INTERNAL G.A. POLICY: NUMBER “TBD”:
TELEWORKING

Authority: President

Source of Authority: N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 116-14; 126-4(5) and (18); and 126-5(c1)(8) and (9)

Responsible Office: Human Resources

I. Purpose

To define the terms under which managers may allow General Administration employees (at any level) to work at alternate work locations for all or part of the work week on a regular, recurring basis in order to promote general work efficiencies. Teleworking is a privilege which may be granted under appropriate circumstances to high performing employees whose job responsibilities are suited to such an arrangement. The following guidelines are for departmental managers and/or supervisors to develop employee teleworking arrangements that are equitable, clearly understood, and to the benefit of the department.

Formal teleworking agreements are not suggested or required for FLSA exempt employees whose work station is General Administration but who routinely work out of the office (i.e. email at nights and weekends, project work at home, etc.).

Teleworking is consistent with sound business practices and in some instances may help the organization be more competitive in attracting talented and skilled employees. Teleworking can also increase productivity and morale of employees, boost efficiency in the use of space, reduce operating costs, and conserve energy.

II. Scope

Teleworking, also known as telecommuting, may not be suitable for all employees and/or positions. Teleworking is voluntary unless specifically stated as a condition of employment. Teleworking is not an employee right, and this policy creates no employee rights in relation to Teleworking. Since teleworking must meet the business needs of General Administration, management decisions regarding Teleworking are generally not subject to appeal. Either General Administration or the employee may discontinue the arrangement at any time, giving at least two weeks’ notice, unless otherwise provided in the Teleworking Agreement. Teleworking may be temporarily suspended due to operational needs of the unit.
III. Policy Definitions

Regular Teleworking: Regular Teleworking is defined as a mutually agreed-upon work option between General Administration and the employee in which the employee works at a Teleworking site (home or an alternative work site) on specified days and/or hours, and at the central work site the remainder of the time.

Mandatory Teleworking: A situation where teleworking is considered a requirement of the position and requiring the continuous utilization of an alternate work location. In most cases the employee will be notified at the time of hire that teleworking is mandatory. If mandatory teleworking occurs after hire, a fair and reasonable implementation period will be observed.

Temporary Teleworking: Temporary Teleworking is defined as approval to work at home on a full or part-time basis for a specified period of time based on a temporary need such as recovery from injury, surgery, prolonged illness, or communicable disease (with physician documentation); or during adverse weather, disaster recovery or other temporary situations.

Central Work Site: An employee’s assigned place of work or duty station owned or operated by the University or a site that is the primary workstation for field-based employees. Typically a central workplace is a duty station from which a supervisor and employees in the same work unit perform the functions of their jobs.

Teleworking Site: The Teleworking site means a work site alternative to the central work site as specified in the Teleworking Agreement. It may be in the employee's home or at a satellite office closer to the employee's home than the central work site and owned or leased by the University. The Teleworking site may be the official workstation in cases where the teleworker has no central work site.

Remote Access: Remote access is defined as an employee's ability to access the appropriate networked server(s) from the employee's Teleworking site to retrieve and store computer files. Remote access may or may not be part of the Teleworking Agreement.

Teleworking Agreement: [link] The Teleworking Agreement is the official document specifying terms and conditions of Teleworking.

Teleworking Application: [link] A Teleworking Application is the official document signed by the employee and submitted to the employee’s supervisor.

Teleworking Office Checklist: [link] A guide used in assessing the suitability and safety of a proposed home office or other Teleworking site submitted to the employee’s supervisor with the Teleworking Application form.
IV. Policy Requirements

A. Eligibility

Permanent employees whose job duties could conceivably be accomplished off-site may apply to Telework after completing the assigned probationary period and receiving a positive performance evaluation. [Temporary employees may also be approved to telework if all other teleworking requirements are met.] Consideration will be given to employees who have demonstrated work habits and performance well-suited to successful Teleworking and in situations that provide an opportunity for improved employee performance or employee retention, reduced commuting miles, or organization savings.

When considering a request, key considerations for the supervisor and/or division include:

- Employee Work habits: Teleworkers must have demonstrated good work habits such as dependability, self-motivation, self-discipline, acceptable performance evaluations, the ability to work independently, the ability to manage distractions, and the ability to meet deadlines.

- Duties of the Position: The teleworker's position must have minimal requirements for direct supervision or contact with customers; the teleworker's need for specialized material must be minimal or flexible; and the teleworker’s work objectives and tasks must be clearly defined with measurable results.

B. Conditions of Employment

The teleworker's conditions of employment will remain the same as for non-Teleworking employees. Employee salary shall not change as a result of Teleworking. An employee’s compensation and benefits will not be affected while teleworking, nor will the required number of work hours change due to teleworking. Teleworkers are responsible for reporting time worked, leave used, and for adhering to General Administration attendance policies. Overtime shall not be worked unless authorized in advance by the supervisor.

The Teleworking must be arranged so that there is no difference in the level of service provided to the customer. The location of work must not significantly alter the teleworker's job content or the job content of co-workers.

Teleworkers cannot act as primary caregivers during the agreed-upon work hours. This does not mean dependents or others living in the household will be absent from the home during the Teleworking hours. It means that they will not require the teleworker's attention during work hours. Teleworkers must make dependent care arrangements to permit concentration on work assignments just as if the individual were working at the central site.

General Administration policies, rules and practices apply at the Teleworking site. Failure to follow these policies, rules and procedures may result in termination of the Teleworking arrangement and/or disciplinary action.
C. Safety Considerations

If Teleworking sites are located in the home, the teleworker is responsible for establishing and maintaining the work site in a manner acceptable to management. The teleworker will comply with items on the safety checklist, and maintain a designated workspace that is clean, safe, and free from distractions. In the event of a job-related incident or accident to the employee during Teleworking hours, the teleworker needs to immediately report the event to the employee supervisor. General Administration does not assume responsibility for injury to any persons other than the teleworker at the Teleworking site. In case of injury to the employee, theft, loss, or tort liability related to Teleworking, the teleworker must allow agents of General Administration to investigate and/or inspect the Teleworking site. Reasonable notice of inspection and/or investigation will be given to the teleworker.

D. Communications and Service Delivery

The Teleworking schedule needs to allow adequate time at the central work site for meetings, access to facilities and supplies, and communication with other employees and customers. The teleworker cannot hold business meetings with clients or customers, the public or professional colleagues at his or her residence. Meetings with external organizations, agencies, groups and individuals are to be scheduled in appropriate university facilities. Teleworking must not adversely affect customer service delivery, employee productivity, or the progress of an individual or team assignment. In approving the Teleworking schedule, the employee supervisor will take into consideration the overall impact of the teleworker’s total time away from the central work site.

The teleworker must attend job-related meetings, training sessions, and conferences, as requested by the employee supervisor. If appropriate, the supervisor may allow telephone conference whenever possible as an alternative to in-person meetings. While teleworking, the teleworker must be available via telephone, computer, or other technologies during agreed-upon work hours.

The supervisor will provide direction on how to handle telephone messages, including the feasibility of call forwarding, frequency of checking telephone messages, and the need for having a home phone answering machine. The supervisor and teleworker will use the most efficient and effective way of handling long distance calls whether that is the use of General Administration calling card or reimbursement for long distance business calls. If reimbursement is approved, the teleworker must submit an expense reimbursement request with a log of long distance business calls and a copy of the phone bill to the supervisor on a monthly basis or as required by internal finance policy.

E. Emergency Situations

If the central work site is closed due to an emergency or inclement weather, the employee supervisor will contact the teleworker. Unless the situation impacts the teleworking site, the teleworker is expected to continue to work at the Teleworking site unless leave is taken.
If there is an emergency at the Teleworking site such as a power outage, the teleworker will notify the employee supervisor as soon as possible. If reasonable, the teleworker may be assigned to the central work site or an alternate work site. If reassignment is not feasible during the period that work cannot be accomplished at the Teleworking site, the teleworker must take leave or make up the work time within the pay period.

F. Performance Management

The method of monitoring and evaluating performance will rely more heavily on teleworker work results than direct observation. Formal evaluations will be consistent with agency policies and procedures. The teleworker must sign and abide by the Teleworking Agreement between the teleworker, the supervisor and Division Head or designee. The Teleworking Agreement will be reviewed by the teleworker and supervisor during performance review and revised as necessary.

G. Equipment, Costs and Logistics

The cost of supporting the teleworker must be reasonable in comparison to non-Teleworking positions. The teleworker's equipment and software must meet organization standards or the central work site may provide required equipment.

The Teleworking Agreement must specify all reimbursable costs. Any additional costs related to Teleworking must be authorized by the Division Head or designee prior to purchase or installation. Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally available at the central work site will not be reimbursed.

The teleworker cannot be paid for commuting time or receive travel expense reimbursement for the commute from a Teleworking site at home to the central office site.

Teleworkers are advised to consult with their insurance agent and a tax consultant for information regarding home work sites. Individual tax implications, auto and homeowners insurance, and residential utility costs are the responsibility of the teleworker.

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Procedures

A. Application Process

Employee: Reviews Teleworking Policies and related procedure provided by General Administration, completes Teleworking Application, and submits to supervisor for consideration.

Employee Supervisor: Reviews Teleworking Policies and related procedure provided by General Administration, reviews the Teleworking Application, and determines if Teleworking Application meets general requirements for Teleworking and that work schedule, accessibility issues, dependent care, equipment and safety issues are satisfactorily addressed. If the supervisor supports the requests, he or she proceeds to discuss with the
division head. If approved by the division head, the supervisor proceeds with implementation.

B. Implementation Process

**Employee Supervisor:** If Teleworking Agreement is approved by Division Head, the supervisor is responsible for working through the implementation details.

These include: Meeting with the employee to discuss Teleworking agreement and complete and sign final Teleworking Agreement; Getting division head approval of the detailed agreement; Notifying employee’s co-workers and others with whom the employee interacts about the Teleworking schedule; Notifying administrative support staff about the Teleworking schedule and how telephone calls, mail, and other communications with the teleworker will be handled; Making arrangements if computer access is needed; Meeting with teleworker and co-workers to address how arrangements will work; and Revises Teleworking Agreement as needed.

If organization-owned equipment is to be used at home Teleworking site, the supervisor ensures that it is included in inventory listing of Teleworking equipment and that changes are made to General Administration inventory records if necessary. After providing copies to the employee, the supervisor sends original Teleworking Application, Teleworking Office Checklist, and Teleworking Agreement to the Human Resources Office.

C. Termination of Agreement Process

**Employee:** If the teleworker wishes to terminate the Teleworking Agreement, meets with the employee supervisor and requests an effective date. Available office space at the central work site may impact the request.

**Employee Supervisor:** If the employee supervisor wishes to terminate the Teleworking Agreement, schedules a meeting with the teleworker to explain reasons and sets effective date for termination of the Teleworking Agreement.

*When a Teleworking Agreement is rescinded or terminated, sends a notification to General Administration Human Resources contact indicating date of termination and reason. Ensures that inventory file of Teleworking equipment is updated if necessary.*

D. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

**General Administration Human Resources Director:** On a yearly basis, General Administration will assess the number of teleworkers, compare cost/benefits, review the efforts to promote and encourage Teleworking, and determine whether to revise, continue, or recommend suspension of the Teleworking program.

**Employee Supervisor and Teleworker:** Review Teleworking Agreement and make changes when necessary.
Related Forms

- Application form
- Teleworking agreement
- Teleworking/off-site office checklist

History

- General Administration approves Teleworking Policy effective 7/1/2012

Related Links

- OSP Teleworking policy: