

Rider University Flexible Work Policy for Administrative Employees

Revised May 2021

Purpose

Rider University believes that, in general, our students and other constituents can best be served when University employees are physically on campus. As a result, the expectation is that staff work-time will generally be spent on campus, where access to others and collaboration during work hours can easily be accomplished. Service to our students and other community members is an unwavering focus which is not to be compromised. However, the University recognizes that technology has made remote work for many employees possible, and there may be times when it is in the best interests of the department, University, and employee to allow telecommuting. This remote work policy is intended to provide the parameters around any such formal arrangement, which must be defined in writing prior to the start of the arrangement.

The development of this revised Policy has been informed by the many lessons learned during the past year and a half of forced separation and has been adopted in light of these lessons learned and in recognition of the complex and varied obligations that employees have in both their professional and personal lives. It seeks to strike the balance between maintaining an unwavering focus on University mission in support of our students with our strategic commitment to being an employer of choice.

This policy is only intended to govern regularly scheduled telecommuting arrangements. Managers are free to separately allow one-time, episodic, informal remote work at home arrangements to accommodate individual employee needs (against the backdrop of work demands), as long as the proper data security measures are in place, approvals are received and other relevant guidelines described below are met.

Telecommuting does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment with Rider University, nor the compensation or benefits available to the employee.

Telecommuters remain subject to all Rider University policies.

This policy is not intended to cover formal accommodation requests related to the ADA. Any requests for accommodation of this nature associated with a disability should be directed to the Human Resources Department separate from this process.

Overview

Telecommuting is an alternate worksite arrangement in which eligible employees perform their regular job responsibilities away from campus for a defined period of time. This arrangement may be established for regularly scheduled, sustained periods of time, subject to business needs on any particular day, and may represent a portion of an exempt employee's work week-up to three days per week-following the required approvals detailed herein.

The ability to telecommute is a privilege based on the demands of the job, and the needs of the department and University. Therefore, it is not a right.

While evaluating telecommuting requests, the Manager will also consider the employee's past and present levels of performance. Additionally, telecommuting relationships should generally not be established during the first three months of employment or when an employee's performance does not meet expectations or the employee otherwise requires close supervision.

Eligibility

Eligible employees are salaried/exempt employees whose work duties permit them to work remotely.

New hires must be employed for at least three months to be eligible for telecommuting consideration, except in special circumstances. New hires must display strong job performance.

To be eligible to telecommute, the employee must have achieved an overall performance rating of at least the "Meets Expectations" level for the most recent performance appraisal period.

Typically, a telecommuting option is open to salaried/exempt employees in non-support staff roles, where the job responsibilities allow. As such, this policy only applies to non-exempt (hourly) employees on an exception basis, due to the work duties associated with those positions. Non-exempt employees may telecommute no more frequently than one day per week, with appropriate approval.

Feasibility

A successful telecommuting arrangement must work seamlessly for both the department and the employee.

Employee Self-Assessment

Prior to seeking authorization to work remotely, employees should realistically assess their ability to accomplish work in the home environment by considering the following factors:

- Can the employee ensure and demonstrate that they are able to maintain full productivity and meet all job expectations?
- Can the employee protect confidential and sensitive data?
- Is the hardware and software at the remote location sufficient to ensure that normal productivity can be maintained, e.g., reliable high-speed internet connection, current and compatible hardware and software, ability to communicate effectively with Manager, colleagues, clients, vendors, etc.?
- Will the work require access to resources, including technology, that are not currently available at home, and if so, how will these needs be met?
- What steps will be taken to ensure that communication with all constituents served will not be negatively impacted by remote work? Among other things, arrangements should be made to receive calls remotely during remote work hours.

- Can unplanned interruptions be controlled to a reasonable degree?

Manager Assessment

Managers determine telecommuting feasibility by evaluating the following:

- The work to be accomplished;
- The anticipated benefits to, and needs of the department;
- The interactions required between the employee and other staff members, customers and vendors;
- The employee's demonstrated skills, abilities and overall performance;
- The scope and management level of the employee's role;
- The level of department coverage required during normal business hours; and
- The employee interest and personal needs.

