

NORWICH UNIVERSITY TELECOMMUTING POLICY

Reviewed and approved on April 30, 2012

OBJECTIVE

This policy is to establish procedures, eligibility requirements, criteria, and responsibilities for approving requests for telecommuting by staff of Norwich University.

OVERVIEW

Telecommuting is an arrangement in which some or all of an employee's scheduled work time is at a location other than a campus office or usual place of work through the use of computers or other telecommunications. Telecommuting may be used to create flexible work arrangements that serve the needs of both the employee and the work unit. Creativity and flexibility in applying this policy are encouraged, as long as job expectations and operating needs are met. Although this policy is not designed for emergency operations or arrangements made as part of business continuity planning, many of the same considerations apply.

GENERAL

A. Criteria for Consideration:

1. The department head will determine
 - a. whether the nature of work is suitable for performance at a remote site
 - b. if an individual employee is a good candidate for telecommuting
 - c. whether the proposed arrangement will be fair to all employees and in the best interest of the department.
2. The following characteristics will be considered when reviewing requests to telecommute.
Employees should:
 - a. Be self-motivated
 - b. Have a proven history of dependability
 - c. Be independent workers who require minimal supervision
 - d. Be well organized with good work habits and time management skills.

B. Eligibility Requirements:

1. A request for telecommuting submitted by a department with approval of the appropriate cabinet member will be subject to review and approval by the Human Resources Office that the job duties can adequately be performed under the telecommuting arrangement.
2. The employee must have completed any applicable initial evaluation period, and the most recent performance evaluation must indicate that job expectations have been met. The employee must not be at any stage of Constructive Discipline. Initiation of Constructive Discipline may be cause for immediate termination of an approved telecommuting arrangement.
3. The employee must have a good knowledge of the job responsibilities.
4. Telecommuting may be initiated by an employee on a voluntary basis, or may be required by a department as a condition of employment.
5. Voluntary telecommuting arrangements must be in the best interest of the University and department, as well as the employee.
6. The department head may terminate the agreement at any time with written notice.

C. Compensation:

1. Telecommuters will be compensated for work performed, paid leave taken and required travel as if duties were being performed at the office or usual work place.
2. For non-exempt (hourly) employees, overtime shall not be worked unless authorized in advance by the supervisor. Failure of the employee to obtain advance approval to work overtime may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

D. Equipment: If job duties require access to the University network or database applications, the University will provide the computing equipment used in telecommuting. Any personal expenses associated with telecommuting, including fees for internet access, will normally be at the employee's expense. In the event that the University pays for internet access, current federal regulations require that the payment be treated as additional compensation because it is not feasible to distinguish personal use from business use; an assertion that there will be no personal use does not satisfy the federal requirements.

E. All employees are responsible for complying with University guidelines, policies and procedures pertaining to outside employment and shall not engage in any outside employment activities during time worked telecommuting.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Employee Responsibilities:

1. The employee or the department will initiate the request by preparing a formal proposal.
2. The employee must be able to perform all essential functions and assigned duties, including contact with co-workers, customers or students as determined by the supervisor and department head.
3. The employee must work with the supervisor and department head to determine how work will be assigned and performance measured, working hours, and arranging for employee to return to the work site when necessary regardless of schedule.
4. The employee is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for appropriate telecommunications connections at the home site.
5. The employee is responsible for making sure that all provided University equipment is safe and that the off site workplace is ergonomically sound, safe and secure, and in compliance with local building codes and zoning requirements.
6. The employee is responsible for assuring that any personally owned computing equipment used in telecommuting will be maintained and secured so that the integrity of University owned data and equipment are not compromised. University owned equipment must be used if job duties require VPN access to the campus network or database applications. Full compliance with University data policies will be required, including preventing unauthorized access to confidential or proprietary data, or misuse of intellectual property. The same policies that apply to staff while on campus regarding monitoring of network access and the content of connected systems also apply to all devices used during telecommuting.
7. The employee is not to conduct university business with in person visitors to the home site.
8. The supervisor must approve any changes to the employee's work schedule in advance.
9. The employee is responsible for ensuring that another individual remains present to provide primary care for any child or dependent adult at the home work site. Any waiver or modification of this requirement must have the approval of the appropriate cabinet member and the Director of Human Resources.

B. Manager Responsibilities:

1. If the department head and an employee informally agree to a telecommuting arrangement, and the arrangement has been approved by the appropriate cabinet member, the department head shall contact Human Resources prior to entering into a formal written agreement. Human Resources will determine if duties of the position can be performed through telecommuting.
2. Ensure that the employee is subject to the same rules regarding attendance and leave, and performance reviews as other employees.
3. The telecommuting arrangement shall cover the days of the regular workweek. The supervisor shall make certain that the employee's work hours do not fall below the standard normal workweek.
4. If the employee is non-exempt, the supervisor must communicate to the employee that he or she is not allowed to work overtime without prior management approval.
5. The department is to ensure employees understand that they are covered by workers' compensation when performing official duties at an alternate worksite, such as the home.

PROCEDURE

If the department head and employee agree to a telecommuting arrangement and Human Resources has determined that the duties may be performed by telecommuting, then the agreement will be documented and submitted to the appropriate cabinet member for approval. The Telecommuting Agreement form is available on the Human Resources downloadable forms listing. The signed original agreement will be sent to Human Resources for final approval by the Director of Human Resources, and will be retained in the employee's official personnel file.

Approved at President's Advisory Council, April 30, 2012

Telecommuting Agreement

Employee Name: _____ Employee ID: _____

Job Title: _____ Department: _____

I have read and understand the University's Telecommuting Policy and agree to the duties, obligations, responsibilities and conditions for telecommuters described in that document.

I agree that, among other things, I am responsible for establishing specific telecommuting work hours during which I may be reached directly; furnishing and maintaining my remote work space in a safe manner; and employing appropriate telecommuting security measures for protecting University assets, information, confidential material and systems. I verify that my remote work site provides space that is free of safety and fire hazards, and I will practice the same safety habits at my remote work site that I would at the office. I understand that the University will not be liable for any claims, excluding workers compensation, resulting from this arrangement.

I understand that the University is not obligated to provide this arrangement and may at any time change any or all of the conditions under which I am permitted to telecommute, or withdraw permission to telecommute.

Remote Work Location:

Telecommuting Schedule:

On a weekly basis as follows:

On a monthly basis as follows:

No regular schedule (separate permission for each day):

Regular Telecommuting Work Hours:

From _____ To _____

Date on which Agreement to Telecommute will Begin:

Job Duties Which Will Be Performed Offsite:

University Assets to Be Used at Remote Location: (Description and Property Numbers)

Non-University equipment, software and data to be used at remote work location: (list)

University information systems to be accessed from remote work location: (list)

Employee's Signature

_____ Approved Disapproved
Supervisor

_____ Approved Disapproved
Director/Dean

_____ Approved Disapproved
Cabinet Member

_____ Approved Disapproved
Director Human Resources

A copy of this agreement will be placed in the employee's personnel file.