

DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Department of Employee Relations

TELECOMMUTING GUIDELINES

I. Purpose and Scope

To provide

- Guidelines governing staff telecommuting.
- Best practices when authorizing and making arrangements for an employee to telecommute.

II. Definitions

Telecommuting: A flexible work arrangement that allows an employee to work at home or elsewhere for part or all of their regular work schedule.

Telecommuter: A staff employee of the University who has been approved for alternate work arrangements, other than working from the primary office.

III. Guidelines

A. General Guidelines

1. Telecommuting is neither a universal employee right nor a universal employee benefit; telecommuting is a management option for an alternative work arrangement.
2. Telecommuting is not appropriate for all employees and jobs, nor all employees in the same or similar jobs, and should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. May be used when appropriate to the particular needs of a department and employee, or under special circumstances such as a pandemic.
4. Telecommuting may be approved on a time-limited basis and exceptions may be required to meet department needs.
5. It is strongly recommended that departments work with their Human Resources Consultant when considering authorizing and making arrangements for an employee to telecommute.
6. It is recommended that departments review telecommuting arrangements at least monthly, to determine whether or not the arrangement should continue forward.
7. Telecommuting work arrangements should be mutually agreed to by the telecommuter, department manager and a higher-level supervisor (Director-level or above) with the understanding that the arrangements may be discontinued by the University at any time.
8. Managers are responsible to develop a means of evaluating employee hours worked and work performance, and holding the employee accountable, as they would normally do for staff working in the office.

B. Communication

1. The telecommuter is typically responsible for establishing and maintaining effective communication and work flow among coworkers, department manager and customers.
2. The telecommuter, in conjunction with the department manager, should devise procedures for effective communication, including frequencies of e-mails and/or telephone contact.

C. Work Space

1. When working at home or elsewhere the telecommuter is responsible for establishing and maintaining an adequate and safe work environment, in accordance with policy 5-404.
2. Telecommuters will be covered by the University Workers Compensation Insurance only for work related injuries incurred during the normal course and scope of their employment and job duties, including only being covered during work hours, in accordance with policy 5-404.
3. When working at home or elsewhere, the telecommuter is responsible for establishing a work environment free of interruptions and distractions that would affect performance.
4. Telecommuters should not provide primary care during agreed upon telecommuting hours for children or elders (dependents) who would otherwise require a provider's care.
5. Telecommuters who believe they need accommodation due to a medical impairment may contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (OEO/AA) to file a request. The OEO/AA will analyze such request according to established policy and procedures.

D. Hours of Work

1. The telecommuter and his/her manager/supervisor will agree on the number of days or hours of telecommuting allowed each week, the work schedule the telecommuter will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication, in accordance with *Policy 5-401*.
2. The telecommuter should agree to be accessible by phone or electronically within a reasonable time period during the agreed upon work schedule.
3. The telecommuter is responsible for recording hours worked, vacation, sick or other leave as the employee would do at the primary work location in accordance with *Policy 5-401*.
4. At department / supervisor request, the Payroll department will set up non-exempt (hourly) staff with "time stamp" access to the Kronos time keeping system. In this case employees can log in to start the time clock and log out when they are finished with their shift.
5. Time at home or elsewhere spent in activities other than work must not be submitted as work-time; such a circumstance would constitute falsification of time records to receive pay for time not worked (theft of time) and could be grounds for immediate termination of employment, in accordance with *Policy 5-111* and associated Rules.
6. Departments are strongly encouraged to coordinate with their Human Resources Consultant when considering telecommuting arrangements for an employee currently on leave. Employees on continuous leave will be prohibited from telecommuting.

E. Computer Equipment and Other Work Resources

1. Telecommuters are generally required to provide their own computer equipment, software and peripherals. An employee who uses their own personal equipment for telecommuting acknowledges and releases the University and his/her department from any and all liability.

2. When longer term arrangements are made for telecommuting, University equipment may be assigned to the telecommuter to utilize from home. If University equipment is used, the employee must exercise reasonable care for the equipment. Department approval should be obtained, prior to allowing University owned equipment to be taken home or elsewhere for the purpose of telecommuting, per Property Accounting form '*Request to use University Property Off-Campus*'. The employee may be held liable for damage caused by negligence.
3. University equipment should not be used for personal/other purposes beyond the incidental personal use it might receive if in the office.
4. All computer and electronic equipment, whether belonging to the telecommuter or the University shall comply with University policy 4-001, *University Institutional Data Management Policy* and University policy 4-004, *University Information Technology Resource Security Policy*, including current and updated versions of appropriate firewall, antivirus and antispyware protections.
5. The employee must follow all software licensing and copyright laws, as well as, all precautions and requirements prescribed by the department IT administrator, in accordance with policy 4-001 and 4-004.
6. No Protected Health Information or otherwise confidential information should be kept on personal electronic equipment, in accordance with policy 4-001.
7. Damage to any personal equipment being used for telecommuting is generally the responsibility of the telecommuter. Preventable damage (as determined by appropriate University administrator) to any University equipment being used for telecommuting may also be the responsibility of the telecommuter.
8. Normal wear and tear on personal equipment being used for telecommuting is the responsibility of the telecommuter. Normal wear and tear (as determined by appropriate University administrator) on University equipment being used for telecommuting is generally the responsibility of the telecommuter's department.

F. Expenses

1. Local Internet Service Providers (ISP's) are necessary for email and WWW functions and are generally paid for by the telecommuter.
2. Work related long-distance telephone (voice) expenses incurred by the employee at home should be reimbursed by the department. According to University procedure, the employee must present an itemized copy of the telephone bill for reimbursement. Cell phone usage may be excluded from long distance reimbursements.
3. To be reimbursed for any business expenses that may arise, the telecommuter should seek department manager approval before incurring them and have proper documentation to support the expenses, in accordance with all applicable accounting, ethics and financial control policies and procedures.

IV. References

1. University of Utah Information and Data Security Document – Signed at time of hire
2. University of Utah Policy, 5-401 – *Staff Compensation*
3. University of Utah Policy, 5-404 – *Workers Compensation Insurance*
4. University of Utah Policy, 5-310 – *Accident and Liability Reporting and Prevention*
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6. University of Utah Policy, 4-001 – *University Institutional Data Management Policy*
7. University of Utah Policy, 4-002 – *Information Resources Policy*
8. University of Utah Policy, 4-003 – *World Wide Web Resources Policy*
9. University of Utah Policy, 4-004 – *University Information Technology Resource Security Policy*
10. University of Utah Policy, 4-005 – *Use and Security of Property*
11. University of Utah Policy, 4-006 – *Identity Theft Prevention*
12. University of Utah Hospitals and Clinics Policies, Procedures, Clinical Protocols and Guidelines – *Acceptable Information Resources Use Policy*
13. University of Utah Policy, 5-117 – *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy*
14. Financial and Business Services, Property Accounting form – *When to use off-campus authorization form*; <http://fbs.admin.utah.edu/download/property/Whencampus.pdf>

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