



Division: *Human Resources*
Classification: Governance and Legal
Department phone: 503-838-8490
Department email: hr@wou.edu

TITLE

Institutional Policy on Remote Work

POLICY NUMBER

GL-05-063

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Executive Director of Human Resources

UNIVERSITY CONTACT

Office of Human Resources

SUMMARY

Western Oregon University recognizes that Remote Work may be mutually beneficial to employees and the University in circumstances when the nature of an employee’s work, the University’s business needs, and the skills and abilities of the employee indicate that such arrangement is in the best interest of the University, and maintaining the priority of serving our community and meeting the needs of our students. Remote work is a privilege granted by the University, not an entitlement or right of employees.

Although remote work may be an option for performing work in some circumstances, an on-campus presence for employees is often critical to maintain the highest possible quality of job function or campus service, particularly given that WOU is a residential campus where students work and live on or near campus. Furthermore, on-campus interactions build connections between faculty, staff and students, facilitate quick exchange of information and help integrate new employees into the culture of WOU. Remote work arrangements should not be implemented if they may result in diminishing the connections and experiences necessary to achieve a commitment of teaching and learning through transformative and personalized support for WOU students.

These policy provisions do not apply to requests for, or management of, workplace accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or any other federal, state, or local law or regulation. Employees seeking workplace accommodations should contact the Human Resources (HR) office.

Remote work is viewed as a cooperative arrangement based on the needs of a position, the department, and the university. Remote work arrangements can be pursued in cases where the implementation of these arrangements advances the university’s mission. Remote work arrangements are not appropriate for many roles on campus; however, this policy recognizes and embraces the dynamic, continually evolving nature of work on campus.

The efficiency and effectiveness of remote work arrangements will be evaluated regularly.

APPLICABLE TO

All Employees

DEFINITIONS

Alternate work locations: Approved locations, other than the employee's central workplace, where official university business is performed. The most common alternate work location is the home of an employee, subject to the approval described in this Policy.

Business necessity: A legitimate business purpose that fulfills the mission and objectives of the university and is not solely for the personal benefit of an employee.

Central workplace: An employer's place of work where employees normally are located. Most commonly this will be on our Monmouth or Salem campus.

Remote Work Agreement: A work arrangement where the employee enters into a formal agreement with the university to perform their usual job duties in an alternate work location at least one day per week, or some other duration or period of time.

Remote Work: A *voluntary* work alternative that is appropriate for some employees and some jobs but not all employees and all positions.

Workplace flexibility: Flexibility in which work is performed at an off-campus work site on a sporadic basis and does not follow a regular, repeated schedule.

AUTHORITY

STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to allow employees to work at alternate work locations for all or part of their workweek.

Policy:

Remote work is a *voluntary* work alternative that is appropriate for some employees and some jobs but not all employees and all positions. It is designed to help maximize productivity and performance, regardless of the work location, when the duties of the position and work performance of the employee allow.

The University encourages and allows the use of remote work arrangements and flexible scheduling within the bounds of good public practice, business operations, and resource limitations.

While we encourage workplace flexibility, no university employee is entitled to or guaranteed the opportunity for remote work. Approval for remote work is granted at the discretion of each respective senior leadership member and or vice president and supervisor, with determination of whether an employee is eligible to participate made in accordance with these procedures and the university's business needs. Approval can be revoked at any time based on the discretion of the employee's supervisor, vice president, Director of Human Resources, or University President.

Position Remote Work Eligibility:

A position's suitability for remote work is based on operational needs and the duties and responsibilities of the position as defined in the employee's position description. It is the responsibility of the department to designate positions as remote work eligible or remote work



ineligible. Positions which can be designated remote work eligible are those where a portion of the duties of a position can be accomplished through remote work.

Employee Eligibility:

Departments decide whether an employee in a remote work eligible position is a candidate for remote work. When evaluating a remote work request, departments should take into account specific position requirements, impact on a team, employee performance concerns, and whether the employee can effectively perform the job duties of the position while working remotely. Additionally, departments must also determine that the proposed remote working arrangement follows applicable regulations, policies, rules, and collective bargaining agreements.

A remote working employee's conditions of employment are the same as those of non-remote working employees, including compliance with all policies and rules of the University and state while remote working.

There may be instances where in-person attendance is mandatory for a remote worker. Requirements for in-person attendance can override regular remote work schedules. Supervisors should discuss such instances with the employee (e.g., hands-on training).

Expectations for timely completion of work to established standards, attendance at meetings, responsiveness to students, colleagues, community members, and other performance criteria are the same for remote working and non-remote working employees. Departments must apply the same performance standards to employees regardless of work location. It is important that departments establish fair and equitable processes to determine whether an employee is successful in using remote work.

Remote work as a Workplace Accommodation

Employees may request remote work as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or as the result of a covered illness or injury pursuant to state or federal laws. Employees should request remote work by completing accommodation requests through the Office of Human Resources.

Position suitability

A position suitable for remote work is one that has responsibilities that can be conducted in a remote work setting, using basic telecommunications technology at home without affecting the employee's work quality/quantity or department operations, effectiveness, or productivity.

Unless otherwise specified (such as during a global pandemic), occasional remote work is not appropriate and may not be used as a substitute for sick leave (or any other type of leave) when the employee's own or a family member's condition interferes with the employee's ability to perform their work. Specifically, remote work generally should not be used to provide active care for a child or other dependent.

Characteristics of positions that DO NOT lend themselves to remote work

- Job duties that require access to specific personnel, onsite files, or specialized space/equipment/ technology in order to effectively perform the job.

- The position has regular in-person student/customer/public interaction that becomes less efficient or less effective in a remote environment.
- Position's job duties require participation in onsite meetings or presentations.
- Remote work relationship that adds additional cost to the University. For example, a remote work arrangement should not typically result in the duplication of office equipment.
- Employee's continued remote work negatively impacts work group performance.

Characteristics of positions that DO lend themselves to remote work

- Job duties can be conducted outside of the onsite location.
- Remote work does not affect the work quality/quantity or organizational operations.
- Remote work does not add additional costs.
- Remote work does not negatively impact work group or department performance.

Approval

Advanced written approval for all remote work is required, through the Remote Work Agreement. The agreement process is vital to ensuring that the risks associated with remote work have been appropriately reviewed by consulting offices prior to approval. Approval minimally involves:

Level 1: Supervisor or time approver

Level 2: Dean/Vice President/Executive Director (If applicable, otherwise skip to Level 3)

Level 3: Human Resources Director

(if remote work will be out of the State of Oregon, the University President's approval is required).

Employee Expectations, Work Schedule, and Overtime

The work schedule of a remote work employee will be determined by the supervisor and employee with approval by HR before the start of the remote work. This schedule will be documented in the *Remote Work Agreement*. *Note: This does not apply to non permanent situations involving workplace flexibility*

The *Remote Work Agreement* will be kept by supervisor and human resources as part of the employee's personnel file. Remote work agreements should be reviewed and updated at a minimum annually, or as warranted due to changes in work responsibilities, availability of equipment, or evolving workplace practices. During the review, it will be determined whether remote work continues to be appropriate, including whether it continues to meet operational needs.

An employee who works remotely (full or part-time) is expected to follow the same expectations as employees performing duties onsite. An employee who works remotely must:

1. Perform all job responsibilities in a manner that meets the identified expectations of the position and as identified in the remote work agreement;
2. Maintain a safe and functional workspace that supports meeting job expectations;
3. Maintain regularly scheduled and approved work hours and be accessible during those hours;
4. Communicate with their supervisor and colleagues as necessary to meet operational needs and the requirements of the position;



5. Comply with WOU's employee policies and procedures including training and compliance; timekeeping, overtime, and paid time off; and maintain records of time worked in the manner directed by supervisor;
6. Attend meetings and functions onsite as articulated in remote work agreement which may include days that they would customarily work remotely'
7. Use safeguards to maintain the privacy, confidentiality, security, and integrity of all data, including written and spoken communications.

The rules and regulations governing overtime, compensatory time accrual, and leave time accrual and use that apply at an employee's designated work location also apply while the employee is working remotely.

Non-compliance

Failure to comply with the requirements and provisions of this policy may result in the immediate termination of any remote work arrangement determined not to be in compliance and or discipline up to and including termination of employment.

REFERENCED OR RELATED POLICIES

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AND LINKS

Remote work agreement

HISTORY

APPROVAL DATE: XX/XX/XXXX

EFFECTIVE DATE: XX/XX/XXXX

LAST UPDATED: XX/XX/XXXX

SOURCE: