
Human Resources Policies

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Remote Work Policy - Staff

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Applies to: (examples; Faculty, Staff, Students, etc)

Staff

Policy Overview:

Issued: 07-01-2021

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Frequency of Review: Annually

Remote work is a work arrangement in which staff in certain positions may receive approval to routinely perform their regular job responsibilities away from their primary business location. Remote work is intended to allow qualifying staff members to continually be productive while promoting work-life balance. Often employees in certain positions and employers find well-developed remote work programs allow for increased productivity overall and increased work satisfaction. These changes occur due to the remote worksite being more free from distractions therefore allowing for certain work to be better accomplished there, while maximizing those irreplaceable interactions and tasks that can only occur when at the worksite.

This policy covers arrangements established for regularly scheduled, sustained periods of time, that represent a portion of the employee’s work week. Working on campus in a collaborative environment is a critical component of almost all positions.

The ability to work remotely is a privilege based on the needs of the job, work group and organization; it may be determined by the employee’s past and present levels of performance; and it is not a right. Not all employees and not all jobs are suited for regular remote work. Typically, remote work relationships will not be established during an employee’s orientation period, when an employee is experiencing performance problems, requires close supervision, or if job requirements can only be accomplished on campus. Remote work arrangements are not intended to create a “second job” with the University or to allow employees to pursue other jobs or business initiatives external to the University.

Department supervisors are responsible for determining the feasibility of any individual remote work arrangement based upon evaluation of the work to be accomplished, benefits to the department, interactions required between the employee who is working remotely and other staff members or customers and the demonstrated skills of the employee. Employees being considered for remote work must have a demonstrated record of acceptable or higher performance, be capable of independent, self-directed work, and be highly self-motivated. A remote work arrangement is developed by the employee and supervisor, but must be approved by both the Office of Human Resources and the President’s Staff representative with oversight of the unit.

Remote work arrangements must comply with federal, state and local laws, as well as University policies that apply to employees at University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis (UHSP). This includes, but is not limited to, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). Therefore, remote work arrangements do not change salaries, benefits, job responsibilities, leave policies or other basic terms or legal requirements associated with employment.

Please refer to the Remote Work Policy details and procedures herein.

Table of Contents:

Contents

Policy Overview..... 1

Definitions..... 2

Policy Details..... 2

Procedures..... 4

Responsibilities..... 5

Resources..... 5

Policy Contacts..... 5

Details:

1. Remote work is an arrangement between management and employee, not an entitlement; is based on the needs of the job, work group and organization; and may be determined by the employee's past and present levels of performance. Employees on corrective action or performance improvement plans will not be approved for remote work. Human Resources must review and approve any exceptions granted under this policy.
2. This policy covers staff employees only and is intended to provide guidelines for the development and approval of regularly scheduled remote work. This policy does not prohibit employees from obtaining permission to work from home on an occasional or ad hoc basis, provided Item 3 (work to be done remotely) and Item 6 (data security) requirements are met. An example may be a minor, short-term illness that may be infectious (such as influenza) but does not significantly diminish the employee's capacity to work. However, even occasional or ad hoc remote work may not be appropriate in all circumstances. For example, remote work is not a substitute for childcare or house-training a new dog. This policy does not apply to emergency remote work situations contained in department continuity of operations plans (COOP), including inclement weather.
3. The nature of the employee's work must be considered in evaluating the appropriateness of a remote work arrangement.
 - a. Jobs that entail working alone or working with equipment that can be kept at the alternate work site are often suitable for working remotely.
 - b. Jobs that require physical presence, close contact with faculty/staff/students, or require closer supervision to perform effectively are not suitable for remote work. Examples include, but are not limited to, supervisor, lab positions, custodian, public safety and maintenance staff, and roles requiring significant in-person contact with students.
 - c. Jobs that require a high degree of collaboration and/or group discussion that cannot be adequately recreated in a forum other than in-person interaction may not be suitable for remote work.
 - d. Employees in positions designated as "Critical Personnel" under the University's Critical Personnel and Continuity of Operations Planning policy may be less suitable for remote work.
4. Other factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, assessing potential costs and savings to be expected; impact on space, equipment, staffing and overall departmental efficiency both at the alternate work location and on the primary work site; and the employee's overall fitness for self-directed work and demonstrated work record. This may include an evaluation of applicability of HR/payroll burdens for work from another site such as new state worker's compensation requirements, tax set up, insurance requirements and liability coverage.
5. The supervisor must communicate in advance what assignments or tasks are appropriate to be performed at the remote work site and what assessment techniques will be used to measure success in meeting performance standards. A good system for measuring the quality, quantity and timeliness of output should be equally effective for both employees on-site as well as those working at home and should not reflect differences in standards.
6. The University chief information officer (CIO) must approve that IT security requirements have been met for remote work. All forms of information (paper, electronic, conversations) must be kept secure and confidential, and employees are required to complete training on and follow the data protection standards policies found at <https://policies.uhsp.edu/policies>. These policies include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. While connecting from an off-campus location, establish a VPN or encrypted connection before accessing any confidential or restricted use data via the network. This must only be done from your University-issued computer. VPN should not be installed on devices that are not managed by the Office of Information Technology.
 - b. All wireless connections must use strong encryption (WPA2 or equivalent or better) such as is offered by the University's EuTecNet wireless network or by using the University's VPN over a wireless network.
 - c. Data should only be accessed and/or stored on devices and within services managed by the University. For example, data can be stored on University Microsoft Office 365 accounts and file servers but not in a personal Google Drive.
7. Ongoing remote work arrangements must be defined in writing and address items in the following list. A template is provided with this policy:
 - a. The business reason for the decision to allow the employee to work remotely.
 - b. Length of time the remote work arrangement will continue.
 - c. Number of hours per day / days per week the employee will work remotely – including when (what days/hours) the employee is expected to work.
 - d. A description of the impact to customers in terms of service and quality of work.
 - e. An explanation of how necessary communication with management, the department and customers will be maintained.
 - f. List of general duties to be performed while working remotely (Note: other duties or accountabilities may be added/deleted as necessary).
 - g. List of essential work that is required to be completed on campus, in person.
 - h. List of the necessary computer equipment, peripheral equipment (mouse, keyboard, printer, scanner) and software as well as where/how/by whom it will be obtained and maintained; and define who is responsible for data costs, equipment set-up and maintenance, installation of and/or training on computer software, security of University equipment, materials, and any additional applicable items. Typically, the University will supply or purchase from departmental budgets inexpensive peripheral equipment such as a keyboard, mouse, additional charging cable or docking station. Because a remote work arrangement under this policy is voluntary, the University will not pay for internet service.
 - i. In a remote work arrangement, it is the employee's responsibility to collect from campus necessary consumable supplies required for remote work; University funds typically will not be used to ship materials to the remote work site. Supplies will remain the property of the University and must be returned to the on-campus worksite in the event that employment

