

# **Workplace Flexibility Program Manual**

## **Human Resources**

11000 University Parkway, Building 20E

Pensacola, FL 32514

[hr@uwf.edu](mailto:hr@uwf.edu)

Phone: 850.474.2694

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# PART 1: REMOTE WORK AGREEMENTS

## WHAT IS REMOTE WORK?

A remote work agreement is a formal document between an employer and an employee that outlines the terms and conditions for working from a location other than the traditional on-site workplace. It serves as a mutual understanding of expectations, responsibilities, and logistics for remote work arrangements.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Remote Work Program's objective is to increase employee productivity, job satisfaction, and provide efficiencies to the employee and the university in the following ways:

- Allowing employees to work remotely away from the distractions that may be present at their official UWF office or workspace and have more control of their work environment and flexible hours.
- Generating significant savings in time and money for the employee as well as for the university. Remote work employees may benefit from cost savings for travel, clothing, dry cleaning, food, and other costs related to commuting to and from the official UWF office or workspace. Remote work may also result in savings for the university by reducing the costs for utilities and the need for additional office/parking space, etc.
- Remote work employees may share office/workspace with another remote work employee at the university.

## PARTICIPATING IN REMOTE WORK

The program allows remote work employees to work at home without having to physically report to their official UWF office or workspace where the supervisor is present. Remote work employees are required to make themselves available to handle calls from the office and to come to the office for meetings while they are assigned to work remotely. Remote work is not a substitute for childcare. Childcare arrangements must be the same as if an employee is working in the official UWF office or workspace. A remote work schedule should not be used to cover absences due to a serious medical condition or a Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) absence. Employees who are approved to work remotely must complete a [Remote Work Agreement](#). This document lists the remote work employee's responsibilities and their supervisors' responsibilities, establishes working hours, and contains a home office evaluation checklist. A remote work program is extremely flexible. Take advantage of that flexibility, and it can aid in achieving success in remote work efforts. Non-Exempt employees cannot remote work outside the State of Florida.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH REMOTE WORK

- Is the proposed remote work arrangement in the best interests of the university or is the remote work arrangement solely for the convenience of the employee?
- Where will the remote work site be located? Is the location conducive to a safe and effective remote work situation?
- What is the proposed duration of the remote work arrangement? Is this acceptable?
- What is the proposed work schedule at the remote work site and how often will the employee be expected to return to the regular work site?

- Have the employee and supervisor agreed on how work will be assigned, results will be monitored/reviewed, and the employee's performance will be evaluated (e.g., quality, productivity, timeliness, expected results/outcomes)?
- What equipment and/or services required for the employee to effectively perform his/her job will be provided by the university? What will be provided by the employee?
- Has the university authorized the equipment and services to be provided, as well as remote access to the employee's workplace computer, in accordance with its procedures?
- Does the employee understand his/her responsibilities with respect to safeguarding university property and/or documents located at the remote work site and preventing unauthorized access to any sensitive or confidential information and/or data?
- Does the employee understand that he/she should not be responsible for care-giving for children, parents, or others during scheduled hours of work?
- How do overtime work considerations, use of annual and sick leave, and workers' compensation requirements impact the arrangement?
- What review will be conducted to ensure that the flexible work arrangement is achieving what it was designed to achieve and the provisions and conditions of the flexible work agreement are being complied with?

## CHECKLIST OF REQUIREMENTS FOR REMOTE WORK

- **Work Schedule:** Define working hours, days, and availability expectations.
- **Work Location:** Specify the approved remote workspace, such as a home office.
- **Performance Expectations:** Outline deliverables, productivity goals, and communication guidelines.
- **Equipment and Resources:** Details the tools or technology provided by the employer, such as laptops or software, and responsibilities for maintenance.
- **Compliance:** Ensure adherence to company policies, data security protocols, and confidentiality requirements.
- **Duration and Review:** Specify the timeline for the arrangement and plans for periodic evaluation.

A system should be established with remote work employees to check electronic mail, chat and voice mail frequently for messages when scheduled to work. This policy does not apply to situations where employees work at home on an incidental or occasional basis for various reasons (e.g., to complete regular assignments or special projects that require concentration and fewer interruptions). These alternate work site situations can be approved by an employee's department on a case-by-case basis.

## REMOTE WORK EQUIPMENT

The university may provide equipment such as computers, laptops, tablets, printers, communication devices, and software needed to perform the employees' work assignments. The equipment must be protected against damage and unauthorized use. Equipment must be used for official UWF business. University provided items remain the property of the University of West Florida and must be returned to the university upon request. In case of extended illness, resignation, or termination; or if the program ends, it is the employee's responsibility to personally return all university equipment.

Items for which expenses are not covered by the department for the establishment of a home office/workspace include, but are not limited to, the following items: Lamps and other room lighting devices, Fans and other room cooling devices, Electrical outlets/conversions, Telephone

jacks/additional telephone lines, the cost for the added use of utilities that result from remote work, door/cabinet locks, desk/work tables and chairs, answering machines.

Use of personal computers for University work is prohibited for certain work activities. Please refer to the [ITS Security Guidelines for Enterprise-wide \(and emergency\) Remote Access](#) for more information. If you are in doubt, please submit an Information Technology Request ticket via the UWF Service Desks (found in MyUWF).

## TRAVEL AND HOME EXPENSES

Travel and mileage between home and office will not be reimbursed. UWF will not be responsible for operating costs, home maintenance, or any other incidental cost (e.g. utilities) associated with working remotely from the employee's residence. For example, home-related expenses such as construction, renovations, heating/air conditioning, lighting, or electricity are not reimbursable. The university will also not be responsible for the maintenance and/or repair of personally owned equipment utilized for Remote Work Agreements.

## ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

The university will be responsible for any work-related injuries under Florida Workers Compensation laws, but this liability is limited to injuries resulting directly from work and only if the injury occurs in the designated work area during the assigned work hours. Any claims will be handled according to the normal university procedure for Workers Compensation claims.

As stated in the workers' compensation laws, the university will be responsible for injuries at the work home site, if the site is ergonomically maintained. The employee is responsible for any injuries and liabilities arising from his/her own negligence. Anytime an accident or an injury occurs, whether or not the employee wishes to seek medical care The employee and supervisor must complete the [Report of Injury](#) form and submit it to Human Resources as soon as possible after the injury (email [hr@uwf.edu](mailto:hr@uwf.edu)). For additional information regarding the reporting process, visit the Workers' Compensation page on the HR website ([Workers' Compensation](#)).

## UNIVERSITY'S RIGHT TO END A REMOTE WORK AGREEMENT

Remote Work Agreements are voluntary and may be terminated at any time by the employee. The university or department manager has the right to end arrangements for working remotely at their sole discretion with a fourteen (14) day prior written notification. If the employee chooses not to return to their campus work location on the expected date, failure to do so will be considered a voluntary resignation and will be treated as such under university standard policies and procedures.

## SICK, ANNUAL, HOLIDAYS, AND LEAVES OF ABSENCES

Any use of accrued leave must be approved by the supervisor. The employee must obtain prior approval for leave usage, in accordance with established university procedures and policies. If you are seeking a remote work agreement to manage a health or caregiving-related situation for yourself or a family member, you should contact the Human Resources Benefits Team to determine if your situation would be more appropriately considered under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or if it should be explored as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## **RECORDS**

Work performed at the remote work location is official UWF business and is considered a public record. All records, papers, and correspondence must be safeguarded for return to the official UWF office or workspace. Release or destruction of any records should only be done at the official UWF office or workspace according to statute and regulation. Computerized files are official records and shall be similarly protected. Carefully review the Information Security & Privacy Policy regarding the protection of information.

## **INDEMNITY AGREEMENT**

UWF will not be liable for damages to an employee's property that result from participation in the remote work program or any other costs, such as utilities and home maintenance, associated with the use of the employee's residence as a remote work location. UWF will not incur any expenditure to assist remote work employees who are subject to an inquiry, investigation, or claim by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or Federal, State or local governmental entity. Employees are covered by Workers' Compensation while performing official UWF duties.

## **PROGRAM AGREEMENT**

Nothing in this agreement shall be deemed to create any right, interest, or expectancy of continued employment.

# PART 2: FLEX SCHEDULING/COMPRESSED WORKWEEK

## WHAT IS FLEX TIME?

Flex time is a scheduling arrangement that allows for either a consistent daily schedule with fixed start and end times throughout the week, or a varying daily schedule with different start and end times each day. The varying schedule can include consistent eight-hour workdays or daily variations of more or less than eight hours. For full-time employees, the total weekly hours, whether on a consistent or varied schedule, must equal at least 40 hours within the workweek (Monday through Friday). Flexible schedules are intended for adjustments to the regularly scheduled hours in a Workweek. It is not intended to replace the reporting of more than two hours of leave used in the same Workweek.

## WHAT IS A COMPRESSED WORKWEEK?

A compressed workweek is a 40-hour workweek completed in four (4) days or some mutually agreed upon variation, at least 40 hours per week. (Day off is determined by the supervisor and department head).

## PROGRAM ADVANTAGES

For the employee, a compressed workweek includes the following advantages:

- Reduced commuting time and cost.
- Increased blocks of time off without reduction in compensation or benefits.
- Enhanced flexibility to meet personal needs while working full-time.
- Maximize limited workspace and equipment.

Flexible work schedules allow employees to meet departmental business needs while completing work in alternative ways. These arrangements help employees balance personal and professional demands, but the division, department, and university's priorities will guide eligibility and program structure.

## TYPES OF FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES WITH LIMITS

- a) Permanent flexible schedule: a permanent change to an employee's schedule from the standard 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday schedule. For example, a schedule to work 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- b) Flexible schedule to avoid overtime: a supervisor may allow or require a non-exempt employee to work different hours to avoid the employee working overtime hours. For example, an employee may be required to not work one afternoon (four hours) during the Workweek if the employee is required to work for four hours at a graduation ceremony on that Saturday.
- c) Flexible schedule to avoid the use of leave: an employee may work additional time during a Workweek to replace the time the employee was or will be absent in the same Workweek, with a cap of no more than two hours. For example, an employee has a one-hour medical appointment on Tuesday. The employee may work an extra hour on Tuesday or another day in the same Workweek to avoid using one hour of sick leave.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH FLEX SCHEDULING/COMPRESSED WORKWEEKS:

- What performance evaluation level must an employee meet, and how should their attendance record reflect eligibility for the arrangement?
- How will the proposed arrangement meet the business needs of the department?
- What will be the impact on work volume, peak periods, and/or overtime in the employee's workgroup?
- How flexible can the employee be if business needs change?
- Who are the customers, and how will they be affected by the arrangement?

## FLEX SCHEDULING STANDARD PRACTICE

Work schedules once identified, will be maintained for a maximum of six (6) months. Upon the expiration of the proposed time period, the employee will return to the original work schedule unless there is a request to extend the flexible work schedule. Flexible work schedules may be extended for six (6) months at a time with no limit on the number of extensions requested. As stated, flexible work schedules are not an employee entitlement and may be modified or discontinued by the appropriate supervisory and department head.

## DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Whether employees work flex time or a compressed workweek, some responsibilities affect the department as a whole. These responsibilities, for the department, include the following issues:

- Complete calendars should be prepared and posted that show all leave requested, compressed workweeks, and flex time scheduling.
- The schedule should be reviewed carefully by employees and supervisors for planning purposes and coordination of supervision.
- Circumstances requiring alternate supervisor coverage should be clearly communicated to all employees involved. This communication needs to occur before implementation.

## PROCESS FOR REQUESTING A FLEX SCHEDULE

Employees interested in requesting a flexible work schedule are responsible for developing a proposal and describing in detail how they would perform their work by completing a [Flexible Work Schedule Request Form](#). The proposal is then submitted to the supervisor for consideration. A meeting is held between the supervisor and the employee to discuss the criteria of the proposal and to determine whether the flexible work schedule is workable within the confines of business necessity. Decisions on proposals are determined on a case-by-case basis and are based upon appropriate supervisor and department head approval. If employees have questions regarding this packet or the preparation of a flexible work schedule proposal, they should contact their supervisor for assistance.