Flexible Working Arrangements and Telework

Types of flexible work arrangements:

- **Flexible hours**: Varying an employee’s schedule on a regular or non-regular basis while still completing the required 40 hours per week. For most classified and A&P positions, this means hours other than 8 am-5 pm. Requires prior supervisor approval, and processing of “Position Information” modify document in HRMS. No other forms needed. See Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) 5-2110.

- **Compressed schedule**: 40 hour/week schedule worked in fewer than 5 full days per week. Requires prior supervisor approval, and processing of “Position Information” modify document in HRMS. No other forms needed. Will alter structure and appearance of timesheets in UT Direct.

- **Telework**: Routinely working one or more days per week at a location that is not the regularly assigned place of employment. Requires prior supervisor and Dean’s Office Approval. Both Telecommuting Agreement and Flexible Work Arrangement forms must be completed and approved. See Handbook of Operating Procedures 5-2130.

See Human Resources “Flexible Work Arrangements: Managers” for more information, including how to evaluate whether a flexible work arrangement could work for your office, and helpful tips for managers.

**Flexible Hours**

Per HOP 5-2110, work schedules should begin no earlier than 7 am, and end no later than 6 pm. A lunch break of at least 30 minutes should be included, so that a shift is at least 8.5 hours long – for example, 7 am-3:30 pm with a half-hour lunch, or 9 am-6pm with a one-hour lunch. Offices must be open between the hours of 8 am-12 pm and 1 pm-5 pm. Therefore, in offices where employees hold flexible hours, staff schedules should be staggered so that someone is always present and available to assist callers and visitors during normal business hours.

Process: Flexible Work Arrangement Request Proposal form, completed, signed by the supervisor, and kept in the employee’s personnel file; Dean’s Office approval not needed. It is recommended that the form be newly-downloaded directly from the link rather than saved to a computer, to ensure the most current version of the form is used.

**Compressed Schedule**

Examples:

- Four 10-hour days per week (plus a one-hour lunch break): Tuesday-Thursday 8 am-1 pm and 2-7 pm
- Nine 9-hour days every two weeks (plus a one-hour lunch break):
  - e.g. 9 hours per day Monday-Thursday, every-other-Friday off, scheduled Fridays at 8 hours:
    - Weeks 1 and 3: Monday-Thursday 7 am-12 and 1-5, off on Friday;
    - Weeks 2 and 4: Monday-Thursday 7 am-12 and 1-5, Friday 7am-12 and 1-4

As with flexible hours, work hours should fall between 7 am and 6 pm, and include at least a half-hour lunch break.

Process: Flexible Work Arrangement Request Proposal form, completed, signed by the supervisor, and kept in the employee’s personnel file; Dean’s Office approval not needed. It is recommended that the form be newly-downloaded directly from the link rather than saved to a computer, to ensure the most current version of the form is used.

*Notes*: Employees on compressed schedules will still receive 8 hours on UT holidays (for instance, 4th of July). If they normally would work 9 hours on that day, they’ll need to use personal leave or comp time to make up the additional hour.

**Telework**

Resources:

- Handbook of Operating Procedures 5-2130
- Human Resources: Telecommuting

Not all jobs or offices are suitable for telework. In primarily front-facing positions or very small offices with few staff, for example, this arrangement may not be practical. Supervisors should consider whether teleworking works for their office as a whole, and not just for an individual employee. Please review Human Resources’ “Tips for managers” on their Flexible Work Arrangements: Managers page.

Process: Employee and supervisor complete and sign the Flexible Work Arrangement Request Proposal, and obtain the approval and signature of the department head (chair or director). Send to COE-HR@austin.utexas.edu for Dean’s Office approval. The Dean’s Office will notify the supervisor once the request has been approved.

It is recommended that the form be newly-downloaded directly from the link rather than saved to a computer, to ensure the most current version of the forms are used.

*Notes*:

- The Telecommuting Agreement should be requested for *business reasons*. Business reasons may include the completion of tasks requiring uninterrupted concentration (writing and editing, data analysis, coding, or other complex or detail-oriented work, or reducing space/noise issues in
shared offices). Business reasons should *not* include child care needs, commute time, illness, slow periods at work, or other personal reasons.

- "Requested Schedule" should specify actual, regular work hours (e.g. 8 am-5:30 pm), and include at least 30 minutes for a lunch break.
- A typical response for "Describe how and when this agreement will be evaluated" could be something like, "Supervisor expects to maintain the same level of performance while telecommuting. Feedback to be provided as needed and in annual performance reviews."
- A six-month trial period is recommended (but not required) for new telework agreements, with regular reviews to assess job performance. Supervisors may wish to adapt the **Probationary Review form** for these appraisals, or may use something less formal – whichever method is used should be used for *all* staff with flex work/telework arrangements. Remember that flex work/telework is a privilege, and may be revoked at any time if problems arise. Supervisors should make sure that staff understand this as well.

*For questions or concerns about flexible work arrangements or telework, please refer to one of the resources below, or contact the Dean’s Office HR Team at COE-HR@austin.utexas.edu.*

**Resources:**

- HOP 5-2110: Flexible Hours
- HOP 5-2130: Telecommuting/Telework
- Human Resources: Flexible Work Arrangements: Managers
- Human Resources: Telecommuting