

HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER HANDBOOK OF OPERATING PROCEDURES

Chapter 4	General Personnel Policies	Effective:	November 2000
Section 4.7	Work and Leave Administration	Revised:	December 2001
Policy 4.7.6	Telecommuting	Responsibility:	Vice President for Human Resources

TELECOMMUTING

Policy

Telecommuting is defined as working from a remote workplace, such as a private home, instead of commuting to a designated headquarters. The term designated headquarters means the employee's usual and customary University work address. With telecommuting, emphasis is placed on information or communication exchange through telephones and remote devices such as computers, modems, and fax machines so an employee may work off-site. In some cases, the telephone may be the only necessary communication equipment.

The objectives of the Health Science Center's telecommuting program are to improve overall productivity of the University, as well as individual employee productivity; make optimal use of University office facilities and equipment; reduce traffic and parking congestion; reduce energy consumption; and, encourage employee retention. The Health Science Center supports telecommuting by employees when feasible and when mutually beneficial.

Applicability

This policy applies at all full-time, regularly appointed classified and administrative and professional (A&P) employees excluding law enforcement personnel eligible for hazardous duty pay. Full-time is defined as employment of forty (40) hours per week. A regular employee, for purposes of flextime, in addition to being appointed full-time, must also be appointed for at least four and one-half (4½) months or more.

Employee Criteria

This policy applies to classified, and administrative and professional employees who are beyond the probationary period. It applies only to regular salaried employees and does not include employees hired for temporary positions. Employee participation in telecommuting is entirely voluntary. A department may not require an employee to telecommute and an employee may not demand the "right" to telecommute. Employees interested in telecommuting must meet the following criteria:

1. have the ability to work well with minimal supervision;
 2. have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the operations for which he or she is responsible;
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3. have a history of reliable and responsible accomplishment of work duties; and,
 4. have demonstrated ability to establish priorities and manage his or her time.

Employees shall abide by all Health Science Center policies and guidelines for standards and ethics. Specifically, employees shall strictly adhere to Health Science Center policies regarding the use of state property. Employees are prohibited from using state-owned hardware, software, telecommunications, or any other equipment/materials for personal purposes except as authorized elsewhere in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

Job Criteria

Jobs acceptable for telecommuting are those that can be performed at a remote site without diminishing the quality of the work or disrupting the productivity of an office. Examples (in alphabetical order) include:

1. Analyzing: financial statements, proposals, data, estimates, budget.
2. Computer-Related: entering or compiling data, developing databases, programming.
3. Contacts: jobs that would not lend themselves to telecommuting are those that require frequent face-to-face contact with the public or internal department staff. However, if such contact could be scheduled on days the employee would be in the office or the contact could be made over the phone, telecommuting may still be a possibility.
4. Critical Thinking: department planning documents, policies and procedures.
5. Documenting: trip reports, test results.
6. Phone-Related Work: arranging meetings, coordinating studies, consulting with experts.

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7. Reading and Reviewing: plans and specifications, policies, procedures, legal documents, reports.
 8. Verifying: reports, records, accuracy tests.
 9. Writing/Editing: memos, reports, letters, articles, policies, procedures, evaluations.

**Job Tools
Criteria**

In general, the need for specialized materials or equipment should be either minimal or flexible. The chair or director must approve the decision to purchase or assign equipment based on overall departmental operational efficiency and effectiveness and based on available funds. Budget limitations within a department may prevent an employee from telecommuting.

**Schedule
Criteria**

The specific time schedule for each telecommuter will be worked out between the employee and his or her supervisor. This time schedule will be recorded in the [Telecommuting Agreement](#). During this scheduled work time, the telecommuting employee must be available for contact as if the employee were working in the designated headquarters; contact may include telephone, fax, network access, pager, and/or e-mail; the employee and supervisor will agree on how to handle telephone work and messages.

Unless otherwise approved, the employee must report regularly to his or her designated headquarters, usually at least once per week. However, the operational needs of the University take precedence over telecommuting agreements. A telecommuting employee must forego telecommuting if needed in the office on a regularly scheduled telecommuting day, but should be given as much notice as possible. Supervisors may allow for flexibility in scheduling the specific days of the week used for telecommuting and allow week-to-week flexibility to meet changing University or employee needs.

**Work
Environment
Criteria**

The telecommuter should maintain a designated workstation conducive to productivity in a clean, professional, and safe condition at the alternate work location. A floor plan of the area showing furniture, equipment, and electrical outlets must be attached to the

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Telecommuting Agreement. The supervisor may visit the telecommuter's work site for evaluation prior to final approval and/or may require that a photo of the workspace be attached to the agreement.

The opportunity to telecommute is offered with the understanding that it is the employee's responsibility to maintain a proper work environment (e.g., arrangements are made so that dependent care does not interfere with work, personal disruptions such as non-business telephone calls and visitors are kept to a minimum, etc.). Telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent child or elder care. Children under the age of 13 must be under the care of an individual other than the employee while the employee is working at home. Unless otherwise approved, someone other than the telecommuting employee must care for other members of the household who need regular attention.

Since the employee's home workspace will be considered an extension of the University workspace, the state's liability for job-related accidents may continue to exist during the understood and approved work schedule. The University specifically assumes no liability for injury to any other person who would not be in the work area if the duties were being performed at the designated headquarters. The University retains the right to make pre-arranged on-site inspections of this work area during working hours. Workers' compensation benefits will apply to injuries arising out of and in the course of employment. Injured employees must notify supervisors immediately and complete all requested documents regarding the injury.

