

UCOP Human Resources Procedures Supplement D – TELECOMMUTING GUIDELINES

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I. INTRODUCTION

The opportunity to telecommute is a privilege that is granted to employees at management’s discretion and with approval of the Department Head. The following guidelines are presented to help departmental managers and supervisors and employees develop employee telecommuting arrangements that are clearly understood and to the benefit of the department. Managers and supervisors are expected to follow these principles in approving telecommuting arrangements.

The University of California seeks to be an employer of choice that provides a work environment that attracts and supports a diverse set of talented employees. The University can advance its goals, promote efficiency and help employees balance work and personal responsibilities through the use of flexible work. Workplace flexibility can increase productivity and performance, enhance employee recruitment and retention, provide relief of space constraints and promote environmental sustainability.

II. DEFINITION

Telecommuting is an arrangement in which an employee regularly performs work at an alternative site. Telecommuting is intended to create flexible conditions that will help employees accomplish their work more effectively. Successful telecommuting arrangements will serve the needs both of individual employees and of their work units. Occasional work off-site, including work while traveling on University business, does not constitute telecommuting and does not require a formal agreement. However, occasional off-site work must be approved by the supervisor.

III. CONDITIONS

Telecommuting arrangements are most likely to be successful when there is a clear understanding of and agreement about what is expected and how responsibilities are divided. Accordingly, long-term telecommuting arrangements require a written agreement.

Eligibility for a telecommuting arrangement is determined by an employee’s job duties. Telecommuting agreements should include the percentage of time that a job may be performed remotely. If there are elements of the position that must be performed in person, those should be clearly outlined in the telecommuting agreement. Not all employees and positions are suitable for telework; however, each new or modified telecommuting arrangement must be evaluated objectively and fairly to ensure an equitable process.

Telecommuting agreements are subject to ongoing review by managers and employees and may be modified or rescinded with thirty days' notice. Examples of situations that may require an amendment or rescission of an approved telecommuting agreement include but are not limited to:

- Business needs are no longer being met
- Job or job requirements change
- Current coverage or staffing needs change

Telecommuting should always be voluntary, and an employee or the supervisor may terminate the arrangement at any time with thirty days' notice.

IV. AUTHORITY

UCOP Department Heads have the authority to establish telecommuting arrangements. Department Heads are encouraged to give serious consideration to all reasonable requests, but shall give the highest priority to the effective functioning of the division or department.

Decisions about which positions are eligible for flexible work should be based on operational and business needs and made without bias or favoritism. Review the Position Eligibility Assessment Document to assist in determinations. All jobs in a department were evaluated as part of the [Position Eligibility Assessment](#) process for flexible work eligibility in the same timeframe to avoid disparate treatment.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

Once the supervisor and employee have determined the nature of the work arrangement, hybrid or remote work, a telecommuting arrangement will be developed. The employee and the supervisor are jointly responsible for:

- Determining the days and hours on telecommuting days
- Determining methods of contact
- Preventing the arrangement from unduly burdening the employee's co-workers
- Ensuring that the employee is readily available, and has adequate means of communication, during specific working hours
- Arranging for the employee to come to the primary work site with reasonable notice based on business and operational needs regardless of the telecommuting schedule.

The employee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that University equipment and records in the employee's off-site workspace are maintained in safe and secure conditions and are used primarily for University business. The employee must ensure that University records in his or her possession are available to the department when requested.
- Being available to travel when his or her work requires
- "Checking in" with the supervisor or designated person on a regular basis
- Alerting the supervisor if external circumstances are likely to interfere with performance under the telecommuting arrangement.

- If the employee is non-exempt, the employee is responsible for working the hours agreed upon and for obtaining approval from the supervisor in advance of working any overtime.
- The employee is also responsible for ensuring a safe and healthy work environment and agrees to hold the University harmless for injury to others at the non-University worksite.

VI. EQUIPMENT AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES

The University will provide the employee with standard IT equipment and ergo chairs based on a ergo assessment needed to perform their job duties. Additional equipment may be provided for accommodation needs. The employee is responsible for supplying any additional equipment needed for their workspace not provided by the University.

University equipment in the employee's off-site workspace is subject to the same inventory control and disposal procedures as that in the primary work site. The employee is responsible for bringing equipment to the primary work site for inspection, maintenance and repair. The department will repair and replace University equipment unless it is lost, damaged or stolen through the employee's clear negligence or abuse. The telecommuting agreement should contain an inventoried list of all equipment including serial numbers or other identifying characteristics (e.g. model numbers). The employee will not use, or allow others to use equipment for purposes other than University business.

The employee is responsible for ensuring that all University-owned equipment, data, or University specific information is maintained in a secure manner, is backed up or stored appropriately, and that there are no risks of loss or uncontrolled information. This includes electronic records as well as hard copy documentation.

VII. HEALTH AND SAFETY LIABILITY

The employee is responsible for maintaining a safe and secure work environment and for arranging the off-site workspace in an ergonomically sound manner and agrees to hold the University harmless for injury to others at the non-University worksite. Supervisors should direct the employee to the UCOP Ergonomist for assistance in setting up an ergonomically correct off-site workspace and may provide telecommuting employees with information on a safe and ergonomically sound work environment. Work-related injuries incurred in the off-site workspace, during agreed upon working hours, should be reported promptly to the supervisor. Such reports of injuries will be handled in the same manner as reports of injuries in the normal workplace. Telecommuting employees should not receive visitors, on work-related matters, at the off-site location without the department head's prior approval.

VIII. PROCEDURES

The employee is expected to initiate the telecommuting request with the supervisor. Together the employee and supervisor prepare a Telecommuting Agreement for approval by the Department Head. The original should be maintained in the employee's personnel file, and the employee should receive a copy.

IX. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Reimbursable Expenses for Remote Work

Telecommuting employees who are working outside of the job location at their own convenience are not on travel status as defined in Business and Finance Bulletin G-28, Travel Regulations, as “the period during which a traveler is traveling on official University business outside the vicinity of their headquarters or residence.” If an employee must travel to their job location that is considered a non-reimbursable commuting expense.

Reimbursement for work-related travel will be made from the employee’s job location, not from where the employee’s services are performed (non-University worksite).

Expenses related to work needs, such as internet connectivity or phone usage, are governed by [Business and Finance Bulletin G-46: Guidelines for the Purchase of Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices, and the UCOP Mobile Device guidelines](#). Only business-related equipment that can be returned to the office at the end of the remote work arrangement should be reimbursed. If any item needs to be installed, charges related to the installation are the responsibility of the employee.

Standard office supplies (such as pens, pencils, highlighters, notebooks, tape, staples, sticky notes) will be shipped to telecommuting employees as needed. Reimbursement of office supplies and equipment should be kept at a minimum to ensure proper procurement processes.

Health and Welfare Benefits

If the employee relocates outside of a benefit plan’s coverage area may have limited benefits and provider options. The employee should contact UCPath with questions.

The employee is responsible for updating their personal information in UCPath. If the employee moves out of their plan’s coverage, they have the opportunity to select a new plan that will offer in-network care. The employee should contact UCPath with specific questions about updating their personal information or changing their benefit plan.

University Worksite Space Allocations

If the employee works three or more days a week from a University worksite, an assigned workspace will be provided. If the employee works 2 or less days a week from a University worksite, the employee will not have individually assigned on-site workspace; however on-site hoteling space will be available for reservation.