



Cancellation of the provision of mobile phone hardware, voice and data services Frequently Asked Questions and guidance

What is the change?

UNSW Sydney has made the recent decision to cease the provision of mobile phone hardware, voice and data services except for limited circumstances which are captured in the exemption approval process.

Staff who are approved via the exemption process to retain a UNSW device or service can still utilise the enterprise Optus account however account holders will need to self-serve most requests directly with Optus.

Under the exemption process, staff may also be reimbursed for their personal service if they wish to use this for work purposes. (more detail below)

Staff will however need to organise the purchasing of physical handsets at the local level and manage any warranty, maintenance and support themselves.

Approved exemptions

Exemption Process - The exemption process will allow a limited number of teams and staff to apply for an exemption to retain a mobile phone/service which is paid for by the University. Though these categories are broadly worded the practical application of these in the approval process will be very stringent and approvals will be permitted only in very limited circumstances. Staff that fall into one of the following categories will be considered:

- **Business/work requirements:** Where a role inherently requires a mobile phone to appropriately conduct duties on behalf of UNSW Sydney. A phone should be an essential requirement/tool for the position. Staff should have carefully considered and trialled MS Teams where possible to confirm this is not an appropriate solution for their work needs.
- **Incident management:** This is specifically for staff/teams who play a role in managing key hazards and risks on and off campus where a phone is required to ensure they are mitigating against key hazards that could affect staff, students, and the broader UNSW community. This typically should not include staff or teams who are managing risks on campus during work hours where MS Teams would be suitable to contact internal and external stakeholders when needed.
- **Emergency role:** This is where staff are the first point of contact for emergency services in their local area where UNSW Security would not be the first point of contact to resolve an emergency.
- **Research:** This is specifically seeking approval for the use of operating funds to purchase a phone solely for the purpose for research needs. Under this scenario a device/service should not belong to a particular individual for use outside of that research purpose.
- **External Funds/ Grants:** Staff who would like to purchase phone hardware and data services under an external fund may do so *without formal approval* via this process. The purchasing should however fall within the conditions of the grant.

A mobile phone exemption approval form has been developed for those who genuinely require a phone to fulfil their work duties in line with the categories above. This form can be found [here](#).

Mobile Phone - If a mobile phone purchase is required (as part of an approved exemption request), the mobile phone purchase must not exceed the cost of one of the following devices in 2021 (This device and model will be updated annually)

- iPhone - iPhone X
- Samsung - Galaxy S10

Any mobile phone purchased should be used solely for the purpose of work and should not be used by staff for personal reasons. Staff should hold their own personal phone and service if required.

Staff who are purchasing a device with their grant funds, must still ensure costs are reasonable and appropriate and in line with the guidance provided to all staff. A phone purchase more excessive than those mentioned above will need to be approved by your MB member/Dean.

**Note if a staff member is being personally reimbursed \$30 per month, they can't also have a phone purchased by UNSW.*

Reimbursement - Staff who are approved via the exemption process may elect to be reimbursed for use of their personal or a personally arranged service rather than a UNSW arranged mobile phone plan. This will be capped at **\$30 per month**.

Retaining your current UNSW funded mobile phone device.

- **Departing staff** are required to return their handset as per the exiting guidelines.
- **Staff remaining at UNSW** may keep their handsets provided they intend to continue to use them predominantly for work purposes. Any incidental private use is allowed. Staff will be required to complete an FBT declaration form to this effect which can be found [here](#) (under mobile phone and/or data service approvals). If this form is not completed, or if the handset is not intended predominantly for work purposes, the handset will need to be returned to UNSW. If staff have more than one mobile phone device, any additional devices must be returned to UNSW. This does not include iPads which can continue to be used for work purposes.

Mobile phones for UNSW travel

The following advice is provided to staff who are required to make calls or use data while travelling for UNSW purposes:

If unable to access Teams and there is a proven need to use data during this period, this will be covered through the provision of the daily incidentals allowance as detailed in the [Business Expense Procedure](#). Examples of proven need may be in a high-risk country where a staff member needs to make a call before they are able to access and purchase a local SIM card.

When international travel is permissible in future, it is expected that staff may purchase a pre-paid SIM from that local country. This is in line with the guidance provided in the Business Expense Procedure. In the event staff are required to use their personal service up until a SIM can be purchased, the travel allowance approved by UNSW allows for this cost to be absorbed under incidentals, and the expectation is that it falls within the limits provided.

Pay-As-You-Go data roaming and international phone calls (i.e. use of Australian SIM overseas) is not permitted and would not be reimbursed.

When will plans and reimbursements cease for mobile phones and data provisions not approved by the exemption process or funded via external funds?

31 March 2021. This will be a phased approach to ensure staff are appropriately supported by IT during this transition period. UNSW IT will commence contacting billing owners to ensure staff are appropriately supported through this transition.

The return of work from home data equipment

Data SIMs which were provided at the beginning of 2020 when staff were asked to work from home will be cancelled on 31 March 2021. This is to provide staff adequate time to source suitable solutions for their work from home arrangements. Staff are reminded they are not allowed to claim reimbursement for any [equipment purchased to work from home](#).

Options for staff with a current UNSW service

Relevant staff will be contacted by UNSW IT throughout Q1 2021 for individuals to select one of the following options:

a) Terminate their service and number.

Number and service is cancelled.

b) Mobile service to be ported out and transferred to individual user.

Where requested and approved, a staff member may keep their current phone number. The process will mean that the individual user will be transferred to the cheapest Optus month-by-month plan (\$45 per month), with the employee then being responsible for the ongoing monthly cost. The staff member can then decide whether to stay with Optus on a plan of their choice or move to another provider. **It's important to note that the individual will be charged \$45 by Optus for that first month if the number is ported out.**

c) Confirm that an exemption has been approved or that the service will be paid by external/restricted funds.

This will ensure your service is not cancelled on 31 March 2021.

Evidence of exemption approval (in the form of the final email you have received) will be required to ensure your service remains active.

The UNSW IT Website provides [guidance and forms](#) should you wish to commence this process.

Modes of communication moving forward for staff required to make external calls for work purposes.

UNSW IT has recently launched Microsoft Teams numbers for staff who are required to make external/international calls. This capability allows staff to do so via the Teams app on their mobile phone, tablet, or laptop devices. Wi-Fi capability will allow you to access this seamlessly, however if you are not in a Wi-Fi accessible area, data will be used.

Your Teams number may be provided to external companies and contractors as your work phone contact number.

The cost of external calls is charged to your local area. If you use your Teams number through your personal mobile phone for calls, your personal mobile phone number is not shared or visible to the caller. An FAQ guide on MS Teams can be found [here](#).

Claiming work expenses with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)

When you are required to use your personal data and phone services for work purposes, you may be eligible to claim a tax deduction through your individual income tax return at the end of financial year. UNSW does not provide any advice on this and staff must seek their own personal tax advice, where required. More information can be found on the ATO website [here](#).

What is expected of staff currently?

Staff may continue to use their current service until you or your local bill owner is contacted by UNSW IT to cancel your service. There will be a phased approach throughout Q1 2021 to ensure a smooth transition.