Telecommuting Schedule

Telecommuting privileges for salaried/exempt employees are limited to a maximum of three days per work week. On an exception basis, and where the position responsibilities allow, non-exempt (hourly) employees may be approved to telecommute for not more than one day per week.

The employee's requested schedule must not conflict with the needs of the department or the University.

The University recognizes that telecommuting offers some flexibility for employees and it wants employees to enjoy that flexibility. Employees should however be reachable during their typical work hours and must notify their Manager if they will not be reachable or available, as expected.

If an employee is ill and reporting a sick day on any day that it otherwise scheduled as a remote work day, it should be treated as any other sick day; both in terms of the requirement to report the absence as well as the fact that there is no expectation that any work obligations exist during reported sick time.

Employees are expected to be video-ready at all times during their scheduled workday. Video calls may be initiated at any time, and employees are generally expected to be present on camera.

Any changes to the typical schedule or work location must be reviewed and approved by the Manager in advance of the change.

Technical Minimum Requirements for working remotely

Following are recommendations for desktops, laptops, internet service, and software for use at the university. University-provided laptop or capable and secure home laptop/desktop.

Minimum Computer Requirements

A University provided computer or if a personal computer, no older than 5 years.

8GB RAM,

Have the ability to connect to VPN

Windows IO (minimum build/version 1909),

Automatic updates turned on

MAC OS (minimum build/version Catalina),

Automatic updates turned on

Software

- Microsoft Office 2016 or higher
- Zoom - current version
- Internet Browsers (current versions): Google Chrome, Firefox, Safari Current anti-virus / spyware installed at all times
- Java 2 - version 1.6
- Adobe Acrobat Reader 11.0 or higher
- Cisco AnyConnect VPN

WebCam

Integrated or external USB

Internet Service Requirements and Speed Recommendations Service Requirements:

- Internet access provided by a cable, DSL or fiber provider
- Minimum upload speed of 2 mbps I Minimum download speed of 5 mbps

Speed Recommendations:

Up to 25 mbps for:

- 1-2 devices connected to the internet
- Surfing the web, Email, Instant Messaging
- Moderate video use

50-100 mbps for:

- 3-5 devices connected to the internet
- Surfing the web, Email, Instant Messaging
- 4K video streaming

A suitable working environment must meet commonly recognized requirements for a comfortable, private and quiet working environment, and includes but is not limited to:

Job Responsibilities and Operating Needs. The Manager will determine if the Employee's job responsibilities are suitable for a remote work arrangement. Each proposed arrangement will be considered on a case by case basis.

Employee Equipment and Workspace Design Considerations. The employee's remote office equipment and/or workspace must adequately support their work duties. Discontinuation of Telecommuting Work Arrangements

Discontinuation of Telecommuting Work Arrangements

Every effort will be made to provide ample notice of the discontinuation of a telecommuting arrangement; however, such arrangements may be discontinued or altered at any time at the discretion of the Manager and the University, with or without notice.

Additionally, poor performance while working remotely can result in disciplinary action, and/or a discontinuation of the remote work arrangement.

Procedure

1. Employee and Manager complete the Telecommuting Assignment and Agreement form available on the Human Resources page of the university website.
2. Manager approves and submits the form to OIT to determine the adequacy and security of the technology resources available for the home work site.
3. Once OIT approves, the request is sent to the Division Head/Dean for final approval.
4. Upon obtaining approval from the Division Head, the request is forwarded to Human Resources for final review.
5. Once all approvals have been obtained, the Manager and Employee finalize arrangements for Employee to begin telecommuting.



Telecommuting Assignment and Agreement Form

Name: _____

Department: _____

Employee ID: _____

Title: _____

Email: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

Phone: _____

Supervisor Title: _____

Telecommuting Period (Not to exceed 1 year):

Requested start date: _____ End date: _____

Day of the Week (Please select):

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

Business reason for telecommunicating:

General duties to be performed while telecommuting:

Description of how communication will be maintained with management, department, and customers:

Impacts to customers in terms of service and quality of work:

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Manager Signature: _____

Date: _____

I acknowledge that I have access to all of the technology stated above _____

Division Head Signature: _____ Date: _____

HR Signature: _____ Date: _____

Telecommuting Arrangement Decision (To be completed by Manager)

Approved

Not Approved - State reason for denial: