

## DISCONNECTING FROM WORK POLICY

**PURPOSE** In compliance with the *Employment Standards Act, 2000* and *Bill 27, Working for Workers Act, 2021*, the purpose of this Policy is to outline Brock University's commitment to supporting employees in balancing their working and personal lives and to encourage employees to disconnect from work outside of their working hours in accordance with and subject to this Policy.

**SCOPE** This Policy applies to all employees of Brock University.

If any provision of this Policy is found to be inconsistent with the provisions of a collective agreement, the collective agreement will prevail, unless the Policy provision is required by law, in which case the Policy provision will prevail.

**POLICY STATEMENT** Disconnecting from work is important for an individual's wellbeing, and helps employees achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance. Disconnecting from work means not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work outside of working hours including when working in an approved flexible work arrangement, such as remote work or working non-standard business hours.

### *Ability to Disconnect from Work*

An employee's ability to disconnect from work depends on the University's business and/or operational needs and the duties and obligations of the employee's position, subject to an employee's employment contract, applicable collective agreement and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the Employment Standards Act (ESA).

Nothing in the Policy precludes the University or other employees of the University from contacting colleagues, vendors/other third parties or other employees outside of what may be considered working hours or standard business hours, subject to any rights or entitlements the receiving colleague or employee may have under their employment contract,

applicable collective agreement and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA.

This Policy does not afford employees a “right to disconnect” beyond what is within their individual employment contract, applicable collective agreement, and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA, which may include rights or entitlements speaking to: hours of work and hours free from work, overtime pay, meal and/or rest periods, public holidays and public holiday pay, lieu time, and vacation.

### *University Obligations*

The University supports and aims to foster a workplace culture that promotes and values disconnecting from work and so will take steps to ensure that all employees, regardless of their place of work, are:

- informed of what their working hours are reasonably expected to be and are informed of the circumstances, if any, in which they will be expected to engage in work outside their working hours (e.g., employees who are on-call for operational, emergency, or health and safety reasons);
- not asked to exceed a 48-hour work week unless they have signed an Excess Hours of Work Agreement or as otherwise permitted under the ESA;
- able to take applicable meal breaks, rest periods, and hours free from work as required by law, contract, or applicable collective agreement language; and
- able to take vacation or other leave entitlements as required by law, contract, or applicable collective agreement language.

### *Employee Obligations*

The University expects all employees to comply with the following in the course of their work:

- co-operate fully with any applicable mechanism utilised by the University to record working time or update their working status (e.g., out-of-office messages) as applicable;
- be mindful of colleagues', vendors' and other third parties' working hours (e.g. whenever possible, by not routinely

emailing or calling outside of working hours or expecting answers or responses outside of working hours);

- notify their supervisor or manager, in writing, of any meal, rest, break, or hours free from work period (or other right or entitlement) which they feel they were entitled to but were unable to use due to performing work for the University on a particular occasion and why this occurred;
- speak with their supervisor or manager if they feel their workload is preventing them from being able to take meal, rest, break, or periods free from work that they are entitled to, or otherwise disconnect from work.

**COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING**

The University shall provide a copy of this Policy to each employee, regardless of their position within 30 calendar days of implementation. Should any changes be made to the Policy after its implementation, the University shall provide each employee of the University a copy of the revised Policy within 30 days of the changes being made.

The University shall provide a copy of this Policy to all new employees within 30 calendar days of the employee commencing employment with the University.

The University shall retain a copy of this Policy and any revised version of this Policy for a period of three years after it ceases to be in effect.

This Policy is under the jurisdiction of the Vice-President, Administration. The interpretation and application of this Policy is the responsibility of Human Resources.

Policy Owner:	Vice-President Administration
Policy Lead:	Associate Vice-President, Human Resources
Policy Classification:	Operational
Approval:	Approved by the Executive Team
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Related documents:	<i>Employment Standards Act, 2000</i> <i>Bill 27, Working for Workers Act, 2021</i>

