Flexible Working Arrangements

General information

Any employee engaging in any type of flexible work arrangement must have a completed UT Flexible Work Arrangement Form (PDF) and a completed UT FWA Expectations Form (PDF) - either Non-Telework or Telework uploaded to their worker profile in Workday.

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 8am-5pm. Requires prior supervisor approval. See Handbook of Operating Procedures 5-2110 Work Schedule.

- **Compressed schedule**: 40 hour/week schedule worked in fewer than 5 full days per week. Requires prior supervisor approval.

- **Telework**: Routinely working one or more days per week at a location that is not the regularly assigned place of employment. Only needed for regularly occurring schedules and not university closures or emergencies that would necessitate employees to work from home. Requires prior supervisor approval. See Handbook of Operating Procedures 5-2130 Telecommuting.

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

Resources

The following UT offices can provide consultations on flexible work arrangements and provide tips.

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP): 512-471-3366
- Office of Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution: 512-471-6638
- Strategic Workforce Solutions (SWS): 512-475-7200

College of Education Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) Guiding Principles - 2021-2022

- Rebuilding our sense of community as we continue to recover from the enduring effects of COVID-19 will be a priority.
- We are a residential teaching and research community supporting the success of nearly 3,000 students. As the campus prepares for a near normal in-person experience for students this fall, on-campus interactions offer essential benefits that cannot be replicated in virtual or online contexts.
- In-person connection and collaboration among faculty, staff, and students are essential to our research, teaching, and service mission. Our baseline for expanding FWA guidelines will be from the primarily in-person college environment, similar to AY19-20 and prior.
- Some remote work and flexible work schedules provide major benefits for the university, for our college, and especially for our employees.
- Our ability to have a more normal on-campus presence is predicated on continued positive public health data related to COVID-19, including the assumption that most members of the college and UT community are vaccinated. All eligible members of our community are strongly encouraged to receive a vaccine.
- AY21-22 will be a piloting year for updates to FWA policies and practices.
- We commit to ongoing assessment of the tradeoffs between telework and onsite work, and between more- and less-flexible work schedules to ensure that excellence in our teaching, research, and service mission is not compromised.

College of Education FWA Policies & Guidelines - Staff- 2021-2022

This section outlines the guidance for managerial decisions around flexible work arrangements (FWA), including telework, for classified and A&P staff. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, to ensure that academic excellence is maintained in supporting both the instructional and research mission of the college. Decisions must always factor in the customer experience for students, faculty, staff, donors, and others and the business needs of the unit. Managers must consider the function of the unit, the nature of the position, the location of work, and the capabilities of the employee when making these decisions.

The university has established the following policies and guidelines around Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) and Telework:

- HOP 5-2110 Work Schedule
Our college will comply with university and Board of Regents policy, and local, state, and federal law.

**COE POLICIES:**

- Employees should live in a geographically close/commutable distance from UT, with the ability to travel to a primary campus location within a few hours.
- Prior to offering or approving work locations outside the state of Texas, supervisors must review the work location with their HR Executive and Business Officer, who will consult with central HR’s Strategic Workforce Solutions (SWS) and the Dean for approval.
- For employees of research centers and auxiliary units living within Texas but beyond the Austin area, Texas Telework is allowed.
- If an employee will work remotely and/or flex their work time, they must complete a UT Flexible Work Arrangement Form (PDF) and a UT FWA Expectations Form (PDF) - either Non-Telework or Telework. The forms must be uploaded to the employee’s worker profile in Workday and reflect a service period of 9/1/21 to 8/31/22.
- Supervisors may not allow FWAs for more than 1-2 days per week without approval from the dean or relevant associate dean.
  - Dean’s Office administration relevant associate dean
  - Academic department Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Educator Preparation
  - Centers Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies

**COE GUIDELINES:**

Managers should also consider the following themes when establishing flexible work arrangements and teleworking agreements:

**Maintaining Excellence & Culture**

Every decision around work-from-home experiences must consider maintaining our excellence in serving our customers. Some functions are best handled in the office, while some are best performed remotely and others can be equally effective in either environment. Managers must make these decisions in context with training new hires, personal interactions, teambuilding, collaborative activities, sense of community, and recruitment and retention of staff. To support a more remote work environment, it may be necessary to redefine processes/procedures as well as identify new expectations and etiquette for operating remote technologies.

Managers should work with employees to establish expectations and boundaries around certain aspects of working remotely such as work/life balance and constant availability. Managers should also recognize the proximity of in-person staff being tasked with things remote workers would not be tasked with due to in-person availability.

Employees and managers should maintain the same level of professionalism regardless of technology or work location. Managers and employees should closely adhere to the core rules of netiquette, or network etiquette.

**Nature of Position**

When deciding if flexible work arrangements/telework would be a good fit for the position, it is important to think about the attributes of the position. First, review the FWA tips and tools on central HR’s website to help determine if a position is appropriate for FWA. Next, consider the environment of where the position functions, and whether its primary purpose is to serve instruction, research, or administration. Finally, reflect on the specific job duties of the position. Some positions engage with the public while others perform back-office duties. Examine whether job duties require in-person work (such as reception or facilities) or where duties previously done in-person can now be done remotely.

**Work Location**

When reviewing a telework request, managers should consider the space in which the employee will work. The employee should have an available, dedicated workspace in their personal dwelling in order to telework. The employee should not use personal computer equipment while working remotely, and should follow appropriate ISO protocols & policies to ensure the protection of university-owned data and equipment. The employee and manager will agree on the workplace location, job duties performed remotely and in-person, how they will meet ISO security requirements, and the protection of confidential data via the UT Flexible Work Arrangement Form (PDF).

If the employee requests to work remotely at a location that differs from their designated remote workspace, they must obtain approval from their manager in advance of that change. If not approved, the employee must either work from the designated remote workspace, come into the office, or use accrued leave. The employee is responsible for completing all timesheets in accordance with UT leave policies.

**Who Is in Your Space**
Telework is not a replacement for appropriate dependent care or other responsibilities of an employees’ personal life. Supervisors may require modifications to FWA plans, with reasonable notice, to adjust for non-work/personal responsibilities based on the unit’s business needs. The employee should use existing accrued leave in accordance with UT leave policies as needs arise. UT employees meeting certain qualifying reasons and eligibility are entitled to up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protective leave: Family Medical Leave. Employees may also seek accommodations via the Office for Inclusion and Equity. In the instances where accrued leave, FML, and/or accommodations would not apply, the employee should discuss the situation with their manager to find a solution on a case-by-case basis given the nature of position and needs of the unit. The manager should verify the employee is working their designated scheduled weekly hours. If the employee is unable to work their scheduled weekly hours or unable to perform their job duties, then the manager should consider a temporary or permanent reduction in hours and/or revoke the FWA agreement.

Performance

Some individuals are better suited for work-from-home experiences than others. Performance standards and measures must be monitored closely by management. Performance improvement must be managed regardless of workplace location. Performance issues may result in the revision or cancelation of the work-from-home arrangement for the employee. If performance concerns arise, consult Strategic Workforce Solutions.

Hours of Duty

Each full-time employee should have a defined workday which should include start and stop times for completing their normal 8 hours of work. In-person employees must cover the standard open office hours of 8 AM to 5 PM, with the ability to flex between 6am to 7pm. Work-from-home hours should be scheduled around supporting business and customer needs of the unit. Compressed schedules (4 days X 10 hours) or nights/weekends/on call/seasonal needs may be appropriate and/or required for certain positions. If working remotely, the employee must adhere to the work schedule outlined in the employee’s UT Flexible Work Arrangement Form (PDF). Managers may require employees to deviate from the agreed upon work schedule as last-minute/emergency business needs arise. Managers shall make every effort to provide reasonable advanced notice to attend in-person required activities.

Recruiting & Retention

The decision to offer flexible work arrangements could have an effect on recruitment and retention. Managers should consider the varying factors (internal and external to UT) that could impact recruitment and retention.

Facilities

If units decide on hybrid remote work, managers must consider redefining how they allocate space. Teleworking can reduce the number of staff work spaces needed for each unit. Managers can use various forms of alternative space options, including but not limited to: shared office space, hoteling, private conference space, and/or break-out rooms. No major shifts of office assignments or space renovations should occur until the 21-22 assessment period is finalized. Please consult with your local facilities manager for space allocation needs.

Equipment, Technology, & Supplies

- Employees should have no more than one primary on-site work space and one unit-issued computer.
- Units should determine what equipment and technology may be taken to, or purchased for, remote telework offices, versus retained exclusively onsite. Technology location changes must be communicated to the Information Technology Office.
- CSUs should follow appropriate business procedures in the acquisition and management of required equipment and supplies involving remote work (e.g., inventory controls, data security standards, UT procurement rules, and CCE technology procurement policy).
- Consider equipment costs, employee income, required duties, equity, and inventory requirements when deciding to issue items to employees.
- University funds may not be used to renovate remote offices and workspaces.
- Units should maximize the use of digital business tools such as DocuSign, Microsoft Teams, and UT Box to facilitate efficiency.
- Employees are responsible for providing internet connectivity and mobile service that allow them to work effectively from a remote location.

Parking

- Employees must pay for their own parking.
  - Use the Parking Perks Debit Program (formerly Share Pass) for intermittent use.
    - https://parking.utexas.edu/parking/garages/parking-perks-debit-program

COVID-19 Vaccinations

All eligible members of our community are strongly encouraged to receive COVID-19 vaccines as soon as they can to help protect themselves and to help protect others in their families and in our community. These guidelines assume that public safety conditions and policies allow for in-person access to schools and dependent care facilities.
Faculty have always had flexible work schedules and work locations, with expectations for substantial on-campus work, including teaching, work with students, and departmental/college/university meetings.

Given the significant decrease in face-to-face interaction over the last fifteen months, the COE faculty and staff will be working to re-establish and build community. In this regard, we expect that most faculty meetings will be in person. With approval from the department chair, some occasional use of zoom may be approved for example for faculty who are out of town for a conference and unable to attend in person.

Faculty should be available to students both in-person and online, as needed.

During this AY21-22 pilot and consistent with pre-COVID practice, faculty are expected to have primarily flexible work locations, including significant work on campus, with flexible schedules.

Faculty, regardless of series or rank, must return to campus to perform required functions, including teaching, mentoring, service, meetings and research, that require onsite work and allow for interpersonal contact with their colleagues and their students.

Any current faculty member who is away from campus for a brief period of time (short term, not a permanent move) must have an agreement in place for how the faculty member’s responsibilities will be managed. This has always been true for conferences or research-related activity.

For any sustained time away from campus due to a formal leave approval, where there’s an expectation for work, there has to be a completed UT Flexible Work Arrangement Form (PDF) and a completed UT FWA Expectations Form (PDF) - either Non-Telework or Telework uploaded to their worker profile in Workday.

Faculty are expected to live in a geographically close/commutable distance from UT, with the ability to travel to a primary campus location within a few hours, unless the position has been hired specifically to work outside of the local area. COE will not reimburse travel costs from home to work for employees engaged in local telework or parking.

Note regarding due date/upload for 21-22 FWAs

FWAs are required to be completed and uploaded to their worker profile if an employee is consistently engaging in regular flex-work/telework. Due to the rapidly changing COVID-19 environment, managers and employees can implement FWAs for 21-22 with the consideration that agreements can change, and/or be reasonably flexible at times of increased community spread.

Process

General:

- Employee and manager complete and sign the UT Flexible Work Arrangement Form (PDF) and a UT FWA Expectations Form (PDF) - either Non-Telework or Telework.
- See "FWA Terminology" for "What type of worker are you?"
- Upload the completed forms to the employee's worker profile in Workday.
- Follow these instructions in the askUS knowledge database.
- Only those who have Workday HR-related roles can upload the documents.

Required Approvals:

Supervisors may not allow FWAs for more than 1-2 days per week without approval from the dean or relevant associate dean. Submit requests as follows:

- Dean’s Office administration relevant associate dean
- Academic department Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Educator Preparation
- Centers Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies

Prior to offering or approving work locations outside the state of Texas, supervisors must review the work location with their HR Executive and Business Officer, who will consult with central HR’s Strategic Workforce Solutions (SWS) and the Dean for approval. Submit requests to COE-HR@austin.utexas.edu.

If any department or center is considering the prospect of hiring a faculty member who will not live in Austin, that position should be advertised as such and first approved by the dean’s office. Any agreement about a faculty member not being in Austin should be specified before final contract. Please contact the Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Educator Preparation to facilitate approvals.

Notes

- The FWA proposal form should align with COE guiding principles and COE FWA Policy & Guidelines.
- The FWA proposal form is needed for regularly occurring schedules only - not university closures or emergencies/natural disasters that would necessitate employees to work from home.
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. 8am-5pm), 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 employee to maintain the same level of performance while telecommuting. Feedback to be provided as needed and in annual performance reviews.”
- A fixed term trial period is recommended for new telework agreements, with regular reviews to assess job performance.

Fall 2021: A temporary alternative Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA) is available for employees with individuals residing in their household with certain immunocompromised medical conditions.

- Please visit the HR Website for information on eligibility, the applications process and FAQs for staff, faculty, graduate students and student employees.
  - HR Benefits and Faculty Affairs will certify the documentation. Colleges, Schools, and Units (CSUs) will make the final determination to approve or decline a request.

This arrangement is not the same as requesting leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or requesting an accommodation for an employee’s own health condition under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Please send suggested additions to this page and notifications about broken links to COE-HR@austin.utexas.edu.