- or the remote work arrangement terminates. University funds are typically not used/approved for home office furniture or additional equipment.
- j. A description of how performance and productivity will be measured.
 - k. For non-exempt employees, how work time will be tracked.
 - l. For exempt and non-exempt employees, a description of expectations regarding hours in the “remote office,” productivity, work to be produced, and expectations regarding availability for spontaneous communication. This may include requirements for video and audio communication as outlined by the supervisor.
 - m. Information on requirements of the employee to work non-remotely for specific meetings or events that require in-person attendance, and/or requirements to work on campus for a period of time to ensure connection, communication, and collaboration with colleagues and the University community.
8. The employee is responsible for:
 - a. Maintaining their own home, high-speed internet connection capable of conducting work (including communications and video conferencing) without significant delays in productivity.
 - b. Maintaining the remote work site work area including having suitable table, chairs, power supply, or other furniture or equipment that makes an acceptable work environment.
 - c. Maintaining the remote work site in a manner free from health or safety hazards that could endanger the employee, his/her family or others.
 - d. Notifying the supervisor immediately about any safety or ergonomic concerns at the remote work site. Health or safety hazards at the remote work site may result in immediate suspension of the remote work arrangement. Injuries believed to be work-related must be reported immediately to Human Resources. If an injury to the employee occurs at the remote work site, management reserves the right, in response to the injury or illness, to inspect the worksite and make appropriate recommendations.
 - e. Taking reasonable steps to protect any University property from theft, damage or misuses. This includes maintaining data security and record confidentiality to at least the same degree as when working at the regular University worksite. All University data security (including FERPA and HIPAA policies) and other compliance policies and procedures remain in effect as if the employee were working at the regular University worksite.
 - f. Securing dependent or childcare arrangements during agreed upon work hours such that these arrangements do not interfere with work being performed during agreed upon work periods.
 - g. If non-exempt, clocking in and out for all hours worked in the appropriate timekeeping system.
 - h. For exempt and non-exempt employees, maintaining agreed upon hours in the “remote office,” reasonable work productivity and following expectations regarding availability for spontaneous communication.
 - i. Remaining available for communication with customers, colleagues and management as directed by the department. If this includes availability for video conferencing, the employee should dress in attire that is consistent with the University’s dress code policies.
 - j. Returning any and all documents, equipment, badges, keys, etc. upon separation of employment, in accordance with University policy.
 9. The employee may not duplicate University-owned documents for home office use without permission and will comply with the licensing agreements for use of all software owned by the University. Depending on the circumstances, the employee may be responsible for any damage to, or loss of, University property.
 10. Employees must adhere to all University and departmental policies while remotely working. In particular, all record-keeping requirements must be followed. Non-exempt employees are required to maintain an accurate and timely record kept of all working time as a condition of continued participation in the telecommuting program. Employees cannot be unavailable from the remote work site for an extended period of time during the agreed upon work schedule hours. Employees must also take meal and rest periods according to University policies. An employee is not exempt from the meal period, rest period, time off or other record-keeping policies solely because he/she is permitted to work at home or at another off-site location.
 11. The employee will be covered by workers’ compensation for job-related injuries that occur in the course and scope of employment while working remotely. In cases where the home and the designated workplace are the same, workers’ compensation will not apply to non-job-related injuries that might occur in or outside the home or for incidents that occur outside of work hours. The employee must report job-related injuries to his or her supervisor as soon as possible and seek treatment from authorized medical care providers consistent with University policy.
 12. Management retains the right to modify, at its sole discretion, or terminate the agreement as deemed appropriate. An evaluation by the supervisor after the first thirty days of the agreement is required. This evaluation can be informal, and should the agreement not be working out, the manager will communicate with the employee regarding what needs to change or end the agreement. Changing or ending the agreement does not necessarily equate to a disciplinary action and is not appealable as such, but an employee can consult with HR if they are not in agreement with the decision. An employee should provide at least two weeks’ notice to the University prior to terminating the remote work agreement.
 13. This policy is intended to apply to voluntary remote work arrangements only and does not cover remote work as a reasonable accommodation for a disclosed disability or remote work in response to a University emergency or continuity of operations plan. Employees seeking disability accommodations must communicate with Human Resources and request an accommodation for a specific disability. Human Resources will work with the employee and unit to identify an accommodation that does not create an undue burden.
 14. The employee will be subject to all applicable University policies during the remote work arrangement.
 15. Questions should be directed to the Office of Human Resources.

Procedures:

Before an employee may begin working remotely:

1. The employee and/or supervisor suggest a remote work arrangement for a position.
2. If the department head approves in concept, he/she will direct the employee and supervisor to complete the Remote Work Assignment and Agreement document.
3. The Office of Human Resources reviews the Remote Work Assignment and Agreement document for initial approval. If the Office of Human Resources approves, the form is submitted to the President’s Staff representative with oversight of the unit for final approval. If the Office of Human Resources does not approve, the documents are returned to the supervisor for discussion, revision and resubmission or communication with the employee about denial of remote work. Should a President’s Staff person request remote work, the review and approval will be granted by the President.
4. If approved, the President’s Staff representative communicates with the supervisor and others regarding finalized arrangements for the employee to begin remote work. If not approved, the form goes back to the supervisor and Human Resources to communicate the decision with the employee.
5. A copy of all executed Remote Work Assignment and Agreement forms are kept with personnel records.

Responsibilities:

<u>Position/Office/Department</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
Supervisor and Employee	Complete the Remote Work Assignment and Agreement
Supervisor	Approves and submits both forms to Human Resources
Human Resources	Approves or denies request and discusses decision with supervisor
President’s Staff/Unit leader	Approves or denies request and discusses decision with supervisor/HR

Resources:

[Critical Personnel and Continuity of Operations COOP Planning Policy](#)

Policy Contacts:

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