

Hampshire College

Telework and Flexible Work Supervisor Guidance

This document is intended to assist supervisors and college leadership in determining what positions and employees are suitable for regular or occasional telework and/or flexible scheduling. This guide is designed to determine how to use the College's approved telework and flexible work schedule policy to support employee flexibility and department goals.

Hampshire College supports the use of appropriate flexible and alternative work options for employees. Supervisors are asked to be flexible with employees while maintaining clear performance expectations. Conversations between supervisors and employees should include:

- Hours of work/schedule: If an employee is actively caring for a child or family member, that time is not considered work time; appropriate leave should be used during those times.
- Balance of presence in virtual and on-site meetings: Supervisors should set clear expectations on how employees should participate in meetings. Zoom should continue to be used to provide all meeting attendees the opportunity to participate.
- Expectations for focused, uninterrupted time for completing job responsibilities and attending meetings. If an employee is unable to set boundaries for work time then the employee is expected to use leave.
- Performance management expectations and metrics of monitoring work performance.
- Any other variables that may impact successful telecommuting practices

Telework is defined as formally working one or more days per week (maximum of 2) from a non-College based location within the jurisdictions where the College is legally allowed to conduct business that is not an employee's originally assigned office or work space. Variations of this word may include telecommuting and/or telecommuter (i.e. the person who is telecommuting).

Two critical steps must be followed to determine telework suitability:

Step 1: Determine the suitability of positions based on job duties and responsibilities.

Step 2: Determine the suitability of employees based on past work performance.

Step 1: Determining which positions are conducive to telework

A position can be considered suitable for telework if some or most of its responsibilities can be performed away from the regular work location. The change in work location should not impact productivity, customer service, operational efficiency, or team collaboration. The determination should be first based on the type of work, not just on employee performance. The list below is merely a suggestion and not an exhaustive list.

Typical roles may include, but are not limited to:

- Accountant or Bookkeeper
- Software Developer, Engineer or Computer Programmer
- Graphic Designer or Illustrator
- Secretarial or Administrative Assistant
- Web Training or Web Design
- Recruiter or Talent Acquisition
- Data Entry or Database Administrator
- Researcher
- And more!

Typical tasks may include, but are not limited to:

- Auditing
- Analyzing Data
- Budgeting
- Calculating
- Computer Programming
- Data Analysis and Entry
- Editing
- Graphics work
- Programming
- Project Management
- Recruiting/Sourcing
- Research
- Software Development
- Writing

Each position should be considered individually, per the responsibilities of the role, to determine if the work can be done outside of the regular work environment.

IT ability and access to Wi-Fi networks also plays a large part in determining telework ability.

- Is the employee able to have access to the needed equipment to perform their job function?
- Do they have access to Wi-Fi to be able to complete their tasks, and communicate with their supervisor and team?

A position may require an on campus/ office presence for other reasons.

- Does the employee's core responsibilities require access to equipment, materials, and files that are only accessible on site?
- Can the core responsibilities and key tasks be accomplished more efficiently on site because of easy access to equipment, systems, and records?
- Is the employee required to be on-site for face-to-face meetings with supervisors, other employees, students, or customers? Or can this contact be done electronically?

Step 2: Determine the suitability of specific employees who are interested in telework

Once it has been determined that some of the role responsibilities can be performed outside of the regular work environment, it should be determined if the employee in this role is compatible to telework opportunities. Consideration should be given on an individual basis for current employees.

Factors for this determination should include but are not limited to:

- Employee's most recent performance history (including disciplinary action).
- Employee's time management and organizational skills.

- Does the employee have the necessary computer skills to complete their required job functions outside of the office?
- Does the employee understand their role and expectations, and require little supervision to complete their tasks?
- Is the employee a self-starter and consistently meets deadlines?
- Other personal considerations (Please note that childcare or eldercare needs are not a reason to approve telecommuting work; leave may be more appropriate to address this need)

A few things to keep in mind:

- Employees in their probationary period should not be approved for new telework unless deemed necessary by the supervisor or other college official.
- If the employee is not well suited for telework or is denied based on a previously documented performance issue, it is best practice to communicate that decision with the employee. In this instance, a discussion about job performance and growth opportunities should take place between the employee and their supervisor before the option for telework is offered in the future.
- Supervisors should keep documentation of telework agreement approvals and denials for each employee.
- As a supervisor, if you are unsure of how to approach this conversation with your employee, please contact your direct supervisor or the Director of Human Resources for guidance.
- A supervisor should be prepared to discuss the following expectation with a telework employee.
 - The employee is in charge of setting up their workspace in a telework environment. This includes adequate access to the internet and a quiet place for calls or video meetings.
 - Employees should work with managers to establish work hours. These work hours should be added to the employee's email signature for transparency across the College.
 - Employees should designate "office" space and get IT support for their setup
 - Employees should try to minimize distractions in this area.
 - Employees should be cognizant of how their environment appears during video meetings.
 - Employees should be aware of their time spent not working whether for child/eldercare, appointments, or other personal business. This time should be recorded accurately when completing their timecard.

Step 3: Supervisor Responsibility to Ensure Telework Success

A supervisor should also consider their own management and supervision style, as well as their level of trust in the employee to perform their assigned job duties in a telework environment. A supervisor may have to have more virtual meetings with the employee even though their personal preference is to have in-person meetings. The supervisor must also consider how they will evaluate the employee's work if they are teleworking and not on site.

Step 4: Tips for entering into a Telework Agreement

After determining that both the role and employee are suitable for telework and both the supervisor and employee have reviewed the telework and flex work schedule policy it is time to complete the Flex Work Arrangement Form that establishes the specifics.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- Days of the week that the employee can telework.
- Expectations of the level of communication and responsiveness expected on telework workdays. This should be from both the employee and the supervisor.
- Expectations of attendance for meetings and other interactions across the College and with customers.
- Any other expectations of work to be done and metrics on how this work will be recorded.

Additionally, expectations for communication between both the employee and supervisor should be identified and discussed ahead of time. These topics should include:

- Balance of presence in virtual and on-site meetings.
- Performance management expectations and metrics of monitoring work performance.
- Physical space arrangement and accommodations including what technology is necessary to perform work functions outside of the office.
- Balance of employee childcare or eldercare needs.
- Managing various work styles including communication expectations from both supervisor and employee. Mediums to be considered in maintaining communication include Zoom, email, phone, IM such as Skype or Microsoft Teams, etc.
- Telework is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate childcare. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate childcare needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands. Prospective teleworkers are encouraged to discuss expectations of telework with family members prior to entering a trial period.
- Managing other distractions at home and setting expectations for professionalism to include dress code.

Step 5: Complete the Flex Work Arrangement Form

From there, Use the Flex Work Arrangement Form to document the expectations and plan for telework and/or the flexible work schedule. Final approval of this arrangement requires approval of the applicable division head and the Director of Human Resources.

Conditions of Employment:

- Performance expectations and evaluations will not change as a result of telework. Conditions of employment will remain the same, and expectations should be clear and measurable. The supervisor will evaluate employee's job performance in accordance with applicable performance planning and evaluation, and probationary policies.
- Salary and benefits will not be affected by telework.
- Arrangements that assure adequate communication between employee, co-workers, supervisor, and customers must be established. For example: Determine regular check-in times or plans to email when workday begins and ends.
- Use shared calendars to post schedules of telework, on-site colleagues, and managers.

- Use basic communication tools such as phone, email, and/or instant messaging, and consider collaborative tools such as audio and video conferencing.
- Coordinate staff meetings and telecommuting schedules, promoting team cohesion and social interaction; it may be necessary for the telework employee to come to the workplace for such events.
- The Flex Work Arrangement Form/ Agreement does not automatically go with an employee in a new position or apply when a position previously done via telework is assumed by a new employee. A new form/agreement should be requested and reviewed when the above situations occur.

Hours of Work:

- The required number of work hours will not change, and employees are responsible for reporting time worked, leave used, and for adhering to college attendance policies.
- Overtime Worked during telework schedules will be treated no differently than regular work hours. Supervisors must approve any overtime. Failure to do so may result in termination of the agreement and/or disciplinary action.
- For non-exempt employees, hours worked must be recorded just as they would be during normal working hours on campus.
- Sick/annual leave is recorded based on the number of hours an employee is scheduled to work on the day they use the leave, whether on campus or alternate work location.
- Paid holidays will count as seven (7) or eight (8) hours if falling on a day scheduled for telework depending on whether the position is scheduled for 35 hours/week or 40 hours/week.
- A meal break of at least 30 minutes must be provided to employees working more than six (6) consecutive hours.
- Days worked at the alternate location must be approved by the supervisor.
- Authorized college closings will apply to the telework employee as they will be unable to remain in contact with supervisor and co-workers. Essential employees are the exception and will receive compensatory leave for hours worked in accordance to the College payment policies.
- Supervisors may require employees to report to a central workplace for work-related events or meetings, if needed.
- Telework is not to be used in place of sick or annual leave; however, in consultation with HR, a department may choose to offer flex work arrangements as an opportunity for partial or full return to work based on college policy and the criteria normally applied to decisions regarding the approval of telework.

Safety:

- Hampshire College does not assume responsibility for injury to any persons other than the telework employee arising out of duties at the telework site during the set work hours.
- Employees are covered by the College's Workers' Compensation Plan if injured while performing official duties at the campus workplace or an alternate work location and must immediately notify the supervisor of an injury sustained at a telework site and complete an Accident Report. Once an employee reports a job-related injury, the supervisor or department personnel must immediately file the Employer's Accident Report Form.

- Supervisors may wish to include additional conditions in their work agreements that require employees to confirm that the alternate work location is, to the best of their knowledge, free of recognized hazards that could cause physical harm. Employees should agree to practice the same safety habits they would use while at the College and to maintain safe conditions in their alternate work locations.

Questions and Additional Information

Supervisors who have questions or would additional guidance regarding the telework and flexible work schedule policies and options, should contact their direct supervisor or the Director of Human Resources.