



**Instructions for Determining whether  
Telecommuting is Appropriate for the Position  
and for Drafting a Telecommuting Plan**

**Guidelines for Determining whether Telecommuting Is Appropriate for the Position**

- 1.1 Employee should be self-disciplined and capable of working with little on-site supervision. S/he should demonstrate the ability to maintain productive work habits (i.e., working 8 hours per day, or the agreed amount per day or week). The employee should be able to effectively use work time to complete projects and must be flexible.
- 1.2 Employee needs strong verbal and written communication skills, as well as appropriate knowledge of the use of computers and other technology.
- 1.3 Employee must have a demonstrated good performance record (i.e., positive performance evaluations and no documented absenteeism problems).
- 1.4 Employee must be able to provide an appropriate telecommuting work environment that meets University standards.
- 1.5 Telecommuting may be appropriate for salaried and wage employees.
- 1.6 Certain positions do not lend themselves to telecommuting. The supervisor or manager has discretion in making this determination based on the tasks and functions of the position. The following is a sample list of tasks which may or may not be acceptable to pursue in a telecommuting environment:

Acceptable	Unacceptable/Challenging
system administration with tasks that can be done remotely	anything that requires face-to-face contact with internal or external customers (front-line support)
technical/analytical writing	anything that requires hands-on contact with on-site equipment
communications development/ graphic design	interviewing and performance reviews/work planning
software development	projects requiring large amounts of collaboration
individual work (non-collaborative)(e.g. development of training materials)	clerical support (i.e., receptionist, file clerk)
on-line data entry/data processing/routine report generation	hardware-related services
administrative tasks (e-mail, status, reports, budgets, and so on)	staff meetings/project meetings/training new staff
web development/ programming	contract discussions/negotiations
certain research (i.e., online)	detailed accounting, reconciliation and reporting requirements
	close supervision of staff

Each Unit/Department may clarify additional acceptable/unacceptable criteria.

## **Requirements for Telecommuting**

### **2. Telecommuter Responsibilities and Obligations**

- 2.1 The telecommuter is required to comply with all University policies and guidelines.
- 2.2 Work products and programs developed by the telecommuter remain the property of the University.
- 2.3 The telecommuter is responsible for determining any and all tax implications or zoning regulations.
- 2.4 Certain meetings are mandatory and will require the telecommuter to come in to the office. Advance notice will be given to employees whenever possible. Telecommuters should not expect to be reimbursed for trips between their home and work unless otherwise agreed to in the approved Telecommuting Plan.
- 2.5 When the employee ceases telecommuting, it is his/her responsibility to return all U.Va. equipment to his/her department.
- 2.6 The telecommuter, in agreement with the manager, will schedule his/her hours out of the office and let managers and co-workers know when and where to reach him/her. This pre-defined work schedule will be set forth in the Telecommuting Plan.

### **3. Recommended Skills and Practices for the Supervisors who participate in the Telecommuting Program**

- 3.1 Supervisor should give all employees the opportunity to know about the telecommuting program and what would be expected of them should they wish to participate. Copies of the policy on Telecommuting and the approved Telecommuting Plan and a copy of the Telecommuting Guidelines must be provided to the telecommuter.
- 3.2 Supervisors should attend training or receive guidance on how to supervise telecommuters and support employee productivity. Supervisors should understand that supervising telecommuters may place additional demands on themselves.
- 3.3. Supervisors must exhibit effective communication skills.
- 3.4 Supervisors should plan to measure telecommuting performance based on employee's deliverables as spelled out in a work plan and not necessarily on direct observation. The work plan should include responsibilities, clearly defined goals and tasks, and describe objective/measurable performance expectations (both in quality and quantity).
- 3.5. The supervisor should define clearly for the employee what steps should be taken when a problem arises during the telecommuting work period.
- 3.6 Wherever possible, staff meetings should be scheduled on days that the telecommuter is available. This will ensure face-to-face contact between the telecommuter and co-workers.

## **4. Work Assignment and Supervision**

4.1 The telecommuter will consult with the supervisor, through mutually agreed upon mode(s) of communication, to receive or review completed assignments. The telecommuter may be required to attend department and office meetings. Travel expenses incurred by the telecommuter are his/her responsibility unless otherwise noted in the Telecommuting Plan.

4.2 The telecommuter agrees to limit his/her performance to the officially agreed duties while working at the approved telecommuting site. The telecommuter is to complete all assigned work according to work procedures and University regulations, as agreed upon by the supervisor and the telecommuter.

4.3 The telecommuter's job performance should be reviewed informally after 30 days, and thereafter, during the third and sixth month. The telecommuter's performance will be based on criteria and expectations as agreed upon by the supervisor and telecommuter, and as documented on a work plan. The telecommuter is to keep and submit a work record using a formal or informal documented work tracking system or procedure.

4.4 The supervisor has the right to terminate the telecommuting arrangement. Such a termination will be communicated in writing with reasonable notice. Written notice should be provided at least 30 days in advance. Similarly, the telecommuter may terminate the telecommuting arrangement with appropriate notice to the supervisor.

