

PERSONNEL

TELECOMMUTING POLICY

Telecommuting

The Office of University Audits (Office) provides the opportunity to telecommute for professional staff that can maintain the level of productivity that is expected in the office. Telecommuting is not an entitlement. The telecommuting days should be scheduled so that job activities are carried out as efficiently as possible and meetings are at the convenience of the auditee and the Office. Audit management must approve the telecommuting schedule.

All staff that want to arrange a regular telecommuting schedule are required to sign a copy of the *Telecommuting Agreement* established by the Office of University Audits. Occasional telecommuting requests can be handled through requests to audit management but the *Telecommuting Guidelines* still apply. New staff should not expect to telecommute for the first three months in order for audit management to assess work habits and levels of productivity.

The following *Telecommuting Guidelines* address terms and conditions of telecommuting arrangements, performance evaluations, and other issues relevant to telecommuting. To demonstrate the value of your telecommuting effort to the Office, specific work goals will be established with audit management and achievement of those goals will be monitored.

The [Telecommuting Agreement](#) will be renewed subject to annual review of work goals achieved.

Telecommuting Guidelines

The Office considers telecommuting to be a viable alternative work arrangement in cases where individual, job, and supervisor characteristics are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting allows an employee to work at home, or other approved remote location, for all or a part of their regular workweek. Telecommuting is a voluntary work alternative that may be appropriate for some employees and some jobs. It is not an entitlement; it is not a University-wide benefit; and it does not change the terms and conditions of employment with the University of Illinois.

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal arrangement as described below. Informal, short-term arrangements may also be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the organization. Such informal arrangements are not the focus of these guidelines.

The Decision to Telecommute

1. The decision to offer a telecommuting arrangement is dependent upon the judgment and discretion of the managing supervisor. Either an employee or a managing supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement. Before entering into any telecommuting arrangement, the employee and manager will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement paying particular attention to the following areas:
 - Employee Suitability - the employee and manager will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters. Successful telecommuting traits include the ability to work independently, organization and time management skills, self motivation, and a results orientation.
 - Job Responsibilities - the employee and manager will discuss job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
 - Equipment needs, work space design considerations, and scheduling issues.

2. Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements, or being considered for such arrangements, must have been employed with the University of Illinois for a minimum of 3 months of continuous, regular employment and must have exhibited above average performance, in accordance with the institution's performance appraisal process. In special circumstances, the three month waiting period can be waived by the hiring supervisor.
3. If the employee and manager agree to a telecommuting arrangement, a [Telecommuting Agreement](#) will be prepared and signed by all parties and the arrangement will begin.

Terms and Conditions of Telecommuting Arrangements

1. All telecommuting arrangements will be made for a set period of time as determined by the managing supervisor, subject to renewal at the end of the agreed upon time period. For initial agreements with new telecommuters, it is recommended that the initial time period be set to a period of 90 to 180 days in which time the benefits of telecommuting to both the employee and employer can be assessed prior to entering into a longer-term agreement.
2. The employee and manager will agree on the number of days of telecommuting allowed each week, the work schedule the employee will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication. The employee agrees to be accessible by phone, modem, pager, or other electronic medium during the agreed upon work schedule.
3. Communications between the telecommuter and supervisor will be more formal during the early stages of the telecommuting arrangement. After ascertaining that the arrangement is meeting intended objectives, the manager and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.
4. Employees entering into telecommuting arrangements must be available for and participate in meetings in accordance with the normal demands of the job. The supervisor will ensure that on-site staff include the telecommuter in meetings as appropriate, using teleconference or other electronic means. If necessitated for business purposes, telecommuting employees may be asked to report to the University workplace to attend meetings.
5. Telecommuting employees remain obligated to comply with all University rules, policies, practices, and procedures. Violation of such rules, practices and procedures may result in immediate termination of the arrangement and possible disciplinary action.
6. Accrual of leave benefits and requests for sick leave and vacation usage will follow the same policies and procedures as those used at the on-site work location.
7. The availability of telecommuting is a flexible work arrangement for employees of the Office that can be discontinued at any time at the discretion of the employer. Every effort will be made to provide 10 working days notice of such a change to accommodate commuting and other problems that may arise from such a change. However, the employer reserves the right to terminate the arrangement without notice if circumstances require such action. An employee can also be temporarily assigned full-time to their on-site office location, if necessitated by business purposes.
8. Employees entering into a [Telecommuting Agreement](#) may be required to use shared workstations and/or office accommodations when working on-site.
9. Prior to renewal of any telecommuting arrangement, the employee and manager will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance. Renewal and/or modifications of the arrangement are subject to the judgment and discretion of the supervisor.

Performance Evaluation

1. Evaluation of telecommuter performance will be consistent with that received by employees working on-site at the office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than attendance-based performance. Evaluation methods will include frequent interaction by phone and/or e-mail between the employee and the manager, and regular face-to-face meetings to assess work progress and discuss problem areas. Expected outputs will be documented at regular intervals to ensure that they are mutually understood by the employee and his or her supervisor.

Equipment and Supplies

1. The managing supervisor will determine, with information supplied by the employee and others involved, the appropriate equipment and communication services needs (including hardware, software, modems, phone and data lines, facsimile equipment, photocopiers, etc.) for each telecommuting arrangement on a case-by-case basis. Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization. Equipment supplied by the employee will be maintained by the employee. The University accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment.

Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The employee and employing department will complete a University Inventory Loan Agreement Form (UIUC and UIS) or a Request for Off-Campus Use of University Property Form (UIC) for University equipment to be used in the telecommuting arrangement. A copy of the appropriate form signed by both the employee and supervisor shall be retained in the department. The telecommuter agrees to take due care to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment or of the telecommuting arrangement, all University property will be returned to the University.

2. The Office will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) for successful completion of job responsibilities. The organization will also reimburse the employee for all other business-related expenses such as phone calls, shipping costs, etc., that are reasonably incurred in accordance with job responsibilities.

Work Environment

1. In the event the telecommuting arrangement involves use of the employee's home, the employee will establish an appropriate work environment within their home for work purposes. The University will not be responsible for costs associated with initial setup of the employee's home office such as remodeling or lighting, or the cost of utilities. Employees will be offered appropriate assistance in setting up a workstation designed for safe, comfortable work. The Office reserves the right to inspect the employee's home work site for conformance with minimal work place requirement including possible work hazards and to suggest modifications.
2. Injuries sustained by the employee while at their home-based work location and in conjunction with their regular work duties are normally covered by the [State of Illinois Workers' Compensation Act](#). Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the University of such injuries in accordance with the [University's Worker's Compensation](#) procedures. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to their work site.
3. Consistent with the organization's expectations of information asset security for employees working at the office full-time, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of University information accessible from their home office. Steps include, but are not limited to, use of locked file cabinets, disk boxes and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other steps appropriate for the job and the environment.

4. Telecommuting is not designed as an alternative for satisfying an employee's dependent care responsibilities. Prospective telecommuters are expected to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering into an agreement, and to establish dependent care arrangements that will not interfere with work completion.
5. Individual tax implications related to the home-based work space shall be the responsibility of the telecommuting employee.

Restrictions

1. Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the *Fair Labor Standards Act* will be required to record all hours worked in a manner designated by the organization. Hours worked in excess of those specified per day and per workweek, in accordance with state and federal requirements will require the advance approval of the supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in the cessation of the [Telecommuting Agreement](#).
2. These telecommuting guidelines should not be applied to University employees represented by collective bargaining units without prior discussion with the Office for Human Resources and union representatives. In the event that a telecommuting arrangement is being considered for a union represented employee, contact the Office for Human Resources for advice on appropriate action.

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