

## **UCOP Human Resources Procedures Supplement D – TELECOMMUTING GUIDELINES**

### **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.

### **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.

Telecommuting is normally reserved for employees in exempt positions, since non-exempt positions require careful tracking of time worked to ensure that overtime policies are properly observed. Telecommuting is more challenging for nonexempt employees due to record keeping requirements that require recording of each workday showing when the employee begins and ends the workday as well as meal and break periods.

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

In the event that more employees request telecommuting arrangements than a department can reasonably accommodate, the department head should respond to requests that are consistent with these Guidelines in ways that are fair to all employees and in the best interest of the department. Among the measures that might be adopted are rotating periods of telecommuting between employees or reducing the amount of time spent in telecommuting arrangements in order to accommodate more individuals.

### **V. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The supervisor is responsible for determining whether the employee is a good candidate, whether the nature of the work is suitable for performance from a remote site, and whether the proposed arrangement will impose burdens on other employees or the department as a whole. In determining if the employee is a good candidate for telecommuting, the supervisor should consider factors such as, but not limited to, completion of the probationary

period, satisfactory performance, and the ability to work independently.

The employee and the supervisor are jointly responsible for:

- Determining how performance will be assigned and measured
- Determining the working hours on telecommuting days
- Preventing the arrangement from 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 when necessary, 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. (As noted in Section III, telecommuting is normally reserved for employees in exempt positions.)
- Ensuring a safe and healthy work environment.

## **VI. EQUIPMENT AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES**

Normally, University equipment and a University email account shall be used only for University business conducted in telecommuting arrangements. When the department head determines that it is necessary for the employee's productivity, he/she may purchase, but is not obligated to do so, network access at the telecommuting site. The employee may be responsible for purchasing network access from the remote site.

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 is responsible for ensuring that all 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. Supervisors should direct the employee to Environment Health and Safety 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.

With reasonable notice, the Office of the President may make on-site visits to the employee's home or other remote workplace to determine that the workplace is safe and free from hazards, and to maintain, repair, inspect, or retrieve University-owned equipment and supplies.

## **VIII. PROCEDURES**

Normally, 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.