



## Workplace Flexibility Guidelines

### Suitability for Remote or Hybrid Work

Either an employee or a managing supervisor can suggest remote or hybrid work as a possible arrangement. Before entering any remote or hybrid work arrangement, the employee and supervisor will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement paying particular attention to the following areas:

- Job Responsibilities - the employee and supervisor will discuss job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a remote or hybrid work arrangement.
- Employee Suitability - the employee and supervisor will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful remote workers. Successful traits include the ability to work independently, organization and time management skills, self-motivation, and a results orientation.

If the employee and supervisor agree to a remote or hybrid work arrangement, the employee will enter into a Remote and Hybrid Work Agreement with appropriate university approvals before the arrangement begins.

### Terms and Conditions of Remote or Hybrid Work Arrangements

1. All remote or hybrid work arrangements will generally be set on an annual basis, subject to renewal at the end of the time-period or early termination at any time.
2. A hybrid work schedule for Urbana civil service and academic professional staff will be generally defined as three or four days on-site and other days working remotely.
3. The employee and supervisor will agree on the number of days of remote work each week, the work schedule the employee will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication. The employee agrees to be accessible by phone, e-mail, or other electronic medium during the agreed upon work schedule.
4. Communications between the employee and supervisor will generally be at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.
5. Employees entering into remote, or hybrid work arrangements must be available for and participate in meetings in accordance with the normal demands of the job. An employee's work modality (in-person, remote or hybrid) should not be a factor in determining who needs to be included in a meeting. The modality of all invited to the meeting may drive whether the meeting is held in person, via video call or potentially a hybrid of in-person and video call. If necessitated for business purposes, remote or hybrid work employees may be asked to report onsite for in-person meetings.

6. Remote or hybrid work employees remain obligated to comply with all university rules, policies, practices, and procedures. Violation of such rules, practices and procedures may result in immediate termination of the arrangement and possible disciplinary action in accordance with university policies.
7. Employees working remote or hybrid schedules must follow their unit's normal process for requesting time off, such as floating holiday, vacation or sick leave. Nothing about the remote work arrangement changes the university's policies on use of sick leave or vacation leave.
- 8. The availability of remote or hybrid work arrangements for employees of the University of Illinois can be discontinued at any time at the discretion of the university.** Every effort will be made to provide 10 calendar days' notice of such a change to accommodate commuting and other problems that may arise from such a change. However, the university may terminate the arrangement without notice. An employee can also be temporarily assigned full-time to their on-site office location, at the university's discretion as it deems necessary for business purposes.
9. Employees entering into a remote or hybrid work arrangement greater than 2 days/week may be required to use shared workstations and/or hoteling space when working on-site.
10. Prior to renewal of any remote or hybrid work arrangement, the employee and supervisor will each evaluate the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance. Renewal or modifications of the arrangement are subject to the judgment and discretion of the supervisor.

### **Employee Selection Criteria and Conditions**

The supervisor will review remote or hybrid work requests considering the factors listed below:

1. Needs of the unit.
2. Employee's work responsibilities and the ability to monitor and measure work performed.
3. Availability and costs of required equipment.
4. Employee's current and past job performance, as documented in performance evaluations, including time management, organizational skills, self-motivation, and the ability to work independently.
5. Assessment of other employees in the immediate work unit performing similar responsibilities to determine interest.
6. Impact on customer service quality.
7. Measurable objectives and results agreed to by the employee and the supervisor.
8. Other items deemed necessary and appropriate.

Remote and hybrid work arrangements are not a substitute for dependent or day care.

### **Work Schedule and Overtime**

The work schedule of the employee will be determined by the supervisor (or by designee defined by unit procedures) and will be documented in the Remote and Hybrid Work Agreement.

Overtime eligible employees working remote, or hybrid schedules are required to record all hours worked in a manner designated by the unit. Hours worked in excess of those specified per day and per workweek, will require the advance approval of the supervisor, just as when working onsite.

## **Compensation and Benefits**

Remote and hybrid work arrangements are management tools allowing for flexibility in work options. They do not change the basic terms and conditions of employment. Salary, job responsibilities, and university benefits do not change as a result of a remote or hybrid work arrangement.

## **Remote and Hybrid Work Agreement Form**

A completed Remote and Hybrid Work Agreement is required and after the employee routes to the supervisor, the form must be routed through the approvals required by the electronic form. The agreement should be reviewed annually prior to the start of the academic year and updated as needed.

## **Equipment and Information Security**

The supervisor will determine, with information supplied by the employee and others involved, the appropriate equipment and communication services needs for each arrangement on a case-by-case basis.

Equipment supplied by the university is to be used for business purposes only. The employee and employing unit will document in the Remote and Hybrid Work Agreement the university equipment to be used by the employee in the remote location. The employee must protect the university equipment from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment or termination of the remote and hybrid arrangement, the employee will be required to promptly return all university property to the unit.

The university will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) for successful completion of job responsibilities.

1. Depending on the job, equipment needs will vary and are determined by the supervisor when working a remote or hybrid schedule.
2. Employees working a remote or hybrid schedule must abide by the university's policies covering information security, software licensing and data privacy.
3. Employees working a remote or hybrid schedule must abide by university purchasing and accounting policies and practices for all purchases and expenditures incurred for remote or hybrid work equipment and services.
4. Maintenance on university-owned equipment will be performed only by a university authorized technician. The employee will be responsible for bringing the equipment to the designated repair location. Necessary maintenance and repairs on university-owned equipment will be performed at the university's expense.
5. Maintenance and repair of employee-owned equipment is the responsibility of the employee. The university is not liable for such equipment even if the employee is engaged in university work at the time of malfunction.

## **Work Environment**

1. Employees must have privacy and minimized distractions while working remotely.
2. Employees entering hybrid and remote work arrangements must be available for, and participate in phone calls, video meetings, and other necessary forms of communication in

- accordance with the normal demands of the job. Managers shall set expectations for video camera usage when working remotely.
3. If the remote or hybrid work arrangement involves use of the employee's home, the employee will establish an appropriate work environment for work purposes. The university will not be responsible for costs associated with initial setup of the employee's home office such as remodeling or lighting, or the cost of utilities. Upon reasonable advance notice to the employee, the university may inspect the employee's home worksite for conformance with minimal workplace requirements, including possible work hazards and to suggest modifications.
  4. Injuries sustained by the employee while at their home-based work location and in conjunction with their regular work duties are normally covered by the university's workers' compensation policy. Employees working a remote or hybrid arrangement are responsible for notifying the university of such injuries in accordance with worker's compensation procedures. The employee, and not the university, is responsible for any injuries sustained by visitors to their work site. (See APPENDIX A.)
  5. Consistent with the university's expectations of information asset security for onsite work, employees working remotely will be expected to ensure the protection of university information accessible from their home office. Steps include, but are not limited to, use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, use of the campus Virtual Private Network (VPN; see <https://techservices.illinois.edu/services/virtual-private-networking-vpn/details>), and any other steps appropriate for the job and the environment.
  6. Individual tax implications related to the home-based workspace shall be the responsibility of the employee working remotely.

## Remote Work Conduct Guidelines

As our workforce operates with remote and hybrid working arrangements, the following expectations for employees are being clarified to avoid issues that may cause disruption to the workday and/or during virtual meetings. In general, you should conduct virtual business with other university employees in the same way you would during in person meetings or discussions.

### General Expectations

- Working a set schedule/hours when working remotely is expected and should be documented in the remote or hybrid agreement.
- Remote employees are expected to be available and communicative during scheduled work hours.
- If, while working remotely, you will be unavailable for a block of time during your regularly scheduled hours, you are expected to inform your supervisor or teammates just as is expected during on-site work.
- University work rules and other policies continue to apply to offsite work locations.
- Consumption of alcohol during work hours is never acceptable.
- Employees should seek a quiet and distraction-free working space, to the extent possible.
- Employees are expected to maintain their workspace in a safe and appropriate manner, free from safety hazards.

