents. It seeks to help policymakers in developing or refining remote work guidelines or policies that address these challenges and promote effective, sustainable remote work policies within HEIs. This study will be adding in the existing literature and fill the gap in literature by analysing the remote work guidelines or policies adopted by the HEIs and identifying the key issues that need to be included in remote work policy of HEIs.

## **1.8 THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH TO FOLLOW**

The structure of this study includes five chapters. Chapter One consists of the introduction and background to the study. The research problem, primary, secondary, methodological objectives and research questions are also included in this chapter. The scope of the study is then explained followed by the key concepts defined. This chapter concludes by explaining the significance of the study and an outline of the chapters to follow.

Chapter Two provides a literature review of the HEI landscape, remote work and remote work. The review includes the advantages and challenges of remote work. Furthermore, highlighting the importance of implementing remote work policies and addressing key elements that need to be included in remote work policies. The research design and methodology are described in Chapter Three. The chapter also explains the research paradigm, approach to theory development, methodological choice, time dimension and data analysis. Chapter Four discusses the findings of the data collection while Chapter Five presents the conclusion,

recommendations, and limitations of the study. The chapter will conclude with areas of future research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE OVERVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a continuation of Chapter One that provided an introduction and background to the study, problem statement and research objectives. Chapter Two will provide an overview of HEI landscape and remote work. The review will consist of the advantages and challenges of remote work, highlighting the importance of implementing remote work policies and addressing key elements that need to be included in remote work policies. This section will be followed by the theoretical frameworks that will be discussed in this study and conclude with a discussion of previous research on remote work in HEIs. This study will adopt secondary data to review existing published sources on remote work policies in HEIs.

#### 2.2 THE LANDSCAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Globalisation has transformed the landscape of higher education, encouraging HEIs to expand their roles outside national borders (Mbithi, Mbau, Muthama, Inyega & Kalai, 2021:57). Universities offer opportunities to students who might lack access in their countries through branch campuses, international education initiatives and recruitment of international students (Mbithi *et al.*, 2021:57). Furthermore, HEIs provide learning materials globally through online education (Mbithi *et al.*, 2021:57).

In the international context, the HEIs has contributed to the society. According to UNESCO (2022), higher education enrolled over 235 million students in 2020 worldwide doubling from 100 million enrolment in 2000. In 2020, the global enrolment ratio was 40% with only 9% in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2022). Globally, private HEIs account for around one-third of enrolment, while public HEIs account for the other two-thirds (UNESCO, 2022). Between 2000 and 2019, the number of internationally mobile students tripled, from two to six million (UNESCO, 2022). The pandemic reduced physical mobility but enhanced virtual mobility (UNESCO, 2022). A study that was undertaken by the International Association of Universities in March and April 2020 found that online replaced classroom teaching in varies ways from Africa to Europe (Marinoni, van't Land & Jensen, 2020). The 2019 UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in higher education provides a legal framework for individuals to have their qualifications appraised fairly, transparently, and without discrimination, promoting international mobility (UNESCO, 2022).

South Africa consists of 26 public HEIs that offer a variety of courses and research opportunities for both local and international students (South Africa Education, 2025). In 2003, South Africa's education sector was reorganised to increase access to higher education (South Africa Education, 2025). As a result, the country has three types of public HEIs namely, traditional universities, universities of technology and comprehensive universities. In addition, South Africa offers six comprehensive universities that offer a mix academic and vocational degrees, and diplomas, six technological universities focus on practical education and eleven traditional universities that offer theoretical degrees. (South Africa Education, 2025). The South African education transformation plan prioritises increasing access for formerly disadvantaged black racial groups, particularly Africans who make up the majority population (Manik, 2015:107). Research indicates that the student population in South Africa's democratic higher education system has significantly improved (Manik, 2015:107).

The higher education landscape in South Africa is constantly changing, with private higher education institutions (PHEIs) playing a significant role (Sithole, 2024:1645). The number of PHEIs has increased due to the globalisation and rise of information economy which has led to the increased demand for higher education globally (Stander & Herman, 2017: 207). According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2022), there are 132 registered PHEIs in South Africa. Given the growing demand for high quality education and skill development, private universities have become a significant option to their public equivalents (McKenzie, 2023).

## **2.3 OVERVIEW OF REMOTE WORK**

According to a study by Green, Tappin and Bentley (2020:6), remote work has been referred to as telecommuting, e-work, telework and virtual work. The concept of remote work originated from the United States of America (USA) in the early 1970s (Al-Shameri *et al.*, 2020:2). This concept has driven its popularity on flexibility, advances in ICT, environmental and legal regulations for companies to consider to those employees prefer to work remotely (Green *et al.*, 2020:7).

### **2.3.1 ADVANTAGES OF REMOTE WORK**

During Covid-19, several organisations were obliged to allow employees adopt remote work as a new working arrangement. However, many employees found this difficult to transition to remote work. There are various benefits of remote work that are outlined below.

#### 2.3.1.1 Travel benefits

In terms of travelling, one of the most significant advantages of remote work is that employees are no longer concerned about travelling to work which saves costs and time (Farris, 2022). Most employees start work at the same time and most end up spending a significant amount of in traffic (Farris, 2022). Employees who primarily work remotely benefit from not being stuck in traffic which reduces stress (Garg & Van der Rijst, 2019:40). According to Atiku and Ganiyu (2021:3), remote working in HEIs can assist lower employees' carbon footprint by reducing emissions from routine work travel.

#### 2.3.1.2 Flexible working hours

Remote work provides employees flexibility with time, allowing employees to be more independent with managing time (Saurombe, Rayners, Mokgobu & Manka, 2022:3). This suggests that employees can start and stop working anytime of the day, provided the tasks are completed and have beneficial outcomes (Courtney, 2021). The pandemic affected HEIs globally, however many employees that worked remotely managed their time well (Atiku & Ganiyu, 2021:2).

#### 2.3.1.3 Productivity

A study by Stephens, Poston, Millerc, Durhamd and Williamse (2025:4) suggests that employees working remotely tend to be more productive due to less distractions and interruptions and reduced commute times. These employees have more control over time and allow them to focus on work without distractions that are common in traditional office environment (Stephens *et al*, 2025:4). Hence, production is the main driver of progress (First Digital, 2021). A study by Lufkin (2021) found that certain individuals are more productive when working in public areas, these areas foster creativity in ways that working at the office and from home do not (Lufkin, 2021). HEIs reported that there was improved independence, flexibility in time management, elimination of unnecessary interruptions and high levels of job productivity (Mogotsi, 2022:32).

#### 2.3.1.4 Adoption of learning platform

HEIs have adopted the Learning Management System (LMS) as the e-learning platform (Anand & Eswaran, 2018:186; Mahabeer & Pirtheepal, 2019:47). The LMS has provided opportunities for academic staff to interact with students as well as tracking information about the students' progress (Maphalala & Adigun, 2021:3). Hence the use of e-learning and the

attention of academic communities in South Africa and several other Sub-Saharan African countries have expanded in the last few years (Maphalala & Adigun, 2021:3). In the context of HEIs in South Africa, e-learning platform remains an important instrument for the facilitation of virtual learning interactions (Adigun, 2020:25).

### 2.3.2 CHALLENGES OF REMOTE WORK

Remote work does not only have benefits, but there are also challenges that employees must deal with. This section will discuss the challenges that employees encounter during remote work.

#### 2.3.2.1 Lack of skills

In terms of training and development, academics lacked the necessary skills to conduct classes online hence the need to attend training is important (Iwu, Okeke-Uzodike, Anwana, Iwu & Esambe, 2022:50). The impact of Covid-19 pandemic had an effect both on academic and administration staff, with the assumption that these individuals had knowledge about the use of technology (Iwu *et al.*, 2022:50).

#### 2.3.2.2 Work-life balance

According to Parham and Rauf (2020:393), the challenges of remote work include time management, separating professional and personal life, interruptions by children and family members, restricted workspace at home and difficulties to distinguish between weekdays and weekends. In the context of HEIs, Parham and Rauf (2020:385) highlight that the transition to remote work has posed issues for academic and administration staff, affecting both the professional and personal life. This working arrangement provides individuals with flexible working hours however, studies suggest that the transition can have a negative impact on work-life balance (Mustajab, Bauwa, Rasyid, Irawan, Akbar & Hamid, 2020:15).

In a qualitative study on the effects of remote work on employee productivity, Mustajab *et al.* (2020:18) show the work-life balance of male employees was better since they had more time to spend with family and perform home responsibilities. However, the study further showed that for female employees, particularly those who are married, struggled with work-life balance since the responsibilities are much more at home and they therefore should deal with distractions from home activities (Mustajab *et al.*, 2020:18). Hence, the effectiveness of remote work is determined by employers' support and characteristics such as, corporate culture, individual personality and family obligations (Alghaithi, 2020:65).

### 2.3.2.3 Unstable internet connectivity

Unstable internet connectivity is one of the challenges that affect employers and employees when working remotely. According to Maphalala and Adigun (2021:3), the access to fast internet services remains an effective tool for accessing information that is critical for education growth and development. Hence academics in HEIs rely on access to uninterrupted internet connectivity for effective delivery (Maphalala & Adigun, 2021:4). In addition, institutions that provide technology support such as laptops, internet bundles and digital skill training have higher success in working remotely (Thelma, 2024:590). However, sustaining distant learning settings require reliable infrastructure including consistent electricity supply and efficient IT support services (Thelma, 2024:590).

## 2.4 IMPORTANCE OF IMPLEMENTING REMOTE WORK POLICIES

Remote work guidelines are essential for businesses and employees to succeed in a remote work environment (Mustabaj, 2024). The remote work policies provide a framework, clarity and consistency which promotes a positive productive work environment (Mustabaj, 2024). Effective policies assist to reduce legal and security risks and promote employee well-being (Mustabaj, 2024). In the context of HEIs, there are essential tools that are required for remote work such as academic staff having the proper tools to facilitate classes, devices to make calls for administrative staff, secure access to university networks and IT staff members should be able to solve technical difficulties remotely (Stone, 2023).

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated digitalisation and promoted the use of technologies for effective operations during the new environment conditions (Iwu *et al.*, 2022:4). According to Iwu *et al.* (2022), technological factors refer to digital knowledge and digital acceptance. Hence, the use of digital platforms to carry out activities for academic and administration staff is important in a remote work arrangement (Iwu *et al.*, 2022:4). The readiness concept in such unexpected circumstances is vital. According to Staupe-Delgado and Kruke (2017:384), training and development is essential in human resource management to improve the employees' skills, knowledge and capabilities. Other studies, such as Aczel, Kovacs, Van der Lippe and Szaszi (2021:2) and Afrianty, Artatanaya and Burgess (2022:53) emphasise the necessity of HEIs management support which comprises the effective use of legislation, services and infrastructure as important in remote work environment.

## **2.5 KEY ELEMENTS TO BE ADDRESSED BY REMOTE WORK POLICIES**

According to Olawale, Ajayi, Udeh and Odejide (2024:1243) remote work policies are structured to define the terms, conditions and expectations for remote work arrangements. These policies act as a model for the relationship between employers and employees ensuring clarity, consistency, and conformity with legal and organisational requirements (Olawale *et al.*, 2024:1243). A concise remote work policy includes numerous key components including eligibility criteria and scope, working hours, communication, equipment and technology support, data protection, performance expectations (Olawale *et al.*, 2024:1243). These components work together to guarantee that remote work practices are implemented in a way that maximises productivity, increase employee engagement, and protects organisational assets and data (Olawale *et al.*, 2024:1243).

