

	PROCEDURE		Motion No.
	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Remote Work</h2>		Effective Date
			09/16/2020
			Responsible Department
			Human Resources
			Attorney Review / Date
			[Attorney Name] [Date]

PURPOSE

To provide guidance for areas in establishing alternate work arrangements for faculty and staff whose responsibilities can be accomplished outside of a College office for part or all of the workweek. Such arrangements are possible when, in the opinion of the supervisor, the College's work needs can be efficiently and effectively met. Telecommuting is a work arrangement in which employees, for a portion of their scheduled work hours, perform their regular job responsibilities away from their primary work location utilizing telecommunication and information technology as appropriate. These arrangements can be either temporary or ongoing.

College and departmental demands are a priority throughout any alternative work arrangement - the arrangement must be transparent to internal and external customers in terms of service and quality. Alternative work arrangements are flexible and subject to change as business needs change.

The College's establishment of a telecommuting program assists in meeting the needs of a workforce that has diverse work and personal demands. Telecommuting can provide flexible work schedules to accommodate temporary situations such as a leave due to a contagious illness or a temporary disability (such as a cold or a broken leg) or can provide flexibility on a long-term basis.

A telecommuting program also allows the College to comply with legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, telecommuting provides alternate methods of addressing budget issues. Finally, a telecommuting program can strengthen management and employee relations.

Factors of Successful Telecommuting

The telecommuters, supervisors, and actual jobs involved in a successful telecommuting arrangement have the following characteristics:

Characteristics of a Telecommuter

A successful telecommuter is a highly disciplined, self-directed, and self-motivated individual, capable of balancing work and personal demands. In addition, the telecommuter must be able to function in an environment that is less structured and more autonomous than a traditional work environment. This type of arrangement can be successful only if the telecommuter has demonstrated good organization and time management skills. The telecommuter must be computer literate and must have adequate connectivity resources to successfully perform job functions from home.

Telecommuters have to adjust to being isolated from daily co-worker interactions. Some may compensate for the lack of social interactions in the office by keeping in contact by phone, e-mail, etc. However, some people may dismiss the possibility of telecommuting knowing that they need social contact on a regular basis in order to work productively.

Characteristics of a Supervisor

The supervisor of a telecommuter must be open to new ideas, be trusting of employees, and be a good communicator. Performance is monitored and managed by results rather than by traditional observations.

Characteristics of a Job

Not all jobs are adapted easily to a telecommuting arrangement. Jobs that are adapted easily include those that consist of writing, reading, researching, independent thinking, editing, and working with data. The job probably should not be dependent on access to other College employees (other than by electronic mail), facilities, and/or physical materials nor should it include daily face-to-face interaction with students. The job should have an independent function, be more technology and information driven, and have measurable duties.

Responsibilities for Successful Telecommuting

Telecommuters

The telecommuter needs to be continually aware of College guidelines, policies and practices. Close communication between the telecommuter and the supervisor will ensure that the employee is aware of any departmental or College priorities. Quality customer service will continue to be a top priority, including customer service and service among colleagues within the department. This includes awareness of training required both for the telecommuter and for colleagues who will be interacting with them. When establishing a telecommuting schedule, the needs of the office and the customers must be taken into account.

The telecommuter is responsible for ensuring that the established business hours are adhered to. Just as procrastinating and being distracted by non-work items can result in failure, so can overwork. A disadvantage of telecommuting is that it provides 24-hour access to work. Working too much causes stress and stress-related illness, burnout, and reduced productivity. Knowing when to stop is essential to good job performance.

Supervisors

The supervisor is responsible for exploring and evaluating the business rationale for a telecommuting arrangement, with quality customer service as a top priority. Human as well as financial resources need to be examined. Start-up expenses as well as ongoing telecommuting costs need to be projected. Once a telecommuting arrangement is established, periodic cost/benefit analyses can be helpful in re-exploring the success of the arrangement.

Procedures are NOT Board approved.

The supervisor needs to ensure that the telecommuter is included in pertinent staff meetings and training sessions. As well, regular communication and updates between the supervisor and telecommuter are imperative. As with any employee, clear performance guidelines and periodic performance reviews are essential.

The supervisor should schedule regular meetings with the telecommuter to assess needs, give feedback, discuss problems, and just catch up. Doing this avoids the feeling of losing contact, and the telecommuter will feel less isolated. Holding regular meetings to set timetables and assess progress gives employees deadlines to keep them on target. When face-to-face meetings are not possible, other means, such as virtual meetings and telephone, should be utilized to keep the lines of communication open.

The supervisor should review the telecommuting arrangements periodically and make necessary adjustments in order to address any changing business demands and to ensure office coverage during normal operating hours.

Establishing A Telecommuting Program

A telecommuting arrangement is a privilege and not a right. As outlined above, not all employees and not all jobs are suited to telecommuting. An employee interested in telecommuting first should present a proposal to her/his supervisor with a copy to Human Resources. This proposal should include:

1. the reason for the request
2. the length of time that the telecommuting arrangement is desired
3. the number of hours-per-day or days-per-week that the employee will be telecommuting - including when (what days/hours) the employee will be accessible
4. a description of the impact on customers in terms of service and quality of work
5. an explanation of how necessary communication with College offices and customers will be maintained
6. the daily hours when the telecommuter is accessible to coworkers and customers
7. a list of duties to be performed while telecommuting
8. a list of the necessary equipment and where/how/by whom it will be obtained and maintained
9. potential problem areas (if any)

The supervisor then reviews the proposal with Human Resources and the appropriate Vice President. If a telecommuting arrangement is feasible, then the supervisor discusses all aspects of the telecommuting arrangement with the employee and reaches a written agreement with the employee. The written agreement includes all of the factors listed above and a clear delineation of whom is responsible for:

1. telephone costs (if any)
2. supplies (paper, pens, etc.)
3. computer set-up and maintenance, installation of and/or training on computer software

4. security of College equipment, materials, and supplies (including responsibility for loss)
5. any additional applicable items

Any required travel that ordinarily would be considered as normal commuting to and from work is not reimbursed. Required travel elsewhere may be reimbursed per College policies. Finally, the agreement should include a provision for the modification or termination of the agreement should either the College or employee needs change.

Effective Date	Motion Number	Document Author	Description of Change
9/16/2020	N/A	Human Resources	Initial Release