### Virtual Meetings

- While distractions are often unavoidable, try to keep them to a minimum. No music or television in the background during meetings.
- Keep yourself muted during video or audio conferencing unless you are speaking.
- Avoid eating a meal during a virtual meeting unless invited to do so by the meeting host.
- Smoking or vaping is not permitted during a video conference.
- Casual dress is acceptable; however, use discretion. During video calls, do not wear apparel that would not be appropriate to wear at your normal working environment.
- Use a distraction free, non-offensive, professional or business appropriate background that is conducive to an effective meeting location.
- Avoid multi-tasking. Give your full attention to the meeting as if you were meeting face to face.

While gentle reminders may be all that is necessary in some circumstances, egregious or continued violations of these expectations and/or other university policies will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

## Remote Work Guidelines for Effective Performance Management

1. When integrating new employees, unit supervisors should schedule one-on-one time with direct reports to ensure that goals, university priorities and expectations are understood and met.
2. Creating a workplace culture with some employees working remotely.
  - a. Units should establish set times to bring their employees together for group meetings and activities.
  - b. Consider teambuilding activities to foster a team environment.
3. Measuring performance and productivity.
  - a. Determine appropriate metrics.
  - b. Seek feedback from clients and co-workers knowledgeable about performance.
4. Gaining feedback from employees/outreach/communication management.
  - a. Schedule one-on-one meetings for all direct reports.
  - b. Have employees assess themselves and the organization.
5. Assessing duties of remote work employees.
  - a. Compare work performance and methods to job description.
  - b. Revise job descriptions to accurately document duties and responsibilities.
6. Evaluating the functionality of remote work.
  - a. Send out weekly emails to the entire unit and possibly more personal, one-on-one videoconferences or phone calls between your unit heads or supervisors and individual members of their teams.
  - b. These unit-wide emails should stress the importance of communication as well as continuing to produce high quality work and maintaining accountability.
  - c. One-on-one meetings should be used to check in with employees to ensure their work needs are being met.
  - d. Terminate remote work if outcomes are not meeting unit expectations.
7. Managing non-work related distractions.
  - a. Empower your employees by focusing on production rather than hours worked.
  - b. Enable your staff to work during the times of day that they are the most effective.

### **Issues with Evaluating Performance**

1. Do job descriptions accurately reflect the remote work?
  - a. Compare work performance and methods to job description.
  - b. Revise job descriptions to accurately document duties and responsibilities.
2. Not enough opportunities to observe subordinate staff.
  - a. Unit-wide emails should stress the importance of communication as well as continuing to produce high quality work and maintaining accountability.
  - b. One-on-one meetings should be used to check in with employees to ensure their work needs are being met.
3. Do current functions performed remotely match the employees' skill set/training?
  - a. Determine appropriate metrics.
  - b. Seek feedback from clients and co-workers knowledgeable about performance.
4. Documenting performance and productivity; Setting Goals.
  - a. Establish a consistent, known evaluation tool.

- b. Compare work performance and methods to job description.
  - c. Revise job descriptions to accurately document duties and responsibilities.
- 5. Limitations on training opportunities.
  - a. Encourage participation in professional organizations.
  - b. Utilize campus resources to discover training opportunities.

### **Strategies to Integrate Newly Hired Remote Employees into the Organization's Culture**

1. Consider an initial period for newly hired remote employees to work onsite.
2. Establish set times to bring all employees together for group meetings and activities.
3. Conduct specific teambuilding activities to foster connection and team engagement.
4. Have new employees virtually shadow co-workers.
5. Develop a culture that minimizes the hesitations of seeking feedback.
6. Use one-on-one meetings to check in with employees to ensure work needs are being met.

### **Best Practices for Remote Work Performance**

1. Set clear expectations.
2. Regularly scheduled communications and feedback.
3. Establish clear work/life boundaries.
4. Prioritize mental and physical health.
5. Implement technology in work methods.
6. Set aside time for individualized meetings.
7. Involve IHR and unit HR early when performance issues are noticed.
8. Set clear performance guidelines for employee evaluations.
9. Utilize team-building exercises.
10. Regularly evaluate remote performance and the functionality of remote work.
11. Assign work in equitable manner between those working remotely and on-site.