### **2.5.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND SCOPE**

An organisation should state who is eligible to participate in remote work arrangements within the organisation (Mwanje, 2025). Eligibility criteria may differ depending on work titles, departmental requirements or other specific considerations (Mwanje, 2025). In clearly establishing qualifying criteria, the organisation ensures that remote work decisions are consistent, this encourages transparency and assists in managing employee expectations (Mwanje,2025). In addition, it is useful to highlight any requirements or prerequisites that employees must meet to qualify for remote work (Mwanje, 2025). Setting defined qualifying criteria allows organisation to successfully manage remote work request while also maintaining productivity and team cohesiveness (Mwanje, 2025).

### **2.5.2 WORKING HOURS**

Establishing working hours is critical for setting boundaries and expectations in remote work arrangements (Khan, 2024). Employees can better arrange their day more effectively and expectations for availability throughout business hours (Khan, 2024). This will allow employees to adjust the schedules to meet the demands of the team and organisation (Khan, 2024). Given clear information about work hours, the organisation fosters work-life balance and helps employees working remotely manage their time effectively (Khan, 2024).

### **2.5.3 COMMUNICATION**

Effective communication is required for successful remote work arrangements (Khan, 2024). The remote work policy should indicate preferred communication methods such as email,

messaging applications or video platforms, and provide guidance on how to make use of these methods (Khan, 2024). This element may also include standards for response times to ensure timely interaction and collaboration among employees (Mwanje, 2025).

#### 2.5.4 EQUIPMENT AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Remote work arrangements rely heavily on providing equipment such as laptops and other relevant tools required for employees to work outside the office and performing the specific jobs effectively (Mwanje, 2025). This element includes the organisation's rules and procedures for equipment provision, maintenance and usage. Employees require access to technical support for any problems that may develop (Mwanje, 2025). Khan (2024) states that the policy should be specific on how remote workers can get technical support such as self-service tools or dedicated IT help desk. Detailed guidance on how to report concerns and seek assistance helps to reduce delay and ensures that employees can address technical issues quickly (Khan, 2024).

#### 2.5.5 DATA PROTECTION

In remote work arrangements, it is vital to protect sensitive information and ensure data security. Data protection establishes guideline for handling, accessing, transferring and storing personal information securely (Mwanje, 2025). This includes encryption procedures, restricting access, password management and data encryption techniques to prevent unauthorised access or cybersecurity (Mwanje, 2025). Prioritising data protection and security measures indicates the organisation's commitment to maintaining trust, integrity, and compliance within remote work operations, reducing risks and protecting important assets (Mwanje, 2025).

#### 2.5.6 PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

According to Mwanje (2025), setting performance expectations is crucial for remote work considering the employees would be most likely to receive less supervisory input than if they worked in the office. The policy should include quality standards, promptness, goals and performance for various positions (Mwanje, 2025).

Organisations should identify the tools or procedures used to track performance, making sure remote work standards are consistent with the ones expected on-site (Mwanje, 2025). This should include the use of project management software or conducting frequent performance evaluations to assess productivity (Mwanje, 2025). In addition, organisations that maintain

regular tracking systems can provide useful input and assistance to employees, allowing the employees to prosper in remote work arrangements (Mwanje, 2025).

### 2.5.7 WORK HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND SAFETY

The transition to remote work, driven by the Covid-19 pandemic, has increased physical and mental health concerns for employees (Van Heerden & Naicker, 2025:6). Remote workers are more likely to develop injuries to the muscles due to poorly constructed home workstations and long hours of seating (Oakman, Kinsman, Stuckey, Graham & Weale, 2020). Ergonomic difficulties such as poor seating and screen arrangement are major contributors to physical discomfort and long-term health issues (Van Heerden & Naicker, 2025:6). Additionally, remote workers are more likely to experience anxiety and depression due to isolation and blurred boundaries between work and family life (Kniffin, Narayanan, Anseel, Antonakis, Ashford & Bakker, 2021:64). Therefore, it is necessary for organisations to address psychological as well as physical risks in remote work environments.

## 2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

According to Kivunja (2018:45), theories are developed to explain, forecast and understand phenomena, as well as to question and expand current knowledge within the constraints of critical limited assumptions or behavioural predictions. The theoretical framework is the structure that supports a research study's theory therefore, theoretical framework includes not only theory but also a narrative description of how a researcher applies the theory and its underlying assumptions to the study (Kivunja, 2018:45).

### 2.6.1 TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL

Technology acceptance model (TAM) is a psychological theory that describes how individuals acquire perceptions of technology and decide how to use it (Davis, 1989:320). According to this theory, individuals are more inclined to utilise technology if they perceive it to be beneficial and user-friendly (Ali, Puah, Ayob & Raza, 2022:620). The model has been used in numerous research including business, healthcare, education and engineering (Rosli, Saleh, Ali, Bakar & Tahir, 2022:2). Furthermore, the model serves to enhance understanding of technology acceptance. For instance, it can be used to forecast the acceptance of new technologies and to determine the causes of user rejection of certain technologies (Alhamad, Akour, Alshurideh, Al-Hamad, Al Kurdi & Alzoubi, 2021:314). TAM is the most used framework for understanding technological acceptance in education and is suitable for both secondary and

higher education (Sulaymani, Prataman, Alshaikh & Alammary, 2022:5). TAM research undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrates a similar emphasis on higher education (Rosli *et al.*, 2022:2). Therefore, remote work requires a certain amount of support ICT skills and organisations must implement digital infrastructures and ICT solutions (Rosli *et al.*, 2022:2). In addition, remote workers should develop familiarity and confidence with the software and technological infrastructure by learning and applying the specialised technical skills required for remote work. (Rosli *et al.*, 2022:3).

## 2.6.2 DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION THEORY

The diffusion of innovation (DOI) theory was developed by Rogers to examine technology adoption (Rogers, 2003:12). According to Bakkabulindi (2014:56), the theory is the most influential model to examine the use of technology in HEIs. In addition, the theory comprises four essential elements namely innovation, communication channels, time and social systems (Rogers, 2003:12). According to Rogers (2003:12), innovation refers to a new concept, method or the use of new ideas and methods that is perceived by an individual or a group of people. Rogers, Singhal and Quinlan (2019) point out that uncertainty is a significant barrier to adopting new technologies or innovations. To encourage technology adoption, it is important to educate individuals on the advantages and disadvantages of technology (Bakkabulindi, 2014:56). The element of communication refers to a process of creating and sharing information to achieve a mutual understanding (Rogers, 2003:5). Communication channels include internet, television, radio and other platforms (Huang & Guo, 2024:96). Rogers (2003:13) states that media is more effective for introducing technology on the other hand, interpersonal channels are suitable to promote the adoption of technology. During the Covid-19 pandemic, HEIs discovered innovative ways to introduce technology and application for academics and administration staff (Huang & Guo, 2024:96).

## 2.6.3 THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR

The framework of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) provides a useful perspective on a wide range of human social behaviour and change (Ajzen, 1985:13). The theory has proven particularly useful in educational environments determining a variety of academic behaviours such as student dropout rates Dewberry and Jackson (2018:101), the use of technology, staff turnover and the adoption of technology post Covid-19 pandemic (Rahimi & Tafazoli, 2022:240). According to Ajzen (1985:14), TPB fundamental concept is influenced by three main factors namely attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behaviour control. Ajzen

(1985:14) defines attitude as an individual's sentiments, whether positive or negative, regarding a behaviour. Subjective norms refer to an individual's perceptions of the social pressure to execute the behaviour, whereas perceived behaviour control represents an individual's confidence in their capacity to perform a behaviour (Ajzen, 1985:14). The attitude factor relates to this study to academic and administrative staff's positive or negative perspectives on the effectiveness and importance of changes brought by the pandemic on working remotely (Ajzen, 1985:14). Subjective norms include the influence of staff, students and institutions on the decision-making process, and perceived behavioural control refers to an academic's confidence in the ability to make and sustain changes, considering factors such as resource availability, expertise and institutional support (Broadbent, Bearman, Boud & Dawson, 2024:2).

#### 2.6.4 INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

Meyer and Rowan (1977:341) define institutional theory as the process by which the acts of an institutional shape the interests and direction of development for the entire institution, influencing the future leaders. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977:341), each significant action or policy creates an environment that leads to new policies and actions. These policies evolve in numerous levels resulting in both micro and macro implications (Meyer & Rowan, 1977:341). In the context of HEIs, the legislative policy changes have an impact on HEIs at macro-level. The HEIs administrators set policies for others to follow. According to Morris, Muchira and Dobroslski (2023:28), the change of policies in HEIs led to administrators of micro institutions such as universities, colleges and departments. The new policies at all levels of HEIs can shape future policies and organisational structure universities and colleges (Morris *et al.*, 2023:28).

#### 2.7 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON REMOTE WORK GUIDELINES AND POLICIES IN HEIS

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in an unprecedented increase in remote work and HEIs had to adapt to the changes of the work environment (Al-Shameri *et al.*, 2024:2). Remote work policies require specific tasks and steps such as determining the type of work that should be done remotely, creating a policy based on feedback from other successful remote work companies, educating employees about the new remote work, putting it into practice and measuring the results (Khan, Mohammed & Harith, 2018:3). In addition, literature indicates

that remote work policies should include communication approaches, virtual presence alternatives, performance evaluation and technological assistance (Khan *et al.*, 2018:3).

Remote work guidelines and policies have been developed by several HEIs globally to assist management in guiding the departments and staff to be engaged and productive (Al-Dmour, Al Hasan, Thneibat, Masadeh, Alkhadrakhan & Alalwan, 2023:2). Furthermore, remote work has benefits both for the organisation and employees by ensuring work continuity in disruptive circumstances such as the Covid-19 pandemic (Abujarour, Ajjan, Fedorowicz & Owens, 2021:56). Al-Shameri *et al.* (2024:5) conducted a survey of 503 (80.9%) administration staff at the University of Technology at the MARA Selangor Branch in Malaysia. According to the survey's findings, 87.1% of participants expressed high level of satisfaction. However, there was a 53.7% decrease in work performance among the same respondents. According to Al-Shameri *et al.* (2024:5), only staff with sufficient ICT equipment should be allowed to work remotely and that remote policies need to be reviewed.

In the South African context, higher institution such as University of Witwatersrand (Wits), University of Johannesburg (UJ), and Nelson Mandela University (NMU) implemented remote work guidelines and policies to promote flexibility and making sure that tasks are completed within specific time frame (Ndevu, 2023:28). Remote work policies differ from one sector to another, hence some in sectors fully implemented remote work policies while others required employees to work shifts such as being at work two or three days a week (Al-Shameri *et al.*, 2024:4). Therefore, the Covid-19 forced individuals to work remotely who have never done so before.

A study by Al-Dmour *et al.* (2023:1) specifically examined the role of academic engagement as a mediating factor in remote work productivity as well as the factors influencing their output during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study's findings are significant for top-level university management and Ministry of Higher Education officials as they are responsible in designing policies to encourage, facilitate and improve remote work productivity (Al-Dmour *et al.*, 2023:1). Furthermore, the study indicates the policymakers directed university management to promote remote work during the Covid-19 pandemic (Al-Dmour *et al.*, 2023:3).

Organisational attitudes and policies around remote work have substantial impact on employee performance (Al-Dmour *et al.*, 2023:3). When employees see organisational value, trust, and availability of training, resources and competent project management the productivity increases (Al-Dmour *et al.*, 2023:3). A study by Grundke, Liu, Pradhan and DeWitt (2018:500)

highlighted that a company's culture is defined by a diverse workforce, supportive management, flexible work schedules and trust. This is critical in determining whether the remote work improves business outcomes (Grundke *et al.*, 2018:500).

## **2.8 SUMMARY**

Chapter Two provided a landscape of HEIs both internationally and in South Africa. Followed by highlighting the advantages and challenges of remote work. The importance of implementing remote work policies and the key issues to be addressed by remote work policies is then discussed. Followed by theoretical frameworks to support the study, the theories used are TAM, DOI, TPB and institutional theory. The last section consists of previous research on remote work guidelines and policies. The first secondary objective (SO<sup>1</sup>) has partly addressed while the first methodological objective (MO<sup>1</sup>) has been fully addressed in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter Three will discuss the research design and methodology. Research design and methodology is referred to as an overall plan outlining the researcher's approach to addressing the study topic (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019:636). This chapter seeks to address methodological objective two (MO<sup>2</sup>) by providing the most suitable research methodology for guiding data collection and analysis to answer the main research question of this study.

#### **3.2 SECONDARY DATA**

According to Taherdoost (2021:12), secondary data is obtained from published sources meaning it was previously gathered by someone else for another purpose in research and all literature review articles are based on secondary sources. Hence, secondary data is an important aspect of research since it can help obtain information from previous studies for doing research. In addition, secondary data can assist in designing a study by providing a baseline for comparing primary outcomes (Kabir, 2016:202). This study will adopt secondary data to review existing literature on remote work policies.

#### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The components of research methodology are namely research philosophy/paradigm, approach to theory development, purpose of the study, methodological choice, research strategy and time dimension. These components will be discussed in detail in the subsections to follow.

##### **3.3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY/PARADIGM**

A research philosophy/paradigm refers to beliefs and assumptions regarding acceptable, true and legitimate information, the nature of reality, and the importance of values and ethics in research (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:145). There are five different philosophies namely positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism (Ugwu, Ekere & Onoh, 2018:119). The philosophy that will be used in this study is positivism. This philosophy uses observation and reasoning to analyse human behaviour as a scientific reality (Ugwu *et al.*, 2018:119). Hence, positivism is appropriate for this study because it ensures that the analysis of the remote work guidelines and policies is based on quantifiable valid data and providing a solid foundation for review.

### 3.3.2 APPROACH TO THEORY DEVELOPMENT

There are two different approaches to theory development namely inductive and deductive approach (Lovino & Tsitsianis, 2020). However, the deductive approach to theory development will be used in this study. The deductive approach is defined as the shift from the general to the specific with the process beginning with an analysis of existing theory, then proceeding to the development of research methods that outline the steps for data collection and analysis concluding with findings that answer the question being studied (Lovino & Tsitsianis, 2020). Adopting a deductive approach enhances knowledge growth by allowing for review of literature resulting in greater improvement, encouragement or rejection of current theories and concepts (Fife & Gossner, 2024:1). This approach is suitable for this study because it will offer a comprehensive and theory-based framework.

### 3.3.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Descriptive and reporting is adopted for this study. Descriptive research is one in which the researcher outlines the variables under investigation as well as the relationship between these variables (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018:8). The purpose of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its attributes (Nassaji, 2015:129). The primary objective of this study is to conduct a review of remote work guidelines and policies implemented in HEIs both internationally and in South Africa.

### 3.3.5 METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE

According to Taherdoost (2021:14), research can be divided into qualitative and quantitative methods based on the type of data collected. A mixed-method study combines the benefits of both methods. The method that this study has adopted is quantitative. Quantitative method uses numerical values obtained from observations to characterise and explain the processes that the observations may reflect on (Taherdoost, 2021:14). This method uses both procedures and empirical statements which are descriptive statements regarding the situations' actual meaning (Taherdoost, 2021:14). It also employs empirical evaluations designed to ascertain the extent to which a standard or norm is met by a certain program or policy (Taherdoost, 2021:15). Quantitative method aims to answer specific questions such as how many and what percentage in various fields (Taherdoost, 2021:15). This study will be counting key issues that need to be included in a remote work policy.

### 3.3.6 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The main strategies for research are experiment, survey, archival research, case study, ethnography, action research, grounded theory and narrative inquiry (Melnikovas, 2018:38). Archival research is a research process that involves the examination of previous records and documents to provide insights into past events, patterns and occurrences (Ventresca & Mohr, 2017:807). According to Kikon (2021:13), archives collect manuscripts, records, electronic records, published and unpublished papers preserved by a library, historical organisation or institution. Different types of scholars use archival primary resources to locate and interpret original resources from various information domains (Kikon, 2021:13). Therefore, since existing remote work policies in HEIs will be analysed in this study, archival research is appropriate.

### 3.3.7 TIME DIMENSION

In terms of time dimension, there are two types of studies namely longitudinal and cross-sectional study (Wang & Cheng, 2020:65). A cross-sectional study is an observational study that examines data from a population at a single period providing a snapshot of literature, allowing the researcher to evaluate the present state of the literature without offering an opinion that there is indication of a trend (Wang & Cheng, 2020:65). A cross-sectional study is appropriate because this study will analyse and compare remote work guidelines and policies in different HEIs both internationally and in South Africa.

## 3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is the process of collecting information to get insights into the research issue (Taherdoost, 2021:10). This is a common component of research in all fields of study, including physical and social sciences, humanities and business. While approaches differ by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection remains consistent (Taherdoost, 2021:10). The study will make use of desk research using the data collection instrument that will populate what aspects were included in remote work guidelines and policies. The data collection instrument will be compiled based on what should be included in a remote work guideline and policy. Monitoring strategy will be implemented as remote work guidelines and policies published in English of international and national HEIs will be scrutinised during the data collection.

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Dibekulu (2020:2), data analysis is the systematic application of statistical and/or logical tools to explain and illustrate, condense and summarise, and assess data. Kaur, Stoltzfus and Yellapu (2018:60) refer descriptive statistics as methods for calculating, describing and summarising acquired data research in a logical, comprehensible and efficient manner. This statistic is presented quantitatively in the manuscript's text, tables or graphically in the figures (Kaur *et al.*, 2018:60). The study will make use of descriptive analysis to describe the results of the quantitative content analysis.

### **3.6 TRUSTWORTHINES AND RIGOUR**

According to Struwig and Stead (2023:24), trustworthiness relates to the research's truth value while research rigour refers to the case used to assure the validity, dependability and accuracy of findings. Ahmed (2024:2) provides four criteria that must be adhered to for trustworthiness and rigour namely, credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability,

#### **3.6.1 CREDIBILITY**

Ahmed (2024:2) refers to credibility as the degree to which the study can be considered accountable and accurate. It protects against subjective sensations, emotions and opinions that may disguise the genuine nature of the research topic. The objective of this research is to identify the aspects within the field of remote work found in adopted guidelines and policies followed that could assist with drafting remote work policies. The websites of universities (national and international) will be scrutinised. This will ensure credibility of this research since credible institutions are scrutinised.

#### **3.6.2 DEPENDABILITY**

Dependability refers to study findings that remain consistent over time (Haq, Rasheed, Rashid, & Akther, 2023:152). Researchers ensure reliability by documenting their approaches, data collection and analysis procedures (Ahmed, 2024:2). Specific steps will be followed when doing the review for this study.

#### **3.6.3 CONFIRMABILITY**

Confirmability refers to the impartiality and objectivity of research findings, ensuring they are not influenced by researcher biases or preferences (Ahmed, 2024:2). Researchers use many methods to enhance the reliability of the findings, such as social debriefing sessions, member

verification and reflective journaling (Ahmed, 2024:2). A specific audit trail will be used while will record all the details of each article considered in this study. This will indicate that the inclusion criteria were applied strictly.

#### **3.6.4 TRANSFERABILITY**

Transferability refers to the extent to which findings can be used to different contexts or circumstances (Ahmed, 2024:2). Researchers improve study transferability by offering clear and complete explanations that enable readers to assess the results' relevance to similar contexts (Ahmed, 2024:2). To ensure that the context in which the research challenge originated is understood, Chapters One and Two provide a thorough and comprehensive description of the subject of this study.

### **3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Researchers' ethical responsibilities extend to their participants, audience, society and academic communities (Mirza, Ballalem & Mirza, 2023:441) These ethical rules should be followed by researchers to ensure good research techniques. In the context of this study, the researcher has complied with Nelson Mandela University's requirements by signing the ethics form (Form E) together with the study leaders and Head of the Department of Business Management.

### **3.8 SUMMARY**

Chapter Three described the research design and methodology that will be used in this study regarding the literature review. The research philosophy adopted by this study is positivism and the approach to theory development that will be used is deductive approach. The methodological choice is quantitative as this study will be counting the key issues that needs to be in included in a remote work policy. Archival research will be used to analyse remote work policies in HEIs. The last section of this chapter concludes with trustworthiness and rigour and ethical considerations. Therefore, on completion of Chapter Three methodological two (MO<sup>2</sup>) has been attained.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **EMPIRICAL FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter Three described the research design and methodology adopted in this study. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the HEIs whose remote work guidelines and policies will be analysed. A summary table is presented to indicate the extent to which each policy addresses the identified elements. This is followed by a comparison analysis of their remote work policies using the key policy elements identified in Chapter Two. Thus, this chapter aims to achieve secondary objectives one (SO<sup>1</sup>), two (SO<sup>2</sup>), three (SO<sup>3</sup>) and methodological objective three (MO<sup>3</sup>) of this study.

#### **4.2 OVERVIEW OF SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

The section to follow will give a brief background of the six selected HEIs that implemented the remote work guidelines and policies, both national and international. The selected HEIs are namely University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), University of Johannesburg (UJ), Nelson Mandela University (NMU), University of South Australia (UniSA), King's College London and University of York. Additional HEIs were considered when selecting the institutions namely, University of Pretoria, University of Western Cape and Cape Peninsula University of Technology. However, the remote work guidelines and policies of these institutions were not available.

##### **4.2.1 UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND**

Wits is located in Johannesburg, South Africa, a thriving commercial city on the African continent (University of the Witwatersrand, 2024). The university's history is associated with mining, academic achievement, and civic and political engagement (University of the Witwatersrand, 2024). Wits is internationally recognised for its vast research efforts and outstanding standard of academic programs (University of the Witwatersrand, 2024). Although Wits is traditionally a contact-based institution, since 2022 it has adopted a blended learning approach (University of the Witwatersrand, 2024). Most courses are now offered both online and in person, with some programmes fully online (University of the Witwatersrand, 2024). Currently, the university has five faculties and 33 schools, offering approximately 3 400 courses to 41 000 students (University of the Witwatersrand, 2024). According to University of the Witwatersrand (2024), the aim of this institution is to educate and transform African

societies through high quality education and strong motivation. For a century, Wits has been acknowledged for the calibre of its alumni, and the impact they have in both the public and private sectors across various industries (University of the Witwatersrand, 2024).

#### 4.2.2 UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

UJ was founded in 2005 in Johannesburg, South Africa, through a historic merger of Rand Afrikaans University, Technikon Witwatersrand and Vista University's Soweto Campus (University of Johannesburg, 2025). This restructuring paved the way for a new type of South Africa that values reform, accessibility and academic excellence (University of Johannesburg, 2025). UJ has evolved into a dynamic, multicultural and diverse institution with over 50 000 students including more than 3 000 international students from over 80 countries. It is one of the largest contact institutions in South Africa and, has a significant impact on the country's higher education system (University of Johannesburg, 2025). This HEI is recognised internationally, with academic programs that follow curricula informed by the latest developments in both postgraduate and undergraduate programs (University of Johannesburg, 2025). The programs are designed to prepare students for the workplace and global citizenship.

#### 4.2.3 NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) was established in 2005 as a result of the merger of Port Elizabeth Technikon, the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) and the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University (Nelson Mandela University, 2023). The Port Elizabeth Technikon was founded in 1882 and is known for being the oldest art school in South Africa. UPE became the country's first HEI to educate in two languages and Vista University provided underprivileged students with access to higher education (Nelson Mandela University, 2023). The merging of these institutions resulted from the government national reform of higher education, which aimed to create a more equal and efficient system to fulfil requirements of South Africa, the continent and the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Nelson Mandela University, 2023).

NMMU was formally renamed to Nelson Mandela University (NMU) in 2017, making it the world's only HEI to be named after Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. The name change allowed NMU to rebrand and establish itself in the continent and globally (Nelson Mandela University, 2023). NMU is the largest HEI in the Eastern Cape with approximately 27 000 students enrolled across seven campuses, with six in Gqeberha and one in George (Nelson Mandela University, 2023). This institution's multi-campus structure allows it to be more directly involved and close

to the areas it serves (Nelson Mandela, 2023). NMU offers over 500 programmes across seven faculties and assists students with attaining academic excellence (Nelson Mandela University, 2023).

#### 4.2.4 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

UniSA is a public university that was established in 1991 located in Adelaide, South Australia (University of South Australia, 2025). According to University of South Australia (2025) the institution is innovative and provides students with practical expertise and is ranked top ten in Australia for employability and one of the world's top 50 young universities under 50. UniSA has six campuses with over 36 300 students, with approximately 6 000 being international students and 2 800 staff (University of South Australia, 2025). The programs offered are in a variety of fields namely business, education, law, arts and social sciences, health sciences, information technology, engineering and environment (University of South Australia, 2025). These degrees are designed in collaboration with industry partners, allowing students to obtain the most recent insights and ensuring that they are prepared for employment (University of South Australia, 2025).

#### 4.2.5 KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

King's College London was established by King George IV and Duke of Wellington in 1829 and is the fourth oldest university in England (King's College London, 2020). The university has five campuses across London, with approximately 42 736 students from 160 countries (King's College London, 2020). It offers 190 undergraduate and 350 postgraduate programmes (King's College London, 2020). This a globally recognised university that provides exceptional education and world-class research (King's College London, 2020). The institution is committed to promoting meaningful and lasting change in local and global communities through exceptional education, impactful research and genuine contributions to society (King's College London, 2020).

#### 4.2.6 UNIVERSITY OF YORK

The University of York is a leading United Kingdom (UK) university that fosters independent critical thinking through a culture of academic excellence and innovative research (University of York, 2025). It is mainly a campus-based university but also provides a variety of online and distance learning programmes (University of York, 2025). The university provides an extensive range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in a variety of fields, fostering a vibrant

and welcoming student community and its commitment is to excel in both teaching and research (University of York, 2025). Currently, the University of York has over 20 000 students and 5 000 staff members (University of York, 2025). This public institution is a member of the Russell group, a group of top UK universities known for their strong emphasis on conducting research and consistently ranked among the top global and national universities (University of York, 2025). The institution is among the top 150 universities in the world in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2025 (University of York, 2025).

### **4.3 KEY ELEMENTS FOR REMOTE WORK GUIDELINES AND POLICIES**

Table 4.1 provides a comparative analysis of the key elements for remote work guidelines and policies implemented by the selected HEIs. The key elements are the following: eligibility criteria and scope, working hours, communication, equipment and technical support, data security, performance expectations and work health, safety and well-being. A comparative discussion of the key elements as found on the HEIs' websites are provided.

**Table 4.1: Comparative analysis of key elements for remote work guidelines and policies**

	<b>Wits</b>	<b>UJ</b>	<b>NMU</b>	<b>UniSA</b>	<b>King's College London</b>	<b>University of York</b>
<b>Eligibility criteria and scope</b>	This policy does not apply to employees that cannot perform the jobs remotely.	This policy is applicable to full-time, temporary and fixed employees.	Applies to all employee that are eligible to work remotely.	Applies to professional and academic staff members.	The policy applies to all staff members.	The policy applies to current and future staff members.
<b>Working hours</b>	The agreed working hours remain the same.	Staff members are expected to work hours as agreed on employment contract.	Line managers are responsible for managing working hours of employees	Staff members should work the hours that are on the employment contract.	Staff members are expected to work hours agreed on contract.	Employee should work according to the agreement reached with the line manager.
<b>Communication</b>	When employees experience disruption, this should be communicated with line manager.	Line manager and employees are to use communication channels such as virtual meetings, emails etc.	Employees should ensure that they are reachable during working hours.	There should be mutual understanding on how regularly should line manager and other staff members communicate.	Employees are to ensure that they are contactable during working hours. Channels of communication are formal and informal	To maintain regular communication with employees through remote or face to face.
<b>Equipment and technical support</b>	Line manager and employee must record the equipment that the employee will be using, and any issues should be reported to ICT department.	Employee should ensure that the necessary equipment is available for to work remotely.	The university to provide the necessary equipment and resources to work remotely.	Equipment is be provided.	King's College provides equipment to employees to ensure that they work effectively.	University to provide reasonable equipment to staff who are working remotely. It is employee responsibility to ensure stable internet connection.

<b>Data security</b>	University will ensure that anti-virus software is up to date.	When employee does not obey the security and policy if UJ equipment it will result in disciplinary action	Employees to familiarise themselves with IT policies.	Staff members should complete cyber security training before remote work.	Guidance is provided to staff members on how to share or handle data when working remotely.	Staff members are to obey data protection and IT security practices.
<b>Performance expectations</b>	Employees expected to perform their jobs as agreed to contract.	Employees should ensure that they perform their duties well.	Line managers are to ensure to communicate with employees regarding goals and expectations.	Line managers should monitor the employee's performances.	Line managers will assess performance of staff members	Managers should ensure that jobs are performed effectively.
<b>Work health, safety and well-being</b>	Employees to ensure that they work in a healthy environment.	UJ policy did not make any reference regarding this element.	Line managers should regularly check on employee's well-being.	UniSA's staff members are responsible for the health and safety environment.	There are wellbeing pages that offer tips on how to stay connected with colleagues. Staff members to report any health issues to line mangers.	Line managers should constantly check in on staff members to avoid working excessive hours.

Source: University of the Witwatersrand,2024; University of Johannesburg, 2025; Nelson Mandela, 2020; University of South Australia, 2024; King's College London, 2025; University of York, 2025

#### 4.3.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND SCOPE

In the South African context, the University of the Witwatersrand (2020) states that its remote work policy applies to permanent and part-time employees, however, does not apply to employees whose duties cannot be performed remotely. These duties include security service, cleaning, maintenance, medical laboratory services and any other services considered necessary for the university's continuous operations (University of the Witwatersrand, 2020). Similarly, the UJ's policy indicate that the policy applies to full-time, temporary and fixed employees (University of Johannesburg, 2022). The guidelines of remote work for NMU also indicate that they are applicable to all employees who are eligible to work remotely for reasons that the university may determine, are justified to implement remote working such as national shutdown, student protest or any other health related issues (Nelson Mandela University, 2020).

In the context of international HEIs, the UniSA applies its remote work policy to both academic and professional staff (University of South Australia, 2024). However, staff must first complete a health and safety form prior to working remotely to ensure safety measures are established (University of South Australia, 2024). Similarly, the University of York's remote work policy applies to the present and future employees however, the policy states that certain roles or responsibilities that cannot be performed remotely are excluded in the criteria to work remotely (University of York, 2021). In addition, employees are only permitted to work remotely overseas in certain circumstances and requests to do so will be considered (University of York, 2021). According to King's College London (2022), remote work approaches can vary based on the requirements of the roles and nature of work. The eligibility criteria of Kings College is similar to the UniSA and the University of York. However, the policy excludes consultants or self-employed such as contractors, external recruiters and casual workers who are not Kings College payroll (King's College London, 2022).

The eligibility criteria and scope element indicate that the policies and guidelines of the selected HEIs provide the same findings, that all staff members were eligible to work remotely except for duties that could not be performed remotely such as cleaning, maintenance services etc. However, the UniSA specifically highlighted that staff members should fill in a health and safety form prior working remotely to ensure that safety measures are implemented.

#### 4.3.2 WORKING HOURS

According to the policy at Wits, the working hours specified in the employment contract must be adhered to, but they may be modified with the consent of the affected employee in line with Section 11 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 75 of 1997 which governs the compression of working weeks (University of the Witwatersrand, 2020). Staff members should be reachable during working hours unless they are on leave (University of the Witwatersrand, 2020). Similarly, UJ's remote work policy indicates that staff members are expected to work the required hours that are stated in the employment contract (University of Johannesburg, 2022). The NMU guidelines state that line managers are responsible for managing employees' working hours and productivity (Nelson Mandela University, 2020).

UniSA's remote work policy highlights that, during any permitted period of remote work, staff members must adhere to the terms and conditions of their employment contract including hours as well as any university policies and procedures (University of South Australia, 2024). The policy of the UniSA further explains that staff members should consult with line managers if the need to extend the remote work is above 40% (University of South Australia, 2024). In addition, applications for remote work under the policy will cover up to 40% of a staff member's work hours depending on the role (University of South Australia, 2024). Similarly, King's College staff members are expected to work the hours agreed on contract for each week (King's College London, 2022). However, the University of York's remote policy specifically states that all staff members should be on campus once a week and the working hours should be from 8am to 6pm (University of York, 2021).

Based on the working hours element, all guidelines and policies from these HEIs referred to staff members adhering to terms and conditions of the employment contract in terms of the working hours.

#### 4.3.3 COMMUNICATION

According to University of the Witwatersrand (2020), staff members working remotely should be reachable during working hours unless they are on leave. However, in the event of a staff member's capacity to work effectively is disrupted, the staff member must promptly notify the line manager so that appropriate alternative arrangements can be implemented (University of the Witwatersrand, 2020). Similarly, employees from NMU are responsible for ensuring that they are reachable during working hours. The line managers should ensure to keep contact with employees using different platforms to communicate such as virtual meeting, emails, group

chats and any other form of communication (Nelson Mandela University, 2020). On the other hand, UJ's policy specifically highlights that, to ensure effective communication and teamwork, regular channels of communication such as virtual meetings, emails and other channels will be used to communicate with colleagues (University of Johannesburg, 2022).

The international HEIs also state the similar points under this element. The policy of the UniSA indicates that a staff member should discuss with the line manager on how regular communication will be maintained to ensure consistent availability and responsiveness (University of South Australia, 2024). Similarly, King's College remote policy indicates that remote work relies on effective communication therefore, staff members who work remotely should ensure that they are reachable with line managers and colleagues during working hours (King's College London, 2022). In addition, to ensure an effective communication among team members, line managers should consider the different working hours of team members (King's College London, 2022). However, communication frequency may differ based on the role and department for instance, high level customer service may necessitate more frequent communication (King's College, 2022). Therefore, maintaining transparency requires both formal and informal open and regular communication (King's College London, 2022). The University of York also indicates that line managers should maintain regular communication with staff members through using communication tools such as Zoom meetings, Google Meet, emails, in person meetings and other informal channels as well as providing colleagues with calendar access (University of York, 2021).

The six selected HEIs provide similar findings under the communication element that staff members should ensure that are reachable during working hours. However, NMU, UJ and University of York are much specific on the communication channels to be used when working remotely.

#### 4.3.4 EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

Under this element, Wits remote work policy highlights that staff members will be provided the necessary equipment to work remotely (University of the Witwatersrand, 2020). When providing the necessary equipment and resources, line managers should consider the nature of the job and its requirements including employee's capacity to operate remotely without any supervision (University of the Witwatersrand, 2020). However, UJ's policy does differ. It indicates that employees should ensure that the necessary tools and equipment required to work remotely are available and the university will not cover any related cost or equipment for

remote work (University of Johannesburg, 2022). NMU's guidelines indicate that to work remotely employees should be responsible for purchasing printers, paper, ink cartridges and ADSL connections (Nelson Mandela University, 2020). While the university will only provide laptops, modems and ICT technical support (Nelson Mandela University, 2020).

According to University of South Australia (2024), a laptop will be provided by the university as the bare minimum equipment. The staff member will be responsible for paying for any additional home-based office supplies (University of South Australia, 2024). On the other hand, King's College will provide the necessary equipment for staff members to work efficiently from home, remotely or on campus and reasonable accommodations will be made for staff with disability (King's College London, 2022). Additionally, staff members should ensure that when working in remote locations, the environment should be suitable with efficient Wi-Fi connection and a private/quiet space to ensure effective productivity (King's College, 2022). The University of York remote policy also indicates that the university will supply all appropriate equipment (University of York, 2021). However, it will be the staff member's responsibility to maintain a dependable and steady internet connection and advice can be obtained from the IT department (University of York, 2021).

In terms of equipment and technology support, four out of six HEIs indicated that the necessary equipment and resources will be provided to staff members working remotely. However, UJ indicated that staff members should ensure that the necessary equipment is available and the university will not cover any cost related to remote work. Similarly, NMU's policy indicated that they are only responsible for providing laptops, technical support and modems, while staff members would be required to purchase consumables such as printer, ink, and paper.

#### 4.3.5 DATA SECURITY

Remote work depends on home Wi-Fi networks to access corporate networks due to insufficient mobile data access during power outages (Skiljic, 2020). Cybersecurity experts indicate that this may not be secure and could jeopardise firm data assets (Skiljic, 2020). Additionally, remote workers may unintentionally share sensitive data through unprotected channels or devices leading to data breaches (Skiljic, 2020). Therefore, Wits will ensure to keep the appropriate anti-virus software up to date on the laptop/devices owned by the university (University of Witwatersrand, 2025). On the other hand, UJ's policy refers to protecting data by stating that, all UJ sensitive information stored on a laptop, PC or private mobile device is solely owned by the university and may only be used for UJ-related purposes (University of

Johannesburg, 2022). Any violation of security and IT policies will lead to disciplinary measures against the employee (University of Johannesburg, 2022). NMU's policy highlights that staff members should be aware that the equipment provided by the university is for university business only and users should read the ICT policies on how to stay secure while working remotely (Nelson Mandela University, 2020).

UniSA's policy indicates that staff members are responsible for maintaining the ongoing integrity, security and privacy of UniSA's data, assets and materials while working remotely (University of South Australia, 2024). Additionally, staff members should ensure to use Virtual Private Network (VPN) when connecting to the university's systems, software or digital infrastructure (University of South Australia, 2024). Similarly, King's College's policy also highlights that all staff members must take necessary precautions when processing, sharing or accessing data remotely and make use of multi-factor authentication to access systems (King's College London, 2022). The college offers comprehensive computer equipment guidance and support including minimum device requirements, data storage and handling tips, device protection, and identifying harmful communications (King's College London, 2022). The University of York also states that staff working remotely are required to follow university's regulations such as the established data protection and IT security procedures (University of York, 2021). Furthermore, staff members should maintain a level of privacy by being careful of where laptops or any other equipment is placed, to ensure that the screen is not exposed to other individuals and log out of the university's applications (University of York, 2021).

All the six HEIs provided the same findings under this element, that staff members should adhere to ICT policies such as data protection and IT security procedures, and equipment provided by these universities are only for work related purposes. UniSA's policy highlights that prior to working remotely staff members must complete cybersecurity training programme to ensure that the remote work location complies with cybersecurity principles.

#### 4.3.6 PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

In terms of performance expectations, Wits' policy highlights that the agreed terms and conditions remain constant unless otherwise agreed (University of the Witwatersrand, 2020). However, in the event of a lack of input, the line manager can execute the necessary managerial action to address the issue (University of Witwatersrand, 2020). UJ's policy also indicates that staff members should perform as per agreement of employment contract (University of Johannesburg, 2022). Similarly, NMU's policy states that line managers are to communicate

with staff members regarding achievable goals and performance expectations and monitor, coordinate and review an employee's performance (Nelson Mandela University, 2020).

The line managers at UniSA should monitor the performance of the staff members and constantly communicate with each other (University of South Australia, 2024). King's College's policy also states that line managers should evaluate the performance of staff members who can work remotely (King's College London, 2022). Depending on the nature of employment, staff members can be allowed to schedule their own time when working remotely, provided the agreed performance development review (PDR) targets and are still reachable in keeping with the expectations agreed with the management (King's College London, 2022). Based on the University of York's policy, managers should ensure that there is an agreement with staff members that roles and duties are to be performed effectively when working remotely (University of York, 2021). Additionally, staff members are urged to communicate openly with line managers and raise any issues about a working arrangement. These should be raised as soon as possible to resolve the issue (University of York, 2021).

Based on the performance expectations element, the findings are similar to each other as they indicate that staff members should perform as agreed on the employment contract and line managers should ensure that the performance is monitored regularly and constantly communicate with staff members.

#### 4.3.7 WORK HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

Working alone may leave an employee feeling isolated from other colleagues. Wits' policy states that it is the responsibility of an employee to ensure that they are working in a safe and healthy environment (University of Witwatersrand, 2020). In the case of NMU's policy, it indicates that line managers should regularly check on the employees and be aware of their wellbeing (Nelson Mandela University, 2020). Further, employees that display symptoms of psychosocial health issues should access services of wellness at work (Nelson Mandela University, 2020). However, UJ's policy does not make any reference to the employees' safety, health or wellbeing.

Under this element UniSA's policy states that staff members are responsible for providing and maintaining a healthy and safe environment that complies with applicable policies and procedures (University of South Australia, 2024). UniSA will not be liable for the health, safety and wellbeing or injury of third parties while working remotely (University of South Australia,

2024). According to King's College London (2022), maintaining a healthy work-life balance can be challenging for remote workers, hence setting a schedule and having clear instructions for when to work and when to stop can help an individual to maintain a healthy work-life balance. To assist with this, there are King's College well-being pages that offer tips on staying connected with colleagues (King's College London, 2022). Staff members should promptly disclose any health issues to the line manager and staff with disabilities should consult with the line manager to make necessary adaptations for remote work to ensure safety and effectiveness (King's College London, 2022). Furthermore, line managers should constantly check with staff members on their wellness to prevent working excessive hours (King's College London, 2022). Similarly, the University of York's policy indicates that the line manager should encourage staff to acknowledge and accept personal responsibility for maintaining their well-being and ensure staff are familiar with the resources available (University of York, 2021). Additionally, it may be beneficial to explain what has worked successfully regarding remote work and what are the early signs that may appear (University of York, 2021). These early signs will be most likely to vary on an individual basis, if the working arrangements are having a negative influence on staff well-being (University of York, 2021).

Under this element, five out six the HEIs provided similar findings, that line managers should ensure that they regularly check on the health and wellbeing of staff members to avoid feeling isolated. Additionally, staff members are to ensure that the environment that they work in is safe. However, UJ did not include the work health, safety and wellbeing to its policy.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

This chapter presents and discusses the findings in relation to key elements of the guidelines and policies associated with remote work in HEIs. The findings indicated that most of the elements included in the guidelines and policies are similar to each other. However, the content of these elements differs from each other specifically under the equipment element. UJ's policy stated that employees should ensure that the equipment to work remotely is available and any cost related to equipment for remote work will not be covered by the university. Additionally, the work health, safety and well-being element is not included in UJ's policy. Chapter Five will focus on the conclusion and recommendations of this study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter outlined an overview of the selected HEIs and presented a comparative analysis of the key elements for remote work guidelines and policies implemented by these HEIs. Chapter five concludes and provides recommendations for future research, based on the findings provided by chapter four.

#### **5.2 MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY**

This section presents the key findings from the previous chapter and provides a discussion of each policy element identified across the selected HEIs.

##### **5.2.1 UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND**

Based on the eligibility criteria and scope element, the findings indicate that Wits' policy applies to part-time and permanent employees. Moreover, the policy specifically states that it does not apply to tasks that cannot be performed remotely. Regarding working hours, employees are expected to adhere to the agreed working hours as per employee contract. In addition, the communication element is very crucial when working remotely, this policy highlights that employees should ensure that they are reachable during working hours.

As part of Wits' requirements for maintaining its assets, the line manager and employee should compile a list of equipment / devices that will be used by the employee while working remotely. In terms of the data security element, the policy refers to ensuring that software and anti-virus are updated. Moreover, in respect to performance expectations, management expects employees to perform their duties according to the employment contract. This means duties remain the same when employees work remotely. Finally, to ensure that employees are working in a healthy environment, this policy highlights the importance of employees ensuring the environment that they will work in is safe and healthy.

##### **5.2.2 UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG**

Under the eligibility criteria, UJ's policy accommodates fixed-term, temporary and full-time employees. However, the policy highlights that remote work is not a benefit for employees, it is a management decision that provides an alternative method of fulfilling work requirements.

Therefore, employees are still expected to work the agreed hours as stipulated in their employment contracts, whether they are on or off campus. Remote work can lead to miscommunication hence, UJ's policy specifically indicates the communication channels that should be used when working remotely. In terms of equipment and technology support, this policy does not support employees with equipment when working remotely. Employees are expected to make use of their own devices. Furthermore, to maintain data security, the policy highlights that sensitive information stored on the devices should only be used for work related purposes. The policy further indicates that performance expectations should remain the same as agreed on the employment contract. Lastly, the policy did not include provisions related to work health, safety and well-being when working remotely, representing a gap compared to other institutions.

### 5.2.3 NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

The findings indicate that NMU's remote work guidelines apply to all employees who are eligible to work remotely, and the scope of these guidelines outlines which employees need to work remotely as well as how they should communicate. Additionally, the guidelines highlight that NMU has the right to decide on whether an employee is permitted or required to work remotely. Regarding working hours while working remotely, line managers are responsible for managing employees' working hours. Furthermore, the guidelines emphasise that employees should dress professional when communicating with colleagues and clients via video, ensuring the background is clear. Furthermore, line managers should run a regular morning check update, this can be done daily or weekly to keep employees on track and communicate important information.

These guidelines highlight that NMU will only provide support to employees with laptops, modems and ICT support, while employees will ensure that they have printers, ink cartridges etc. Regarding data security, employees are required to familiarise themselves with the university's ICT policies on how to protect data. To ensure that employees are performing well while working remotely, the findings revealed that line managers should communicate with employees regarding the performance expectations. Lastly the findings revealed that it is the responsibility of the line manager to check up on the well-being of an employee.

### 5.2.4 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

To be eligible for working remotely, the findings from UniSA's policy revealed that an employee does not need to formally request to work remotely. However, a working from home

form should be completed prior working remotely to ensure safe working conditions are established. In relation to working hours, the policy highlights that the working hours of employees are to remain the same when working remotely. Moreover, the policy emphasises the importance of effective communication between employees and line managers, encouraging both parties to discuss how regular communication will be maintained. The policy further indicates that a laptop will be provided to employees to work effectively, and the equipment provided by the university will be returned at the end of remote work. Prior to engaging with remote work activities, employees must complete the cyber security training package, ensure that the remote work location is appropriate to work, and comply with the safety and well-being and cyber security principles. Additionally, to ensure that employees are being productive, the findings under the performance expectations show that line managers should monitor and track the employees' performance. Lastly, regarding work health, safety and well-being, the policy highlights that, employees should maintain a healthy and safe environment while working remotely.

