

CURTIN UNIVERSITY
PROJECT DELIVERY GUIDELINES

WORKPLACE GUIDELINES
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Curtin University

Details of revisions

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document provides guidance for the planning and design of professional and academic staff workspaces incorporating design objectives to create workplaces that are:

- contemporary
- collaborative
- flexible.

Similar requirements may apply to sessional staff, post-graduate students and higher-degree-by-research students.

These guidelines support the University's Greater Curtin and Academic Heart plans in creating a city of innovation with contemporary facilities.

As the workplace environment plays a significant role on business efficiency and effectiveness, Curtin encourages creative and flexible workplace designs that provide a range of spaces for individual focus, informal communication and collaboration to foster a more interactive and engaging workplace.

Workplace typologies could be described as:

- Cellular – typically enclosed offices with adjoining amenities
- Open plan – where multiple individual workstations share a single space without the use of dividing walls, and where there are associated collaborative facilities, individual work spaces and amenities
- Activity based – purpose-built areas for specific activities e.g. impromptu meeting areas, formal meeting spaces, project rooms, individual work spaces or breakout areas, offering more flexible working arrangements as users can choose the area of the work place that best suits the activities they need to perform

Curtin expects that new and refurbished workplaces may display the characteristics of all types and that they will be incorporated in a way that best suits the needs of the user stakeholders, the nature of work being undertaken and future developments of the University.

2 DESIGN OBJECTIVES

2.1 CONTEMPORARY

The contemporary workplace is to respond to both the needs of the user stakeholders and the University, and be economical and space efficient.

The contemporary workplace will:

- provide academic and professional staff with a work environment that reflects current practices and preferences
- provide a variety of work modes e.g. individual, shared, grouped, informal
- be technology rich
- be considerate of the wellbeing of people
- easily adapt to the next generation of employees and users.

WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Flexible work practices as part of current work culture must be supported by flexible and agile work environments. Recognising that people want to work in different ways leads to designing alternative spaces in which to work, and by creating different working areas within the workplace, people have the freedom and flexibility to work where they want, when they want.

Providing such areas as free-form breakout spaces, screened lounge style booths and quiet rooms creates a variety of spaces and destinations to work and to inhabit.

Work environments are to accommodate a range and nature of work activities and remain flexible to a person's particular method and preference for working, yet are to be flexible and able to adapt to the growth, movement and changes in function and technology.

WORK MODES

Workplace design must respond to the type of work being undertaken and where it is undertaken. It should include spaces to support work where a high level of collaboration and interaction is necessary and where more focussed individual work is undertaken. For activity-based work, a person's physical location will depend on concentration/collaboration needs, what team members need to be consulted and their locations, and the type of work being done. Selecting from a variety of working environments that best align to the task being undertaken, these are increasingly no longer dedicated to one person's use, but available for use by many and for a variety of purposes. Options include individual, shared, grouped and informal work spaces.

TECHNOLOGY-RICH

Technology is integral when designing workspaces as it drives more mobile, social and collaborative patterns of work behaviours. Wireless technology has transformed traditional workspaces creating untethered areas in which to work, engage and socialise.

Central to work efficiency, people must easily be able to interact with their technology tools in order to perform, collaborate and share information – technology must fit the requirements for the workspaces and users.

Connecting people through technology involves the fundamental need for basic power and online access, the use of sophisticated video conferencing and collaboration tools and current features such as 'plug and play'. These require complementary furniture and equipment that allow for quick set-up and connections.

WELLBEING OF PEOPLE

Curtin is mindful that the health and wellbeing of employees should be central to the work environment and that by creating a comfortable environment that supports work styles will provide a positive impact on health, happiness, and productivity in the workplace.

The use of flexible and ergonomic furniture e.g. sit-stand desks, and considering comfort factors such as airflow, lighting and natural light all increase the productive wellbeing of people. Further, consider support spaces in which users can collaborate or seek privacy and amenity spaces e.g. carer's room, prayer/reflection room.

Biophilic design is a concept that draws inspiration from nature, creating a connection to the outdoors using natural objects, elements, materials, forms and patterns as a vehicle for design.

Consider the location of functioning areas such as storage, rest areas and breakout spaces with regard to location of people. Incorporate social spaces that encourage impromptu interactions, social engagement and a feeling of community.

2.2 COLLABORATIVE

A collaborative workplace brings people together from a range of locations to develop and enhance networks and partnerships, and build positive relationships within the work environment.

The collaborative workplace will:

- encourage informal communication and socialisation
- enable short-term relocation of people
- provide opportunities to bring people to engage and work together, from within and outside the University, and with supportive technology.

COMMUNICATION

Spaces that encourage socialisation and diverse interaction, casual mingling, impromptu meetings and cross-faculty chatter provide informal engagement opportunities. These spaces should be easily located and readily accessible by all with accompanying supportive features and amenities and should include formal and informal areas.

Using low-height partitions and considered placement of shared facilities such as resource areas, amenity areas and breakout spaces encourages collaboration and social participation and brings with it a broader sense of community.

RELOCATION OF PEOPLE

People collaborating on short-term activities require spaces that meet their needs; including spaces that are appropriate in size and suitable for their activities. Spaces are to be flexible to accommodate small and large groups, with supportive technology to enable quick connections for equipment/devices and contain furniture that is flexible and multi-use such as movable desks and shared bench spaces.

COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Reinforcing the concept from the Academic Heart for 'enabling open, collaborative workplaces', design shall incorporate flexible, open-plan spaces that encourage and support brainstorming, peer critiques, free exchanges of ideas and enable cross-faculty collaboration and interaction.

