

Online Toolkit

Flexible Work Arrangements

UNT System Organizational Development and Engagement provides this toolkit to assist supervisors and staff members with navigating through our institutional policies and guidelines around flexible work arrangements.

Flexible work arrangements allow for modifications to when and where work is performed through flexible schedules, compressed workweeks, and remote work.

The information in this toolkit will help supervisors and staff members understand the process for establishing a flexible work arrangement including procedures, requirements, expectations and guidelines.

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Flexible Work Arrangement Policies

The University of North Texas System and its component institutions endeavor to foster a work environment that maximizes productivity and flexibility for supervisors and staff. UNT System and its component institutions allow flexible work arrangements, at the discretion of supervisors, to enable staff members to serve customers, meet institutional and departmental goals, and balance professional and personal responsibilities. Flexible work arrangements may be implemented as a means of achieving administrative efficiency, improving productivity and job performance, supporting business continuity plans, and supporting the hiring and retention of a highly competent workforce through work/life balance. A flexible work arrangement is a privilege and not a right. The availability of flexible work arrangements is not intended to change a department's regular hours of operation, nor does it alter the responsibility or diminish the authority of supervisors to establish and adjust work schedules.

Policy Overview

The University of North Texas System and its component institutions normally require that work be performed on university property. In order to promote general work efficiencies, UNT System and its component institutions may permit or direct designated eligible staff members to work flexible work schedules and/or at remote work locations for all or part of the workweek.

A flexible work arrangement is a privilege and not a right. Flexible work arrangements do not change the conditions of employment or required compliance with policies. These arrangements do not constitute an employment contract and they do not create a property interest in employment.

Requesting a Flexible Work Arrangement

1. A staff member interested in requesting a flexible work arrangement must complete and submit a Flexible Work Arrangement form to his/her supervisor.
2. The supervisor reviews the request in conjunction with the needs of the university, staff member's work history, and measureable data to support the request.
3. Before approving a request, both the supervisor and staff member must review the Flexible Work Arrangement policy for their institution and attend training. Refer to your institution's policy to identify mandatory training requirements.
4. Following supervisor approval, the form moves to the appropriate second level supervisor for approval. Additional levels of approval may be required as indicated on your institution's Flexible Work Arrangement form.
5. Approval will be made on a case-by case basis, based upon recommendation of the supervisor and supported by evidence of measurable outcomes that can be evaluated upon request.

Termination of Arrangement

Flexible work arrangements may be terminated by either the staff member or the institution at any time for failure to comply with the terms of the Flexible Work Arrangement guidelines or institutional policies, or for diminishment in performance while participating in a flexible work arrangement even if the diminishment does not warrant disciplinary or corrective action.

All notes, data, reference materials, sketches, drawings, memoranda, reports, records, equipment, software, supplies, and any other property issued to the employee is considered institutional property and must be returned upon termination of agreement.

Supervisor Responsibilities

In a flexible work arrangement, the supervisor is responsible for supporting his or her staff member in successfully managing job duties and expectations.

How Can I Make This Work for My Team?

The supervisor should evaluate both the characteristics of the position and of the staff member requesting an arrangement. Supervisors should assure that the jobs chosen for a flexible work arrangement are easily adapted to an alternative arrangement, especially in working remotely.

Things to consider when moving to a flexible work arrangement:

- ▶ Has the staff member demonstrated sustained high performance?
- ▶ Can the staff member maintain the expected quantity and quality of work and service to the campus community?
- ▶ Will the work schedule meet departmental operating and service needs?
- ▶ The flexible work arrangement does not have to be permanent and can be changed at the discretion of the supervisor.
- ▶ Supervisors should (but are not required to) provide 5 -business day notice of changes in flexible work arrangements.

Staff Member Responsibilities

Staff members participating in a flexible work arrangement are responsible for adhering to all terms of the arrangement.

Things to Consider:

- ▶ Staff members should work with their supervisors to establish daily or weekly goals and timelines.
- ▶ A flexible work arrangement does not alter the staff member's responsibility to follow their organization's policies and values.
- ▶ In accordance with the outside employment policy, staff members cannot perform tasks that fulfill duties for an outside agency of employment during their set work schedule.
- ▶ All staff members who have a flexible work arrangement may be required to submit weekly time reports as well as any other records related to work hours required by the supervisor. Failure to provide records in a timely manner, when requested, may result in disciplinary action.

Flexible Work Schedule

Flexible work schedule means a work schedule that allows staff members to work hours other than 8AM-5PM on days other than Monday through Friday. For example:

- ▶ 7am- 3:30pm M-F (with a 30 minute lunch)
- ▶ 9am- 6pm M-F (with an hour lunch)
- ▶ 7am-4pm M-F (with an hour lunch)

Supervisors may also arrange for staff members to have a **compressed workweek**, which enables them to work extended daily hours in order to take a portion of a day or a full day off during the work period. For example:

- ▶ The "4-10" (or "4-40") work week is 4 days at 10 hours per day with a 30- to 60-minute lunch
- ▶ The "4-9-4" work week is 4 days at 9 hours per day with a 30- to 60-minute lunch, and one 4-hour day

Flexible Work Considerations

- ▶ Individual work schedules must meet departmental operating and service needs.
- ▶ The flexible work arrangement does not alter the staff member's obligation to other rules, policies, and procedures.
- ▶ Supervisors may rearrange work hours of their staff members to meet needs of the department as long as it allows the department to remain open during normal business hours.

Remote Work

Remote Work means the performance of normal work duties at a location away from a staff member's regularly assigned place of employment. This off-site location is most often the staff member's home.

Remote Work Considerations

- ▶ Staff members are expected to work their regularly scheduled hours. Overtime must be approved in advance.
- ▶ Working remotely is not intended to serve as a substitute for dependent care. However, in an effort to be an employer of choice, working remotely could be a valuable tool to staff members with caregiving responsibilities, if their productivity or quality of work is not compromised.
- ▶ The remote worksite must be maintained as a healthy and safe environment.
- ▶ Staff members should ensure that during a remote work arrangement, information is secure so that it does not allow any unauthorized party access to University owned data, information, or information resources.
- ▶ Decisions regarding what equipment will be provided for remote work will be made by the department and individual supervisor consistent with the institution's Flexible Work Arrangement policy and guidelines. In general, the institution is not obligated to provide any infrastructure to support the remote working effort (i.e. PCs or laptops for home use, reimbursement for internet connectivity at home, or reimbursement for home telephone expenses).

Setting Expectations & Guidelines

Setting performance expectations and goals for each workweek will help you measure performance and determine if the flexible work arrangement is working. Supervisors and staff members should work together to identify goals and resources needed for success. In addition, you should schedule regular meetings to assess needs, give feedback, discuss problems, etc. A periodic review of the flexible work arrangement is important. If needed, make necessary adjustments in order to address any changing business demands.

Job Performance

- ▶ Evaluate the performance of remote workers and on-site team members using the same expectations and criteria.
- ▶ Staff members with a flexible work arrangement are responsible for communicating with supervisors any delays in assignment completion or issues with meeting deadlines.
- ▶ Staff members should inform their supervisor immediately if problems with equipment or remote access hinders their ability to do quality work.

Attendance at Meetings

- ▶ Staff members must be available to report as needed for work-related meetings, training sessions and/or other events determined by the supervisor.
- ▶ Supervisors may also meet with staff members in an alternate work location as needed to discuss work progress or other work related issues.
- ▶ Supervisors should provide staff members with an advance notice of meetings when possible.

Timekeeping and Reporting

- ▶ Supervisors must keep track of all documentation regarding the staff member's work schedule.
- ▶ Staff members who have flexible work arrangements may be required to submit weekly time reports as well as any other records related to work hours required by the supervisor. Supervisors can take disciplinary action if records are not submitted in a timely manner when requested.

Workplace Injury & Property Damage

All work related injuries that occur in the remote work location that happen during a staff member's established work hours must be reported to a supervisor immediately. After receiving notification, the staff member and supervisor should follow their institution's Risk Management procedures and Workers' Compensation process.

UNT System and its component institutions are not responsible for injury at the remote work location to any other person who would not be in the work area if the duties were being performed at the regular place of employment.

