

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

TO: All Steve Hicks School Staff and Supervisors

FROM: Luis H. Zayas, Dean

The Steve Hicks School will resume in-person operations and Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) during the months of June, July, and August 2021. In line with the message from [President Hartzell](#), we will start returning to on-campus work on July 5th and be fully transitioned to resume full operations by Monday, August 16 (both in-person and telework). The plans outlined in this document reflect the agreements of the university and all colleges, schools, and units. The [Protect Texas Together](#) website will continue to provide updates and I urge you to check it regularly.

PRINCIPLES FOR FORGING FWA

There are two principles that we will use to guide our return to campus. In preparing these principles, I am operating under the assumption that some of staff will be interested in maintaining a flexible work arrangement to work remotely.

The *first principle* is that we want to maintain the personal connection among staff, faculty, and students that is so critical to our success. Physical presence in the school and other locations (e.g., Lake Austin Center; Pickle campus; Hargis) is essential for collaboration and advancing our teaching, research, and service missions. We will strive for consistency and fairness for all staff, students, and faculty.

The *second principle* is that we all recognize that some remote work is highly effective, and some things need to be done in person. It is the flexible balance between these two points that should guide all proposed work arrangements to keep us as productive as possible. This will preserve the quality of our work and be responsive in our service to each other.

POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR FWA

With these principles in mind, we will follow several policies and practice.

1. The school's flexible work arrangements are a *pilot project* to test and assess (and modify as needed) the effectiveness of our remote work arrangements. This keeps us in line with the university's direction and the agreement of deans across the campus.
2. Telework assumes that we will operate in person and during standard business hours, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

- a. Most functions will need to be carried out during the business day, but you may request a flexible set of hours between 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM when discussed with and approved by your supervisor and filed with my office through Sharon Brennan.
 - b. The primary work location for most employees will be on-campus in Austin or another official UT location. Before you think about working from outside of Texas, your supervisor and you will need to work with UT HR to review and approve the arrangements you are proposing.
3. Staff will be granted up to two days of local remote telework or “work from home” per week. All staff and supervisors must complete a Flexible Work Arrangement document if their schedule and work location vary from the university standard. Any arrangement beyond two days of local remote work will require my approval.
 - a. Your supervisor and you should ensure that the flexible work arrangement meet all job duties, your team’s needs, and the school’s overall business needs.
4. All FWA may be amended or rescinded if it is determined that the functions, roles, productivity, and quality at issue are not consistent with our mission or performance levels.
5. The school fully recognizes that remote work has been a long-held arrangement for research institutes, including individuals and groups working outside of the state of Texas. We will honor existing arrangements. Any projects undertaken out of state and require employees to work out of state will not require dean’s approval as FWA.
6. Remote work plans made prior to July 2021 will be honored and not require decanal approval.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

JUNE: The school’s FWA planning was discussed at the June 16 Faculty-Staff Briefing. A follow-up comment period ends at 5:00PM central on June 24. A final draft of this memorandum will be filed in the offices of the President and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

JULY: Our “back to campus” day to resume our work, launch programs, and get acclimated to re-entry will be July 5. A template for your arrangement will be circulated once a model is provided by university administration. Until then, the dean’s office will accept emails describing FWA that have been agreed to by staff and supervisor.

AUGUST: On Monday, August 16, we will resume full operations which will include both in-person and remote work arrangements.

SEPTEMBER: All FWA documents will be due by Wednesday, September 1.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. SSW will not approve more than one primary on-campus office and one school-issued computer or laptop.
2. Any FWA approved, include teleworking more than two days per week, it may require that staff share office space (simultaneously or hoteling) rather than holding individual offices.
3. If staff took any school-owned furniture and/or equipment (e.g., chairs, printers, computers, docking stations, monitors) to your home during the pandemic, you have three options that must be effectuated by August 16.
 - A. Continue to use the furniture and equipment at home but the school will not replace the items in your office.
 - B. Return all furniture and equipment to your offices and be responsible for your own at-home work set up.
 - C. Continue to use some of the furniture and equipment at home and return others to your office.
4. When working from home, you will be responsible for your own internet connectivity to make it efficient and effective when teleworking. Even while teleworking, you are required to follow all university policies regarding IT information and data security.
5. Students in academic and non-academic positions are required to return to campus to perform those job functions that require onsite work, and they can be considered for FWA for those duties that do not require onsite work. FWA to be reviewed and approved by their supervisor.