

Guidelines for Telecommuting Requests for staff in Academic and Student Affairs

Telecommuting is a management option that is not suitable for all employees and all positions. Approval of a telecommuting arrangement will be granted based on a totality of factors, including the suitability of the job and the employee for telecommuting, satisfaction of all eligibility criteria, and departmental needs. The employee acknowledges their understanding and adherence to all parameters within the telecommuting policy. The full policy can be found at <https://hr.cofc.edu/telecommuting/telecommuting-policy> .

Summary of guiding principles from the Telecommuting Policy

- Before approval is granted, supervisors should consider multiple factors, as listed in the policy, including but not limited to the past performance of the employee, the feasibility of measuring and assessing the employee's work tasks outside of the primary workplace, availability and cost of equipment needed, and the effect on services provided by the department to students and the effect on employees in the department who are not working remotely. Departments and employees providing direct services for students, employees, or the public must ensure that those services are not negatively impacted.
- For eligibility to telecommute, an employee must have completed twelve months of satisfactory employment at the College. An exception to this requirement may be waived by the respective Executive Vice President. In addition, any employee in a warning period of substandard performance or those subject to disciplinary action, within the past twelve months are not eligible for telecommuting. An exception to this requirement may be waived by the respective Executive Vice President.
- In accordance with the College's telecommuting policy, "The supervisor will meet with the employee regularly to provide assignments and to review completed work. The employee will complete all assigned work according to procedures agreed upon with the supervisor. The employee will be required to adhere to those standards agreed upon with the employee's manager for telecommuting purposes. The evaluation of the employee's job performance will be based on such established standards and should be documented and evaluated using the annual EPMS process. Performance must remain satisfactory to remain a telecommuter."
- Supervisors can assign additional work expectations for communicating, tracking work progress, and reporting of completed work assignments.
- The employee understands that telecommuting is not to be used as a means for dependent care. Telecommuters are expected to work and to focus on the performance of their job duties during all working hours, except for established break times and lunch time. Telecommuters are expected to adhere to all College leave policies requesting time off for non-business-related activities. Any personal activities must be done during

approved and scheduled work breaks, lunch time, after work hours, or during leave time.

- Telecommuters will identify an alternative work location that must be approved using the safety checklist. At no time, should another unapproved site be used for remote work.
- Failure to comply with any of the guiding principles may result in an alteration or termination of the telecommuting agreement or other disciplinary action.

The following guidelines are applicable to all offices in the Division of Academic Affairs and the Division of Student Affairs and are intended to assist and guide supervisors with their review and approval of applications for telecommuting, particularly for student-facing offices. These guidelines have been developed to ensure that reviews of telecommuting requests are grounded with consistent criteria to support equity and consistency across the two divisions. They are intended to be an additional resource to empower supervisors to account for a department's culture and needs when making decisions on telecommuting. In addition, these guidelines attempt to help supervisors fairly apply a telecommuting policy among multiple offices with various levels of staff, while being supportive of individual telecommuting desires. It should be noted that, consistent with the College's telecommuting policy, these guidelines apply only to applications for regular recurring telecommuting.

- Consistent with the College's *Hours of Work* policy, department offices should generally be open in-person during the College's core business hours (8:30 am – 5:00 pm Monday through Friday) with the appropriate level of staff to ensure services are accessible and available to students in the formats that work best for them, as not all students want to or can engage virtually. With this guideline, there is the understanding that offices staffed by only one or two individuals may need to close briefly for lunch, breaks, or work obligations elsewhere on campus. Subject to the review and approval of their own supervisor and the EVP for the area, supervisors may also establish and maintain earlier opening times and later closing times for in-person services when that better serves students. In cases where an employee is working a schedule different from the College's core hours, they should complete the [Flexible Schedule Form](#).
- At the supervisor's discretion, some departments may require regular in-person service after hours or on weekends, as guided by their mission, services, programs, activities, or required office meetings. These factors will affect what days telecommuting is an option for staff. It is also understood that for many offices and positions, there are periods of time when telecommuting may be particularly appropriate (*e.g.* during periods of time when there is much independent project or detail-level work and not much walk-in traffic or team work) and there are periods of time when telecommuting is simply not a viable option.
- Supervisors must consider the office culture and impact on staff morale across the office when reviewing telecommuting requests. In particular, supervisors should be attentive

to fairly and appropriately handling shifts in responsibilities that may occur when some team members have telecommuting agreements and other team members are working fully in-person.

- It is recommended that telecommuting agreements initially be limited to only one day a week for student-facing offices. These supervisors may re-evaluate telecommuting agreements to include one additional day a week after a six-month trial period.
- Supervisors may, at their discretion, add criteria to telecommuting proposals or change schedules to maintain adequate office staff for accessibility to students.
- If there are more requests to telecommute on certain days of the week than can be approved, supervisors may establish a rotating system for all staff members interested in telecommuting on those days of the week. Submitted requests to telecommute can reflect this rotation (*e.g.* telecommuting every third Monday).
- Supervisors may, at their discretion, need to require a staff member/s to work on campus on a day that they would otherwise be telecommuting. Examples include but are not limited to attending an in-person office meeting or retreat. In such cases, every effort should be made by the supervisor to provide timely notice to the employee when their approved telecommuting schedules cannot be accommodated due to office needs. However, in accordance with the College's *Telecommuting Policy*, employees may be required to report to the primary workplace on campus without advanced notice if necessary.
- Telecommuting is not a viable option for departments that are not able to provide coverage for walk-in traffic while an employee is telecommuting.
- The telecommuting location and employee's workspace at that location must be suitable for all privacy and data protection measures appropriate to the position.
- Telecommuters must be readily accessible to supervisors, as if they are working in the office. The supervisor and employee will determine a method of regular communication (*i.e.* Teams, open Zoom room, cell phone, Soft Phone-Segra Unify App, etc.) for use during work hours.
- The supervisor and employee may re-evaluate the telecommuting arrangement at any time. It must be reviewed at three months from the start date if it has not been reviewed already.