Creating a campus community requires ease of collaboration and interaction with people from on campus or offsite, visitors, and external agencies/organisations that is facilitated by appropriate spaces, resources and technology.

People working on campus require formal and informal spaces for collaborative activity that is to be supported by appropriate technology and furniture, with privacy and acoustic requirements based on their needs. For people who work in a variety of locations, virtual collaborative spaces require supporting technology and/or work spaces.

2.3 FLEXIBLE

The flexible workplace is accommodating of new, altered and changing needs of the user stakeholders.

The flexible workplace will allow:

- easy movement of furniture and equipment
- spaces to change to meet University requirements
- spaces to change to meet people and user stakeholder needs.

FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

Modular components that can be mixed, stacked and moved around, offering innumerable combinations for a dynamic and collaborative workplace, and the use of standardised furniture that is interchangeable will contribute to flexible workspaces that readily allow for change. These are easy to reconfigure to accommodate additional people with minimal disruption and within very short timeframes.

Additional design considerations for future proofing the workplace include an agile working environment which has a high level of flexibility with desks and hot desks, storage and room/area dividers on castors/wheels.

CHANGING NEEDS OF UNIVERSITY, PEOPLE AND USER STAKEHOLDERS

With evolving business culture, current design focus is now on innovative ideas to provide efficient furniture and layouts that meet modern needs and responds to both the current and future needs of the individual and university. This has influenced flexible and efficient spaces that will allow the workplace environment to be moved and altered to bring people, processes, connectivity and technology together.

Flexible work arrangements and high project activity have impacted the efficiency of workspaces with the focus now on the adaptability of these spaces to accommodate varying numbers of people and the nature of work being undertaken.

3 CURTIN REQUIREMENTS

3.1 DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN

Curtin University believes in creating equitable and inclusive access for people with a disability to its facilities, services, events and academic programs on all its Western Australian campuses.

The *Universal Design Guideline* has been developed to reflect a commitment to equity and inclusion for all by embedding Universal Design principles into project planning, design and delivery guidelines. Consultant architects, designers and engineers should make themselves familiar with the particular requirements of the *Universal Design Guideline* before responding to a project brief.

3.2 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Curtin University is committed to providing and maintaining high standards of health and safety in the workplace and will:

- ensure compliance with relevant legislation and the University's Health and Safety Management System
- promote an organisational culture that adopts health and safety as an integral component of its management philosophy
- ensure that health and safety is part of the business planning processes and that it is adequately resourced by all areas
- maintain an effective mechanism for consultation and communication of health and safety matters
- maintain an effective process for resolving health and safety issues and managing health and safety risks
- provide appropriate health and safety training
- regularly review health and safety performance to monitor the effectiveness of health and safety actions and ensure health and safety targets and objectives are met.

A copy of our Health and Safety Management Standards can be found at:

<https://healthandsafety.curtin.edu.au/local/docs/HManagementStandards.pdf>

3.3 SUSTAINABILITY AT CURTIN

It is Curtin University policy that all new or refurbishment projects on site should support its status as Australia's first university to achieve a 5-star Green Star – Communities rating from the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA). Designers should understand and incorporate the Green Star criteria into designs and specifications in order to maintain and enhance Curtin's Green Star status. Information on the criteria can be found in the *PDG Green Star – Communities Design Guidelines*.

4 REFERENCES

4.1 CONTACTS

The requirements for the design of new and refurbished workplaces will be project-specific and will need to accommodate the latest Curtin University design objectives. Designers should ensure that they establish early communications with all the relevant project stakeholders and obtain briefings on the desired outcomes.

For Curtin University workplaces, the Responsible Officer will engage the following stakeholders:

- the department or faculty for which the workplace is being designed
- Properties, Facilities & Development – Portfolio Manager, Campus and Workplace
- Properties, Facilities & Development – Portfolio Manager, Interiors and Minor Projects.

4.2 RECENT EXAMPLES

Recent projects to construct new workspaces or to refurbish and repurpose existing spaces may be illustrative of future designs. Recent projects and outcomes are described in the following documents:

4.2.1 CURTIN CONNECT WORKPLACE REFURBISHMENT 2017

The Curtin Connect project demonstrates how contemporary, collaborative and flexible workplaces can be created in existing facilities, often adjacent to occupied premises and enabling continuous and interdependent use of the spaces.

Schematic design drawings can be found in the references on the P F & D website at <https://properties.curtin.edu.au/workingwithus/guidelines.cfm>. The lead design consultant is Geyer, the CU contact is Portfolio Manager, Interiors and Minor Projects.

4.2.2 B105 WORKPLACE REFURBISHMENT – OFFICE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING - 2014

The B105 project demonstrates how contemporary, collaborative and flexible workplaces can be created in a previously cellular office environment with limited amenity and natural light and ventilation.

Schematic design drawings can be found in the references on the P F & D website at <https://properties.curtin.edu.au/workingwithus/guidelines.cfm>. The lead design consultant is James Christou Design Studio, the CU contact is Portfolio Manager, Teaching and Learning.

4.2.3 B501 ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF WORKPLACE REFURBISHMENT 2013

The B501 project demonstrates how contemporary, collaborative and flexible workplaces can be created through the re-planning and refurbishment of a whole building

Schematic design drawings can be found in the references on the P F & D website at <https://properties.curtin.edu.au/workingwithus/guidelines.cfm>. The lead design consultant is John Flower Architects, the CU contact is Portfolio Manager, Teaching and Learning.

4.3 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Title
PDG Green Star – Communities Design Guidelines
Universal Design Guideline – Built Form