#### 5.2.5 KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

Based on the eligibility criteria, the findings state that consultants and contractors that are not on King's payroll are excluded from this policy. In terms of working hours employees are to ensure that they obey the terms and conditions of the employment contract. Remote work is dependent on effective communication, thus the policy highlights that employees should ensure to be contactable during working hours. King's College policy indicates that the required equipment to work remotely will be provided to employees. Additionally, as remote work depends on stable internet, the policy states that employees are responsible to ensure that the Wi-Fi in their remote locations is efficient to work. King's College policy further indicates that taking precautionary measures when sharing and accessing data is important when working remotely, thus staff members must take necessary precautions when processing, sharing or accessing data remotely and make use of mutli-factor authentication to access systems. Furthermore, the findings indicate that monitoring the employee's performance ensures that tasks are completed on time hence line managers should keep track of the employees' performance. Lastly, working in a healthy environment is important hence the policy highlights that there are well-being pages that employees can read through.

### 5.2.6 UNIVERSITY OF YORK

The findings of the eligibility criteria in this policy show that it applies to all employees except for the roles that cannot be performed remotely. Regarding the working hours element, the policy specifies that employees should be present on campus at least once a week. The policy also highlights the communication channels that should be used namely, Google Meet, Zoom meetings, emails and other informal channels. The university ensures to provide its employees with the necessary equipment when working remotely. Furthermore, the findings show that employees are to take necessary precautions when working in a public space and adhere to ICT policies. In terms of performance expectations, line managers and employees should agree on the roles and duties that should be performed effectively. Lastly, the university provides resources to employees to assist with maintaining their well-being when working remotely.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, there is a need for improvement for remote work guidelines and policies in HEIs. HEIs should clearly clarify which duties can be performed remotely. Lack of clear guidelines or decisions on who can work remotely can come across as biased or irrational in the absence of clear criteria. Clear eligibility requirements enhance fairness by ensuring that all employees receive the same treatment and evaluation criteria. Additionally, the policies should establish official communication channels to use for remote work, this is important because it promotes clear communication and maintains professionalism. These policies should emphasise to line managers doing a weekly check in, to ensure that employees efforts are consistent with departmental goals and institutional priorities. Lastly, digital fluency is essential for remote work hence, the policy should include offering training on digital tools and platforms. Understanding these tools facilitates smooth cooperation regardless of location and increases productivity and provides efficient operations and learning experiences in HEIs.

### 5.4 CONCLUSION

Based on the objectives that were outlined in Chapter one under section 1.3. The first objective was conducting a review of remote work guidelines and policies implemented in HEIs internationally and in South Africa. The research strategy that was used to achieve this objective was archival research. The second objective was to identify HEIs, both internationally and in South Africa, that have implemented remote work guidelines and policies. The six HEIs include three international and three in South Africa. These HEIs were identified in Chapter four. The third objective was to analyse the remote work guidelines and

policies adopted by these HEIs. The analysis revealed that these guidelines and policies were similar to each other in terms of how they were structured. The fourth objective was to identify the issues of remote work guidelines and policies that are included in the HEIs. The findings revealed that there were six key issues of remote that were included in these guidelines and policies.

In conclusion, the remote work guidelines and policies in the selected HEIs, both internationally and in South Africa showed that they share common features in terms of the key issues that are included. However, in the context of HEIs in South Africa, UJ indicated that employees should ensure that they have the necessary equipment for remote work. Similarly, NMU highlighted that it will only provide employees with necessary equipment such as laptop and technical support. While employees will be responsible for purchasing inks, papers, printers etc. In terms of the well-being element, UJ was the only HEIs that did not include this element in the remote work policy while it is an important aspect to include when employees are working remotely.

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## ANNEXURE 1: LEARNING AGREEMENT



### FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES

#### LEARNING AGREEMENT BETWEEN STUDY LEADER AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENT FOR BCOM HONS MINI-TREATISE QUALIFICATIONS

The aim of this learning agreement is to provide postgraduate students and their study leaders an opportunity to develop a sound and productive working plan. This document should be read in conjunction with the following Nelson Mandela University Policy documents:

- The General Prospectus
- Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences Prospectus
- University Code of Ethics Policy
- Policy on Intellectual Property
- Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism

These documents are available on the Nelson Mandela University's website (<http://my.mandela.ac.za/default.asp?id=308&IRCno=>)

The Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences requires all postgraduate students and their study leader(s) to complete a learning agreement. Postgraduate students and their study leader(s) should discuss the issues outlined in this agreement, to have clarity and consistency regarding the conduct of the Postgraduate student and study leader. The document should be signed in each other's physical presence.

The postgraduate student and study leader should keep a copy of this learning agreement, and a copy must be sent to the module coordinator (Shelley.Farrington@mandela.ac.za).

#### PART A: DETAILS OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENT, STUDY LEADER(S) AND QUALIFICATION

<b>NAME &amp; SURNAME:</b>	Nangamso Anyikwa
<b>STUDENT NUMBER:</b>	214352137
<b>QUALIFICATION:</b>	BCom Honours Business Management
<b>YEAR OF REGISTRATION:</b>	2025
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Department of Business Management
<b>STUDY LEADER:</b>	Ms E. Kobese & Prof J. Krüger

#### PART B: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POSTGRADUATE STUDENT AND STUDY LEADER(S)

##### • POSTGRADUATE STUDENT:

As a postgraduate candidate, the student is expected to apply him- or herself to meeting the following reasonable responsibilities.

The postgraduate Student accepts and undertake the following responsibilities:

DESCRIPTION	INITIAL
Complete all the required components of the academic programme as stipulated.	N.A
Plan and execute the research study as agreed to with the guidance of the study leader (and co-study leader, where applicable).	N.A

Ensure that the research proposal (Chapter 1-3) is submitted at the stipulated date.	N.A
Adhere to the principles of accepted safety and health standards, ethical research practice as per Nelson Mandela University Code of Conduct for Researchers (IRC 404.01), Policy on Research Ethics (IRC 404.02), specific codes of the discipline (where applicable) and conventions regarding plagiarism as per Nelson Mandela Policy for the Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism (IRC 305.04).	N.A
Make regular appointments with study leader(s) to update study leaders(s) on progress or any difficulties encountered in executing the academic project as planned to ensure timeous remedial action where required.	N.A
Keep written record of supervision sessions and the decisions agreed to.	N.A
Submit regular outputs from the academic project to ensure effective guidance and input by study leader(s).	N.A
Ensure that written work submitted has been proofread and of an acceptable academic standard.	N.A
Ensure that the necessary amendments or revisions decided upon with study leader(s) are made regularly and resubmitted as agreed for further guidance.	N.A
Take responsibility for the final production of the treatise for examination and final submission at the specified dates.	N.A
Submit a manuscript to the study leader prior to the time of the approval of examiner reports (for purpose of awarding the doctoral degree).	N.A
The postgraduate student has read all the relevant strategic and policy documents related to their relevant qualification.	N.A
The postgraduate student has familiarised him- or herself with the internet-based plagiarism detection service; Turnitin software.	N.A
The postgraduate student endeavours to partake in workshops and training related to the research project	N.A

#### STUDY LEADER / CO-STUDY LEADER:

The responsibilities outlined below are reasonable expectations of academics or any other persons who are undertaking the supervision of candidates.

The study leader(s) accepts and undertake the following responsibilities:

DESCRIPTION	INITIAL
Clarify respective roles of student, study leader, and co-study leader (where relevant) to ensure that student and study leader (s) are clear about channels of communication as well as expectations. Preferably such clarification should be contained in a study leader or learning agreement	EK & JK
Confer or make contact with the student regularly (minimum once a month) to provide academic guidance to ensure the development of research skills and competencies relevant to the discipline and the specific study, and to ensure adherence to university requirements and/or discipline standards.	EK & JK
Monitor progress of the student and submit reports on student progress as required by the university and by relevant scholarship funding bodies.	EK & JK
Keep a record of supervision sessions and provide feedback, within the timeframe agreed upon, to enable student progress.	EK & JK
Study leaders must maintain an adherence to accepted safety and health standards, as well as ethical research practice as per Nelson Mandela University Code of Conduct for Researchers (IRC 404.01), Policy on Research Ethics (IRC 404.02), specific codes of the discipline (where applicable) and conventions regarding plagiarism as per Nelson Mandela Policy for the Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism (IRC 305.04) and advise their students to maintain these standards as well.	EK & JK
Provide the relevant information to the student so that the candidate submits the treatise for examination and final submission on the correct date and format.	EK & JK

The study leader(s) to consult Turnitin report submitted by the student to the internet-based plagiarism detection service; Turnitin software.	EK & JK
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**PART C: TERMS OF LEARNING AGREEMENT**

<b>FREQUENCY OF COMMUNICATION</b>			
The contact details of the study leader(s) were provided to the postgraduate student.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>YES</b> X</td> <td><b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	<b>YES</b> X	<b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>YES</b> X	<b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/>		
Specify frequency and communication channel for meetings (i.e. telephone, email, face-to-face).	Every two weeks via email or in person (depends on feedback to be provided)		
In case of the appointment of a co-study leader(s), how will meetings and communication between all be organised?	N/A		
Specify who is responsible for scheduling meetings and how far in advance these meetings should be scheduled.	Student or supervisor – depends on what needs to be discussed		
Specify the procedure for changing the meeting date and time.	Communication via email preferably 24 hours prior to schedule meeting		
Specify frequency and duration of meetings (approx.).	Every two weeks; 30 minutes max		
Specify who will set the agenda and take notes.	Student or supervisor – depends on what needs to be discussed and who requested the meeting		
Clarify whether there will be any expectation regarding regular email communication.	Acknowledgement of emails sent		
Indicate the availability of communication of study leader during period of research and/or ordinary leave.	Student will be informed of leave period and arrangements will be made prior to leave period in order to assist student if needed during leave period		
List the roles, responsibilities of study leader, co- study leader(s) and student.	As per roles and responsibilities indicated in the EBML410 study guide sections 1.4 to 1.7.		
<b>Comments: None</b>			
<b>RESEARCH PLAN / TIMEFRAME</b>			
Specify the research plan and timeframe	31 March Draft 1 Matrix 14 April Draft 2 Matrix 22 April Final Matrix 5 May Draft 1 Chapters 1 to 3 12 May Draft 2 Chapters 1 to 3 19 May Final Chapters 1 to 3 20 May – 20 July – search for articles (min 50) 21 July Draft 1 Chapter 4 4 Aug Draft 2 Chapter 4 18 Aug Final Chapter 4 1 Sept Draft 1 Chapter 5 15 Sept Draft 2 Chapter 5 29 Sept Full mini-treatise – final review 13 Oct Full mini-treatise – for assessment 20 Oct Full mini-treatise – for moderation		
Specify how changes to the research plan / timeframe will be dealt with.	Supervisor in consultation with the student will make the necessary changes to ensure completion on time		
Was the postgraduate student informed of the timeframes	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>YES</b> X</td> <td><b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	<b>YES</b> X	<b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>YES</b> X	<b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/>		
Specify remedial action if schedule is not adhered to?	Follow up emails will be sent and if needed, the module coordinator will be requested to intervene.		
<b>Comments: None</b>			

<b>SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN MATERIAL AND FEEDBACK</b>		
Specify how often written work should be submitted to the study leader(s).	Submissions as per the timeframe given	
Specify the timeframe for feedback.	Feedback to be given at the end of the week of submission	
Specify remedial action if feedback agreement is not adhered to?	Supervisor in consultation with the student will make the necessary changes to ensure completion on time	
<b>ETHICS APPROVAL</b>		
	YES	NO
The postgraduate student was informed that all research projects require ethical approval?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
The postgraduate student was informed that it is his/her responsibility to apply for ethics?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Comments:</b>		
<b>INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY</b>		
	YES	NO
The postgraduate student was informed that all intellectual property resulting from research conducted for postgraduate degrees, including all publications, is governed by the Intellectual Property Policy (IRC 401.01)	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
The student was informed that the intellectual property rights resulting from a postgraduate's research shall vest in the University	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Comments: None</b>		


The **STUDENT** and the **STUDY LEADER** confirms that:

1. They have read and understood this Learning Agreement,
2. They agree to accept its content for the duration of the study period as per the qualification stipulated above.

**SIGNATURES:**

Student:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 24/04/2025

Study leader:  \_\_\_\_\_

Co-study leader:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date 24 April 2025

## ANNEXURE 2: ETHICAL CLEARANCE (FORM E)



### FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES

### DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATION FOR HONOURS TREATISE (non-publication route)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- Should be completed by study leader and student.
- Must be signed off by the student, study leader and HOD.
- Submit the completed and signed form to the module coordinator who will submit to Mrs [Kim.Alexander@mandela.ac.za](mailto:Kim.Alexander@mandela.ac.za).
- Please ensure that a summary of the research methodology section of the treatise is attached to this form (*Complete Annexure A to this Form*).
- **Please note that by following this ethics route, the study will NOT be allocated an ethics clearance number.**

#### SECTION A – STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

- The student acknowledges that their research project is for academic qualification purposes only. As such, the research report or any sections thereof **may not be published**.
- The student also acknowledges that their research project **will be a desktop study** and will **make use of publicly available documents or secondary data**. No human subjects will be involved in the study as primary sources of data.

Secondary data, in this instance, refers to data that was collected and processed by someone else for some other purpose but is now being used by the researcher for another reason (Tripathy, 2013). Research utilising secondary data that both exists and has been collected in a public, academic database, for example Google Scholar, is considered desktop research, and generally does not require full ethical approval (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

#### SECTION B – STUDENT AND RESEARCH PROJECT DETAILS

Student name & surname	Nangamso Anyikwa
Student number	214352137
Title of treatise	A systematic literature review on remote work policies in Higher Education
Qualification	BCom Honours Business Management
Department	Department of Business Management
Study leader	Ms E. Kobese & Prof J. Kruger

## SECTION C – ETHICS CRITERIA

	<i>(Please tick the appropriate block)</i>	YES	NO
1.	Is there any risk of harm, embarrassment of offence, however slight or temporary, to the participant, third parties or to the communities at large?		X
2.	Is the study based on a research population defined as ‘vulnerable’ in terms of age, physical characteristics and/or disease status?		X
2.1	Are subjects/participants/respondents of your study:		
2.1.1	Children under the age of 18?		X
2.1.2	NMU staff?		X
2.1.3	NMU students?		X
2.1.4	The elderly/persons over the age of 60?		X
2.1.5	A sample from an institution (e.g. hospital/school)?		X
2.1.6	Handicapped (e.g. mentally or physically)?		X
3.	Does the data that will be collected require consent of an institutional authority for this study? (An institutional authority refers to an organisation that is established by government to protect vulnerable people)		X
3.1	Are you intending to access participant data from an existing, stored repository (e.g. school, institutional or university records)?		X
4.	Will the participant’s privacy, anonymity or confidentiality be compromised?		X
4.1	Are you administering a questionnaire/survey that:		
4.1.1	Collects sensitive/identifiable data from participants?		X
4.1.2	Does not guarantee the anonymity of the participant?		X
4.1.3	Does not guarantee the confidentiality of the participant and the data?		X
4.1.4	Will offer an incentive to respondents to participate, i.e. a lucky draw or any other prize?		X
4.1.5	Will create doubt whether sample control measures are in place?		X
5.	Do you wish to publish any research output (i.e. article) from this study?		X

*Please note that if **ANY** of the questions above have been answered in the affirmative (**YES**) the student will need to complete the full ethics clearance form (MEOS REC-H application) and submit it with the*

The student hereby certifies that he/she has given his/her research careful ethical consideration and full ethics approval is not required.

## SECTION D – INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED INTO THE RESEARCH REPORT

*(The section below should be edited and aligned to the specifics of the study)*

### 1. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study will follow the ethical research considerations that apply to all research in the social sciences, which are defined as moral rules and professional codes of conduct to the collection, analysis, reporting, and publication of information about research subjects (Pietilä, Nurmi, Halkoaho & Kyngäs, 2020:49). The research will, at all times, adhere to the following ethical considerations:

#### 2. Informed Consent

Where data is freely available on the Internet, books or other public forum, permission for further use and analysis is implied, however, the ownership of the original data must be acknowledged (Tripathy, 2013).

### 3. Anonymity and Confidentiality

To ensure privacy and to protect individuals or institutions within the secondary data, a privacy plan or protocol will be in place to protect the confidentiality of the users. This may include removing identifiable information, securely storing the data and removing any sensitive information prior to distribution of the outcome of the study (where needed).

### 4. Action and Competence of Researchers

The study will be undertaken in an ethically correct manner. Under no circumstances would the researcher in this study make judgments about data, falsify data or plagiarise.

### 5. Respect of Intellectual Property

Intellectual property is the creation arising from intellectual activity, and this study will acknowledge and reference all ideas and sources used in the study.

### 6. Beneficence

The study topic being researched is for degree purposes only and will not be published.

### 7. Non-Maleficence

Non-maleficence makes sure that what is being done is not harmful and that harm is not done by omitting care or treatment. This study will make sure that no harm will come to anyone connected to the study. This body of work and the documents consulted will also adhere to the Protection of Personal Information Act (PoPIA). POPIA governs the collection, processing and sharing of personally identifiable information (PII).

#### 7.1 Applying for ethical consideration

The researcher will apply for ethical consideration from the **Department of Business Management** (Nelson Mandela University) to have the right to research within the intended domain. The research process, in particular data collection, may only be conducted once ethical clearance has been granted, i.e., the ethics form has been signed by the student, the study leader and the Head of Department.

## SECTION E – SIGNATURES AND DATES



STUDENT

24/04/2025

DATE



STUDY LEADER

24/04/2025

DATE

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

24 / 04 / 2025

DATE

## REFERENCES

Cilliers, L. & Viljoen, K. (2021). A framework of ethical issues to consider when conducting internet-based research. *South African Journal of Information Management*, 23(1).

Creswell, J.W. & Poth, C.N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*, Sage, London.

Pietilä, A. M., Nurmi, S. M., Halkoaho, A. & Kyngäs, H. (2020). Qualitative research: Ethical considerations. In *The application of content analysis in nursing science research*, Cham. Springer, 49-69.

Tripathy, J.P. (2013). Secondary Data Analysis: Ethical Issues and Challenges. *Iran Journal of Public Health*. 42(12): 1478–1479.

## ANNEXURE A: BCOM HONOURS TREATISE – SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Please provide a summary of the research design and methodology employed in the study by completing the following template.

<b>Treatise details</b>	<b>Title of treatise</b>
	A review on remote work policies in Higher Education
<b>Background to the study</b>	<b>Introduction and background</b>
	<p>Higher education institutions (HEIs) have a social responsibility of providing guidance to faculty, administrators, staff and students, and the decisions that are made have an impact on the economic, social and environmental elements of the communities (Bantanur, Mukherjee &amp; Shankar, 2015:323). According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2025), HEIs have a unique ability to acquire skills and knowledge, as well as the capability to gather resources for education and provide learning opportunities to a wide range of communities. This includes a significant shift from merely training young secondary school pupils to encouraging learners from diverse backgrounds to pursue higher education at various ages and stages of their personal and professional lives (UNESCO, 2025).</p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the nature of employment, forcing individuals from different industries to shift to remote work (Parham &amp; Rauf, 2020:385). HEIs are not an exception, and the rapid transition has had a significant impact on all key stakeholders (Parham &amp; Rauf, 2020:385). Swarts (2023) study defines remote work as a work arrangement in which employees work outside of the usual environment, by using technology to communicate with colleagues and complete work-related tasks. Remote work requires online communication tools namely video conferencing, email and messaging applications (Karle, 2024). This work arrangement relies on information and communication technology (ICT) and steady power supply to be operational. Remote work is not a new concept; however, the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown procedures have led to the trend of enabling employees to work remotely (De', Pandey &amp; Pal, 2021:1). The evidence in literature indicates that countries that invested in ICT prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, were able to cope with the shift to remote work during the lockdowns and develop support mechanisms for academics and administration staff (Li &amp; Lalani, 2020). However, countries such as South Africa with poor ICT and electricity infrastructure were slow to adopt or failed to migrate to remote work, this led to significant challenges for the institutions (Hlatshwayo, 2022:2).</p> <p>The sudden shift to remote work created challenges for HEIs, where both academic and administrative staff struggled to adjust to new methods of teaching, engaging students, conducting research, and managing related responsibilities (Parham &amp; Rauf, 2020:385). In order to manage effective performance to staff members, management practices have had to adjust to the new norm of remote work (Mabaso &amp; Manuel, 2024:2). According to Saurombe and Barkhuizen (2020:86), managing performance is essential in a workplace, this assists line managers and organisations to assess whether workers are meeting the standards required to achieve towards the organisation's goals. In the context of HEIs, the pandemic has impacted the</p>

	<p>working environment particularly regarding the rise in remote work arrangement. Therefore, these challenges have revealed the critical need for HEIs to develop and implement structured remote work policies that effectively support staff (Chiromo, Khosa &amp; Kalitanyi, 2023:170).</p>
	<p><b>Problem statement</b></p> <p>Historically, HEIs play an important role in transforming societies through training, skill development and promotion of positive human behaviour (Vahdati, Naghayi, Vaezi &amp; Sharifzadeh, 2023:353). However, the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, a global health crisis, affected different spheres of society including HEIs (Bozkurt, 2022:2). In response to the outbreak of the pandemic, governments around the globe instituted various lockdown measures to slow the spread of the virus and flatten the curve (Bozkurt, 2022:2). Strict social distancing measures were implemented and required HEIs to offer programs, courses and services off campus with no physical contact to avoid the spread of the virus between students, lecturers and administrative staff (Santandreu-Calonge, Connor, Hultberg, Shah &amp; Medina-Aguerrebera, 2022:19). Consequently, the teaching methods adopted by academics shifted from traditional face-to-face to remote teaching and learning (Bozkurt, 2022:2). A concern was that many academic staff lacked the required digital skills and had to undergo training to facilitate effective online learning (Sonn, Du Plesiss, Van Vuuren, Marais, Wagner &amp; Roman, 2021:3). Although some HEIs had invested in technological infrastructure these institutions still faced challenges due to limited technical readiness (Siddiquei &amp; Kathpal, 2021:812). However, these challenges brought by remote work did not affect academic staff only. Administrative staff in HEIs were also affected by the shift to remote work. These staff members play a crucial role in supporting and monitoring academic activities within HEIs (Garraiol, Freitas, Magalhaes &amp; Matias, 2022:2). During the pandemic, administrators had to adapt to working in a different environment while facing also facing numerous challenges. (Ndevu, 2023:27).</p> <p>The development and implementation of remote work policies in HEIs have presented both challenges and opportunities. According to Bond (202:192), these policies are essential for creating adaptive, effective, and efficient work environments. They must balance flexibility with accountability, allowing staff to perform the roles assigned to them effectively, while enhancing student engagement and success (Andrew, Cattan, Costa, Farquharson, Kraftman, Krutikova, Phimister &amp; Sevilla, 2020:4). In addition, it was noted that most of the public universities in South Africa were ill equipped because no policies were implemented for remote work apart from the University of South Africa (UNISA), which is an open-distance learning institution (Chiromo <i>et al.</i>, 2023:170). Therefore, this study seeks to review remote work guidelines and policies implemented in HEIs and highlight key issues where improvements may be needed to enhance remote work in these policies.</p>
<p><b>Objectives of the study</b></p>	<p><b>Primary objective</b></p> <p>The primary objective of this study is to conduct a review of remote work guidelines and policies implemented in HEIs, both internationally and in South Africa.</p> <p><b>Secondary objectives</b></p> <p>SO<sup>1</sup>: To identify HEIs, both internationally and in South Africa, that have implemented remote work guidelines or policies.</p> <p>SO<sup>2</sup>: To analyse the remote work guidelines or policies adopted by these HEIs.</p> <p>SO<sup>3</sup>: To identify the issues of remote work guidelines or policies that are included most in such guidelines and policies of the HEIs included in the analysis.</p>

	<p><b>Methodological objectives</b></p> <p>MO<sup>1</sup>: To conduct a literature review on remote work guidelines and policies, including defining the concepts, describing the importance thereof, identifying what these guidelines or policies should include, and the challenges of remote work.</p> <p>MO<sup>2</sup>: To provide the most suitable research methodology for guiding data collection and analysis to answer the main research question of this study.</p> <p>MO<sup>3</sup>: To analyse remote work guidelines and policies implemented in HEIs to identify the issues included in these guidelines and policies.</p> <p>MO<sup>4</sup>: To draw conclusions and recommendations based on the data analysis findings, highlighting issues to be included in remote work policies of HEIs in South Africa</p>
<b>Research design &amp; methodology</b>	<b>Research philosophy / Paradigm (positivism, interpretivism etc.)</b>
	Positivism paradigm
	<b>Approach to theory development (inductive, deductive, abductive)</b>
	Deductive research
	<b>Purpose of study (descriptive, exploratory, comparative)</b>
	Descriptive and reporting
	<b>Methodological choice (mono, multi, mixed methods)</b>
	Mixed method
	<b>Research approach (quantitative, qualitative, mixed)</b>
	Quantitative
<b>Data collection</b>	<b>Research strategy (SLR, literature review, archival research, case study)</b>
	Archival research.
	<b>Time dimension (cross-sectional, longitudinal)</b>
	Cross-sectional
<b>Data collection</b>	<b>Technique and procedures (desktop study / desk research)</b>
	Desk research using the data collection instrument that will populate what aspects were included in remote work policies or guidelines.
	<b>Search strategy: Data inclusion criteria</b>
	Monitoring study where journal articles published in English in accredited journals focusing on remote work, remote work guidelines and remote work policies will be considered to develop a data collection instrument.
	<b>Search strategy: Sources of data (databases, websites etc.)</b>
Databases: Google Scholar, Mendeley, and NMU online library database and accredited sources.	
	<b>Search strategy: Search terms or word strings</b>
	Remote work, remote work guidelines, flexible work, remote work policies, Higher Education Institutions
<b>Data analysis*</b>	<b>Data analysis techniques (content analysis, thematic analysis)</b>
	Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.
<b>Trustworthiness*</b>	<b>Quality criteria (credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability) (How will each of the aforementioned be ensured?)</b>
	Credibility – The objective of this research was to identify the aspects within the field of remote work found in adopted policies or guidelines followed that could assist with drafting remote work policies. The websites of universities (national and international) will be scrutinised. This ensured the credibility of this research since credible institutions are scrutinised.
	Transferability – In order to ensure that the context in which the research challenge originated is understood, Chapters One and Two provide a thorough and comprehensive description of the subject of this study.
	Dependability – Specific steps will be followed when doing the systematic

literature review.

Confirmability – A specific audit trail will be used which will record all the details of each article considered in this study. This will indicate that the inclusion criteria was applied strictly.

## REFERENCES

- Andrew, A., Cattan, S., Costa, M.C., Farquhason, C., Kraftman, L., Krutikova, L., Phimister, A. & Sevilla, A. 2020. *Inequalities in children's experiences of home learning during the COVID-19 lockdown in England*. Institute for Fiscal Studies. Available: <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/inequalities-childrens-experiences-home-learning-during-covid-19-lockdown-england> [Accessed 28 March 2025]
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- Vahdati, S., Naghavi, M.A.S., Vaezi, R. & Sharifzadeh, F. 2023. Discovering the antecedents of virtual leadership in universities and higher education institutions of Iran during Covid-19 pandemic: A qualitative study. *Journal of Management Development*, 42(5), 352-372.
- Garraio, C., Freitas, J.P., Magalhaes, S.I. & Matias, M. 2022. Work-Life conflict among Higher Education Workers' during COVID-19: A demands-resources approach. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 7, 1-11.
- Siddiquei, M.I. & Kathpal, S. 2021. Challenges of Online Teaching during COVID-19: An Exploratory Factor Analysis. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 3(5): 811–822.

## ANNEXURE 3: TURNITIN SUMMARY REPORT

### Nangamso Anyikwa Chapter 1-5

#### ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>15%</b> SIMILARITY INDEX	<b>8%</b> INTERNET SOURCES	<b>9%</b> PUBLICATIONS	<b>7%</b> STUDENT PAPERS
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#### PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	Submitted to Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Student Paper	<b>1%</b>
<b>2</b>	Submitted to University of South Africa Student Paper	<b>1%</b>
<b>3</b>	J. Broadbent, M. Bearman, D. Boud, P. Dawson. "Academics' intention to sustain new teaching practices after the COVID-19 pandemic: Examined through the theory of planned behaviour", Higher Education, 2024 Publication	<b>1%</b>
<b>4</b>	Mncedisi Christian Maphalala, Olufemi Timothy Adigun. "Academics' Experience of Implementing E-Learning in a South African Higher Education Institution", International Journal of Higher Education, 2020 Publication	<b>1%</b>

## ANNEXURE 4: EXAMPLE OF MENDELEY SCREENSHOT

The screenshot displays the Mendeley Reference Manager application window. The title bar reads "Mendeley Reference Manager" with standard window controls. Below the title bar is a menu bar with "File", "Edit", "Tools", and "Help". On the left is a sidebar with navigation options: "All References", "Recently Added", "Recently Read", "Favorites", "My Publications", "Unsorted", "Duplicates", and "Trash". Below these are sections for "COLLECTIONS" (with a "Create collection" link) and "GROUPS" (with a "Create group" link). The main area shows a table of "All References" with columns for checkboxes, authors, year, title, source, and a numerical value. The table contains 15 rows of reference data.

	AUTHORS	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	AD
<input type="checkbox"/>	Andrew, Alison; Cattan, Sa...		Institute for Fiscal Studies		9:3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mestry, Raj	2023	The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education institutions in So...	South African Journ...	9:3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maphalala, Mncedisi Chris...	2020	Academics' experience of implementing e-learning in a south african higher ...	International Journa...	9:3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hlatshwayo, Mondli	2022	Online Learning during the South African Covid-19 Lockdown: University St...	Education as Change	9:3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Salmi, Jamil	2020	COVID's Lessons for Global Higher Education Coping with the Present whil...		9:3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scott, Linda	2023	COVID-19, education and access to digital technologies: A case study of a ...	South African Journ...	9:3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shava, Elvin	2022	Reinforcing the Role of ICT in Enhancing Teaching and Learning Post-COVI...	Journal of Culture a...	9:3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sayed, Yusuf, Singh, Marc...		Evidence and education policy making in South Africa during Covid-19: Pro...		9:3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Okeke-Uzodike, Obianuju ...	2025	Resilience During Crisis: COVID-19 and the New Age of Remote Work in Hi...	Administrative Scie...	9:2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Santandreu Calonge, Davi...	2021	Contactless Higher Education: A SWOT Analysis of Emergency Remote Te...	Journal of Educatio...	9:2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ali, Wahab	2020	Online and Remote Learning in Higher Education Institutes: A Necessity in I...	Higher Education St...	9:2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vahdati, Soudabeh; Seyye...	2023	Discovering the antecedents of virtual leadership in universities and higher ...	Journal of Manage...	9:2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swarts, Ilze		Management practices supporting lecturing staff during remote working at a...		9:2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sonn, Inge K.; Du Plessis...	2021	Achievements and challenges for higher education during the covid-19 pan...	International Journa...	9:2

## **ANNEXURE 5: GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN WRITING PROCESS – USAGE DECLARATION**

According to Nelson Mandela University's Institutional Position Statement on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) (D\_71\_24\_(2025-02-07), the following are considered recommended uses and unacceptable uses of AI by students and staff.

### **Recommended uses:**

- Search engine
- Enhancing understanding
- Gaining insights
- Gathering information
- Clarifying concepts
- Critically evaluating information

### **Unacceptable uses:**

- Copy and paste generated intellectual work.
- Claiming a generated product (text, image, creation) as your own.
- Generating information for assessments, projects, and assignments, unless this is explicitly instructed by the academic, who has provided clear guidelines in the form of permissions and prohibitions as to the appropriate use thereof as part of an assessment designed around the use of AI.
- Used for unfair advantage – when you are determined to deceive and do not use something in an appropriate manner.
- Making use of AI and not appropriately referencing the sources represented in the generated text, image and/or other product.
- Makes use of AI and does not ensure that the sources represented in the generated text, image and/or other product are accurate and represent the actual work of existing sources.
- Generating information via AI that may or may not represent the intellectual work of another person, people or AI and thereafter making further use of AI to disguise this information and then present it as one's own.
- When you do not follow permissions and prohibitions provided in assessment guidelines.
- When you are not transparent about its use, do not reference and acknowledge your sources.

### **Student declaration:**

During the undertaking of preparing and writing this mini treatise,

I NANGAMSO ANYIKWA with student number 214352137 declare that (please tick the appropriate circle indicating whether you have used AI or not):

- I have not used AI in an unacceptable manner as described by Nelson Mandela University's Institutional Position Statement on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence.*

I further declare that *I have used* [NAME TOOL(s) / SERVICE] *in order to* [REASON(s)]. [LIST THE NAME AND REASON FOR USING EACH TOOL HERE]

.....  
Grammarly- To improve grammar

.....  
Mendeley- To add my references

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
I *also acknowledge* that I am ultimately responsible and accountable for the contents of this mini treatise.

- *I have not used AI at all* during the completion of my treatise.

SIGNATURE STUDENT:



DATE:

29 September 2025

**[NOTE:** Students must declare in their mini treatise the use or not of AI and AI-assisted technologies in the process of writing their treatise by completing this declaration statement. This statement must be included as an Appendix/Annexure in their mini treatise. AI and AI-assisted technologies do not include basic tools for checking grammar, spelling, references etc. Using AI and AI-assisted technologies in their mini treatise without completing this declaration amounts to academic dishonesty. Should AI and AI-assisted technologies not have been used in the process of writing, *the appropriate circle should be ticked*. Students should note that the use of AI is detected by Turnitin and in addition to this declaration a Turnitin report is required as an Appendix/Annexure to their mini treatise.