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Flexible Work Arrangements Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1: What is a flexible work arrangement?

A: A flexible work arrangement allows a full-time staff member to work hours and days outside the established work week for his/her department, and/or have a regular work location at a place other than the staff member's regularly assigned campus work site; such as the staff member's home.

Q2: What is remote work?

A: Remote work refers specifically to a work arrangement that allows the staff member to perform his/her primary job responsibility at a location other than his/her campus work site, such as at the staff member's home.

Q3: Who can request a flexible schedule or remote work?

A: Regular staff employees, other than a faculty employee*, may be permitted to request a flexible work arrangement. Supervisors are responsible for determining the eligibility of staff members who elect to seek eligibility for a flexible work arrangement. Supervisors should ensure that jobs chosen for flexible work arrangements are adapted easily to an alternative arrangement, especially if working remotely. Eligibility is based on an assessment by the supervisor and should evaluate both the characteristics of the position and the impact on the business needs of the department, as well as the work history and performance of the staff member.

Additional approval may be required once the supervisor determines eligibility. Refer to your campus policy to determine required approvals. The final decision to approve or deny a request is at the sole discretion of the institution and is not subject to the grievance procedure.

**Faculty members are subject to the policies and practices of their institution, division and department.*

Q4: If a staff member is currently working a flexible work arrangement, do they need to complete the approval process including the form and training?

A: Yes, a staff member already working a flexible schedule or working remotely will need to submit a Flexible Work Arrangement form to his/her supervisor. The supervisor will need to approve and route to the appropriate second level(s) for final approval. In addition, the staff member will be required to complete mandatory Flexible Work Arrangement training onsite or online through the [My Learning portal](#).

Q5: If a supervisor denies a staff member's remote work or flexible schedule request, can the staff member appeal that decision?

A: No. A final decision by a supervisor to deny a staff member's request for a flexible work arrangement may not be appealed. The supervisor may approve, deny or present an alternative flexible work arrangement that is proposed by the staff member. If the supervisor and the staff member do not agree on the aspects of the schedule, then the staff member will continue to work his or her standard hours at the regularly assigned place of employment. This decision is not subject to the grievance procedure.

In general, flexible work arrangements are a privilege, which may be granted under appropriate circumstances for staff members whose job responsibilities are suited to such arrangements and each request to deviate from the normal schedule and/or location will be evaluated on an individual basis.

Q6: Can a staff member approved for remote work be required to come to campus on days he/she is scheduled to work from a remote location?

A: Yes, a supervisor who finds it necessary to request a staff member working remotely to report to campus as needed for work-related meetings or other work-related events may require a staff member to come to campus. Supervisors are encouraged to provide advanced notice when possible.

A flexible work arrangement does not alter the responsibility or diminish the authority of supervisors to establish and adjust work schedules or work locations.

Q7: If a staff member works from home and is required to come to campus for a meeting, can he/she count that as business travel and submit mileage?

A: No. A staff member working remotely from home may not submit an expense reimbursement for mileage if required to travel to the department's primary work location for meetings or other work-related events or needs.

Q8: If UNT System campuses are closed due to inclement weather or some other emergency, are staff members working remotely excused from work as well?

A: Yes, staff members approved for remote work are not required to work from an alternate location when the campus location is closed.

Q9: How does a University closure impact a staff member working a flexible schedule?

A: Staff members working a flexible schedule will be required to follow the time entry guidelines for University closures, which outlines how staff members will be paid, based on the hours worked or scheduled.

Salaried staff members working a flexible schedule will be paid for the number of hours they were scheduled to work during the closure.

Hourly staff members will only be paid for the time physically worked that day, regardless of how much time they were scheduled to work.

Q10: Can a staff member utilize the remote work policy and work from home when he/she is sick even if a flexible work arrangement form is not in place?

A: The Remote Working and Flexible Work Schedule policy (03.000) addresses a formal arrangement between the staff member and supervisor/department documenting a change in work location or hours.

This policy does not limit a supervisor's ability to grant informal or infrequent requests from staff members who do not have a flexible work arrangement form in place.

Supervisors still have full discretion to grant informal or infrequent requests from staff members to work from home on occasion or flexible schedules to accommodate personal needs on an informal or casual basis. These types of informal or infrequent requests do not require a pre-approved flexible work arrangement form. Informal flexible work arrangements provide an added layer of flexibility for staff members and supervisors that allow for creating a healthy work life balance.

Q11: Can a staff member on FMLA work from home to extend his/her available leave time?

A: No. Remote work should not be a substitute for taking time off as protected by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). A staff member who is on FMLA and unable to report to work may not perform work at home in order to extend his/her available leave time. Remember, a staff member who has been approved for FMLA leave will not be available for work until he/she is released by the treating physician or in the case of caring for an ill family member, until the approved leave time has been met and is no longer needed. However, a staff member may be permitted to work from home while on FMLA if they are approved for intermittent or a reduced work schedule as indicated in the staff member's medical certification completed by the treating physician.

Q12: How does a supervisor manage the performance of a remote staff member?

A: When a staff member is not physically present, a supervisor may be concerned about his/her ability to monitor the staff member's work effort. To successfully manage a remote staff member, a supervisor should focus on the outcome of the work, not the physical presence of the staff member. Applying this performance management strategy to both remote and onsite staff members will help you achieve greater success. This type of performance management includes setting clear expectations and goals, but also creating an environment of trust and autonomy. Focus on establishing goals that set clear, measurable items like: quality, quantity, and timeliness of the work, instead of focusing on the daily process. Supervisors may find tools such as a weekly status report or project management software helpful in managing performance and work of the entire team.

Q13: How do paid holidays impact a flexible schedule?

A: Since paid holidays are based on an 8-hour day, it may be necessary for supervisors to work with staff members to adjust flexible schedules to ensure holiday pay does not increase or decrease the total hours scheduled in the workweek or result in an overtime situation.

For example, if a staff member is approved for a compressed workweek, and a holiday falls on a 10-hour workday, only 8 of those hours will be charged as holiday. The remaining two hours must be taken as a vacation and/or compensatory time or worked on another day during that workweek. The staff member could elect to revert to a 5-day/8 hour schedule for the holiday workweek to avoid having to use accrued leave or making up the time on another workday.

Q14: Can a manager or supervisor work a flexible work arrangement?

A: The institution's policy does not prohibit managers or supervisors from remote work or flexible schedules. In fact, managers and supervisors may also find a better work life balance through a flexible work arrangement.

Managers and supervisors should take time to assess which functions/tasks would benefit from a flexible work arrangement; including taking into consideration options for leading their team remotely, staying connected with the team members and ensuring the team feels supported.

Keep in mind that a flexible work arrangement should assist the department in achieving administrative efficiency, improving productivity and job performance, and supporting business continuity plans.

Q15: Can remote work help a staff member with child or other dependent care needs?

A: Remote work is not intended to serve as a substitute for child or adult care. However, keep in mind that the goal of a flexible work arrangement is to allow staff members to balance professional and personal responsibilities. In keeping with this goal, remote work can provide benefits for staff members with caregiving responsibilities. Staff members may save time commuting that can now be spent with family members. In addition, the flexibility of being closer to home may enable caregivers to take less time off for personal activities. While a staff member should not be serving as a daily primary caregiver during his/her scheduled work hours, this does not mean children or adults cannot be at home with the staff member if another individual is present to provide care or if a child or adult is independently pursuing their own activities during the day or after school.

Q16: What equipment is the institution required to provide a staff member who is authorized to work remotely?

A: Decisions regarding what equipment will be provided for remote work will be made by the department and individual supervisor consistent with the institution's Flexible Work Arrangement policy and guidelines. In general, the institution is not obligated to provide any infrastructure to support the

remote working effort (i.e. PCs or laptops for home use, reimbursement for internet connectivity at home, or reimbursement for home telephone expenses).

We encourage supervisors to familiarize themselves with these guidelines and their campus policy on equipment. Factors to consider include technology needs based on the work of the staff member, information technology security requirements and budget constraints.

Q17: Can a supervisor suspend or terminate a flexible schedule or remote work arrangement?

A: Yes. Flexible work arrangements may be terminated by either the supervisor or the institution at any time for failure to comply with the terms of the Flexible Work Arrangement Guidelines or institutional policies, or for diminishment in performance while participating in a flexible work arrangement, even if the diminishment does not warrant disciplinary or corrective action. Supervisors should, but are not required to provide, a 5-business day notice of changes in flexible work arrangements.

Q18: Does a Flexible Work Arrangement form need to be approved and on file?

A: Yes, if the supervisor has approved a formal flexible work arrangement for his/her staff member in either his/her work location or schedule, then an approved Flexible Work Arrangement form is required prior to the staff member working remotely or working a flexible schedule.

This policy does not limit a supervisor's ability to grant informal or infrequent requests from staff members who do not have a flexible work arrangement form in place.

If the request to work from home is an informal or infrequent request to accommodate the staff member's work life balance needs, then a Flexible Work Arrangement form is not required. An informal or infrequent request means that the staff member does not work from home with consistency or any pattern in work schedule, but rather as needed to accommodate personal needs, such as waiting for a repair person or caring for a sick child.

Q19: Can a staff member be issued discipline when he/she is working remotely?

A: Yes, the same standards and expectations of performance and attendance apply to all flexible work arrangements. However, supervisors are encouraged to take a positive, proactive approach to both performance and conduct issues. Follow best practices for addressing conflict, identifying problems and exploring the root cause of the issue or concern. Schedule a time to discuss performance and expectations with the staff member. Provide feedback and coaching. If the flexible work arrangement is contributing to the problem, then re-evaluate, adjust or terminate the arrangement if needed.

In addition, a supervisor should not forget to self-assess his/her contribution, if any, to the issue or concern being discussed. A supervisor should evaluate how he/she supports the staff member, as well as communications. It is easy for both supervisors and staff members to feel less connected when working remotely.

Q20: What are the steps that need to be taken if a staff member works from home without authorization?

A: The supervisor should discuss this issue with the staff member and express the reasons why it cannot be supported moving forward. Failure for the staff member to comply with the supervisor's expectations may result in disciplinary action.

Q21: Does a staff member working remotely need to be compensated if they work overtime without pre-approval?

A: Yes. Overtime worked, even if not approved, must be compensated in accordance with the provisions of both the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the Texas Government Code.

Setting clear expectations is important with all staff members, not just remote workers. However, remote staff members may feel more isolated and be unable to reach his/her supervisor to clarify expectations. It is important to establish clear guidelines and expectations with a remote staff member, so he/she will know how to handle a scenario in which deadlines or workload may lead to working overtime.

Supervisors should discuss and set expectations with the staff member, ensuring the staff member is aware the institution's policy requires that all overtime and compensatory time worked must be approved in advance. A staff member who fails to follow departmental directives or policy regarding the approval of overtime and compensatory leave may be subject to disciplinary action including discharge.

Q22: How can a staff member working remotely protect confidential information if he/she is using his/her personal devices for work?

A: Each staff member is responsible for adhering to the [UNT System Policy 08.100: Information Security and UNT System Information Security Handbook](#) to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data, information, and information resources while working remotely. Staff members are required to ensure that personal or university owned technology or equipment used during flexible work arrangements adhere to the protection requirements noted in the [UNT System Information Security Handbook](#). Staff members must not allow an unauthorized party access to University owned data, information, or information resources. Staff members are required to adhere to University policies regarding copyright laws, intellectual property, and other policies related to use of information resources and equipment.

Q23: Can a supervisor require a staff member working remotely to provide proof that they have updated antivirus software on his/her devices to ensure data is protected?

A: Yes. All workstations, whether personal or University owned, should use antivirus software for protection against malware. ITSS Information Security provides McAfee Antivirus software that can be

downloaded at [AntiVirus Download](#) with a valid EUID and password. The antivirus software should be configured for regular updates and automatic scans to remain effective.

Q24: How should a staff member working from a remote location handle equipment malfunctioning?

A: For University-Owned Equipment: Work with your department and local IT Services support team.

For Employee-Owned Equipment: Staff members are responsible for maintaining their personal equipment when working from home. The institution is not responsible for damages to employee-owned equipment resulting from participation in the flexible work arrangement program.

If the staff member is unable to work remotely due to equipment failure, he/she is required to coordinate with his/her supervisor and make arrangements to work onsite at the campus.