For more information, please contact [Campus HR](#) or [Risk Management Services](#).

Property Damage

UNT System and its component institutions are not responsible for damages to employee-owned property used while working remotely.



UNT System and its component institutions may be liable for a staff member's job-related injuries or occupational illness or disease that occur during the staff member's established work hours in their remote work location. It is critical that the staff member understand that they are responsible for maintaining a designated workspace in a clean, professional and safe condition at the remote work location.

UNT System and its component institutions retain the right to pre-arranged, on-site inspections of this work area during work hours.

Working Remotely While on Leave

Remote work should not be a substitute for taking time off as protected by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). A staff member who is on Family Medical Leave (FML) and unable to report to work may not perform work at home in order to extend his/her available leave time.

Remember, a staff member who has been approved for FML will not be available for work until he/she is released by the treating physician or in the case of caring for an ill family member, until the approved leave time has been met and is no longer needed.

However, a staff member may be permitted to work from home while on FML if they are approved for intermittent or a reduced work schedule as indicated in the staff member's medical certification completed by the treating physician.

Best Practices

- ▶ If a staff member reports they have a medical circumstance affecting their ability to work, supervisors should encourage them to apply for FML whether they are a remote worker or not.
- ▶ A staff member cannot return to working remotely after being out on FML until they have received a letter from the FML coordinator releasing them to return to work.
- ▶ The supervisor should keep track of utilization of all sick, vacation, and state comp* time under FML before being placed on unpaid leave.

Equipment & Supplies

Each staff member is responsible for adhering to [UNT System Policy 08.100: Information Security](#) and [UNT System Information Security Handbook](#) about ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data, information, and information resources while working remotely.

Employee-owned hardware and software requirements:

Decisions regarding what equipment will be provided for remote work will be made by the department and individual supervisor. Decisions must be consistent with the institution's Flexible Work Arrangement policy and guidelines. In general, the institution is not obligated to provide any infrastructure to support the remote working effort (i.e. PCs or laptops for home use, reimbursement for internet connectivity at home, or reimbursement for home telephone expenses). Factors to consider include, technology needs based on the work of the staff member, IT security requirements and budget constraints.

Data Backup

- ▶ The staff member must periodically save files to locations properly maintained by their institution rather than keeping the only copy of data on the local hard drive of the remote computer.
- ▶ Data must be protected in accordance with the UNT System Information Security Handbook based on its data categorization (i.e., public, proprietary, or confidential).
- ▶ Confidential data must be encrypted if stored on a portable device, removable media, or on a non-university owned device.

Supplies

- ▶ Office supplies for the alternate workspace will not be provided by the institution.
- ▶ Out-of-pocket expenses for materials and supplies normally available at the regular work location (e.g. paper, pens, printer cartridges, etc.) will not be reimbursed.



UNT System and its component institutions will not be liable for damages to employee-owned equipment resulting from participation in the remote work program. Likewise, UNT System and its component institutions will not be responsible for operation costs, home maintenance, or any other incidental costs (e.g. utilities, basic telephone service, and insurance) associated with the use of the staff member's residence for remote work.

Definitions

Compressed Workweek- an arrangement that enables staff members to work extended daily hours in order to take a portion of a day or a full day off during the work period.

Flexible Work Schedule- a work schedule that allows a full-time staff member to work hours other than 8:00-5:00 on days other than Monday through Friday, or work from a location other than a System Administration or University campus location.

FMLA- Family and Medical Leave Act, which is a federal law that entitles employees to job protection and unpaid leave for qualifying medical and family events.

Remote Work Location- an approved work site other than the staff member's regularly assigned place of employment where official business is performed. Such locations may include, but are not limited to, a staff member's home.

Remote Working - the performance of normal work duties at a location away from a staff member's regularly assigned place of employment. This off-site location is most often the staff member's home.

Regular Staff- an employee, other than a faculty employee, who is scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week for a period of at least 4 ½ months and is not employed in a position for which the employee is required to be a student as a condition of the employment.

Regularly Assigned Place of Employment- the location where a staff member usually and customarily reports for work.