## **5. Customer Impact**

5.1 Customer needs should be taken into consideration in the design and implementation of any telecommuting arrangement.

5.2 A formal evaluation of customer impact should be completed before a telecommuting agreement is reached.

## **6. Assessment and Evaluation**

6.1 Supervisor and telecommuter should reassess the Telecommuting Plan and the agreed upon terms at least annually.

6.2 Supervisor and telecommuter should consider scheduling face-to-face performance reviews after 30 days, and thereafter at regular intervals (for example, during the third and sixth month of a six-month program agreement). Weekly telephone contacts are also advised. Monthly written feedback and status reports from the telecommuter to supervisor should be discussed.

6.3 The supervisor and telecommuter should set goals and document them in a work plan.

6.4 The criteria for the evaluation of the telecommuter's performance should be the same as for on-site employees.

## **7. Work Space**

7.1 The telecommuter agrees to use a designated work space that is conducive to working and one that meets the University of Virginia Environmental Health & Safety recommendations.

<http://ehs.virginia.edu/ergo/vdt.html>

7.2 The telecommuter agrees to permit work site reviews by the University when necessary, provided there is at least a 24-hour notice and the inspection is within working hours. The review would ensure appropriate maintenance of University property, provide the employee with feedback about how to improve their environment, along with ergonomic compliance.

7.3 The costs for office furniture will be the responsibility of the employee. The supervisor and employee will determine together what equipment and/or other supplies the department will provide. The Department may loan surplus office furniture if available. The Department may provide for the computing environment for the employee if possible, but the supervisor will make the final decision, depending on what equipment may be needed.

## **8. Equipment**

8.1 All equipment loaned by the University for the purpose of performing the job duties as agreed is to be maintained in good working condition and used only for performing job responsibilities. The cost for maintenance for University equipment will be covered by the University, if approved by the supervisor in advance. Upon resignation or termination of this agreement, the telecommuter agrees to return the equipment loaned in good working order and in comparable condition as when loaned.

8.2. Personally-owned equipment may also be used at the home office, however, maintenance and repair of this equipment remains the responsibility of the employee. Access (including dial-in costs) to the University network will be decided upon by the telecommuter and the supervisor (or manager) together, depending on the type of work done, where the telecommuter lives, and budget constraints.

8.3 The telecommuter is responsible for the safety and security of University equipment, software, data, supplies, and furniture at the telecommuting site. This includes maintaining data security and confidentiality to the same degree maintained by the University. The telecommuter may not duplicate University-owned software.

8.4 U.Va. equipment and software is to be used for U.Va. related projects only. You may not use University equipment for unlawful purposes or for work for other employers, nor may other persons use it.

8.5 The department may provide equipment and maintenance for University owned equipment from one or more sources: by purchasing equipment, by renting or leasing equipment, or by subcontracting the supply and support of equipment. This equipment may include whatever is required for the telecommuting employee in order to accomplish his/her work, for example: modems, fax machines, computers, telephones, or software.

## **9. Support and Coordination**

9.1 Telecommuters will be required to bring their University-owned machines into the office for servicing. Telecommuters can also call or send e-mail to the desktop support staff for inquiries.

9.2 Individual departments will coordinate the Telecommuting Program. The individual department will oversee paperwork and ensure compliance by both the employee and manager. They will also oversee that the supervisors/managers and employees involved in this program have adequate support.

## **10. Conditions of Employment and Pay Status**

10.1 All employment responsibilities and conditions (i.e., compensation, benefits, vacation time, overtime, rights, privileges, and disciplinary procedures) apply at the telecommuting site as if the telecommuter were at the primary work site.

10.2 The telecommuter works in a regular pay status while at the telecommuting site. The telecommuter will be reimbursed only for authorized or pre-approved expenses incurred while working for the University, as stated in the Telecommuting Plan and per University regulations.

10.3 Requests for overtime, vacation, sick leave, and change of work schedule are to be approved in the same manner in which they are approved on-site.

## **11. Accidents and Injuries**

11.1 A designated work space shall be maintained by the telecommuter at the alternative work location and described in the Telecommuting Plan. Worker's compensation liability will be limited to work-related injuries at this work space. The telecommuter is responsible for immediately informing his/her supervisor of any work related injuries.

11.2 The University will be responsible for any work-related injuries as stated under the state's Worker's Compensation laws (if a telecommuter's alternative work site is in another state, other Worker's Compensation laws may apply).

11.3 A health and safety inspection may be conducted by a University representative in order to ensure a safe working environment.

11.4 Transportation to or from the work site, and any accident that may occur in transit, is the responsibility of the telecommuter. When a telecommuter's presence is required at the work site, the telecommuter is not considered to have arrived at the work site until the destination is reached.

## **12. Program Parameters**

12.1 The guidelines in this document are not meant for employees who may telecommute occasionally under special circumstances. These employees should continue to work on a case-by-case basis with their supervisors or managers to make the necessary arrangements. Examples of occasional arrangements include, but are not limited to, weather conditions that prevent an employee from traveling to work, or when an employee wants to work at home to complete a special report.