The University will not be liable for damages to the employee's property resulting from participation in the telecommuting program. The University will not be responsible for operating costs, home maintenance, or any other incidental costs (e.g., utilities, telephone, insurance) associated with the use of the employee's residence for telecommuting, unless specifically provided otherwise in advance in writing.

Supplies required to complete assigned work at the alternate location should be obtained during one of the telecommuter's in-office work periods. Out-of-pocket expense for materials and supplies normally available at the University such as computer paper, floppy disks, etc., will not be reimbursed.

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On telecommuting days, employees must be available to receive telephone calls during their scheduled work hours. Telephone calls received at the home work office must be handled in a professional, business manner.

The University will provide an adequate work area for telecommuting employees on their non-telecommute days.

**Work
Assignments
and Evaluation**

Employees will meet with his/her supervisor to receive assignments and to review completed work. Employees will complete all assigned work according to the standards of performance for their classification and according to procedures mutually agreed upon with their supervisor.

The evaluation of the employee's job performance will be based on established performance standards for his/her classification. Performance must remain satisfactory in order to remain in the telecommuting program. Evaluations should be performed every six months while an employee is telecommuting.

Telecommuters will be required to maintain accurate time accounting documentation to support and substantiate their work hours and products. They will be required to submit routine time and status reports detailing hours worked and tasks performed and/or completed.

**Length of
Telecommuting
Agreements**

Telecommuting agreements may remain in effect for a maximum of twelve (12) months, unless terminated in accordance with the procedures described elsewhere. A new agreement must be completed at the beginning of each new fiscal year. These agreements do not constitute an employment contract and they do not create a property interest in employment.

**Termination of
Participation**

The telecommuting arrangement is voluntary and may be terminated at any time with ten (10) days written notice by either party; however, the University may terminate the telecommuting agreement for cause without prior notice. When the [Telecommuting Agreement](#) is terminated for whatever reason, the employee must return immediately to the University all notes, data, reference materials, sketches, drawings, memoranda, reports, records, equipment, software, supplies,

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and any other University property in the employee's possession or control. The University will not be held responsible for costs, damages, or losses associated with the termination of the telecommuting agreement.

Employee Benefits

Telecommuting does not change employee benefits established in applicable policy or related law or rule. All forms of telecommuting imply an employer/employee relationship, with the employee receiving the same benefits and having the same responsibilities as a non-telecommuting employee. Therefore, employee benefits including leave time, holidays, compensation (except for the accrual of overtime and compensatory time), etc., are not affected by participation as a telecommuter.

Authorized Expenses

Chairs and Directors are authorized to approve, using established University procedures, expenditures for office equipment (excluding furniture), software, communications (including charges for connecting telephone lines and long distance charges related to University business), and office supplies needed by telecommuters at their remote workplace. Contact Telecommunications and Networking Customer Services for procurement of any communication services.

Equipment and Software

Each Chair or Director is responsible for identifying all equipment needs within his or her department. When University equipment is used at a remote workplace, the employee is financially responsible for that equipment if it is lost, stolen, or damaged because of that employee's negligence, misuse, or abuse. Property removal procedures must be followed. The following policies apply to all University and employee-owned hardware and/or software used in telecommuting:

1. All hardware and software used must be approved by the department and scanned for viruses.
2. Products/programs the employee develops while telecommuting for the University remain the property of the University.
3. Employees are required to follow all University information security rules, software copyright laws, and manufacturer's

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licensing agreements. University-owned software may not be duplicated except as allowed under licensing agreements.

4. Telecommuters must use only University-approved communication software when connecting with the University network. Standard solutions must be implemented where those standards exist. Departments shall not provide previously used technology which becomes ever more difficult to support remotely.

**Work Related
Injury, Health,
and Safety**

Telecommuting employees are expected to maintain the same standards of health and safety at their remote workplace as they are at their designated headquarters. Employees are subject to University policies, regardless of work location.

Time and Leave

1. The amount of time an employee is expected to work will not change due to telecommuting; employees working full-time will be responsible for forty (40) hours per work week.
2. Telecommuting employees may not be approved for overtime nor are they eligible to earn compensatory time.
3. In accordance with established policies, employees must obtain supervisory approval before taking any type of leave.
4. All time and leave records must be maintained by departments for telecommuting employees as they are for on-site employees.

Responsibilities

Executive Committee members will:

1. consider and approve where appropriate recommendations for telecommuting from Chairs and/or Directors for initial implementation and annually thereafter at the beginning of each fiscal year; and,
2. verify that all departments and units in their area or school apply the same criteria in following the telecommuting policy and procedures.

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Chairs and Directors will:

1. identify jobs, employees, and supervisors appropriate for telecommuting;
2. verify that all areas in the department apply the same criteria and follow the telecommuting guidelines; and,
3. obtain necessary equipment and resources as feasible.

Supervisors will:

1. secure approval from the Chair or Director before offering the telecommuting option;
2. be responsible for the performance of telecommuting employees, just as with other employees under their supervision; and,
3. be responsible for coordinating telecommuters' equipment and other technical needs.

Employees will:

1. be responsible for abiding by the terms of their [Telecommuting Agreement](#) and the telecommuting policies set forth by the University;
 2. be responsible for equipment, materials, and other resources provided by or belonging to the University;
 3. comply with all University required information security policies and procedures; and,
 4. ensure state-owned equipment is used only for officially permitted purposes.
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