Workplace Expectations and Conduct: Telework Policy

Subject: University Human Resources
Policy: Telework Policy
Effective Date: January 1, 2019
Revised:
Review Date: Three (3) years from Effective Date above
Responsible Party: University Human Resources
Applicability: This policy applies to all employees except student employees or short-term workers

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE
The university recognizes there may be circumstances in which it is in the university's interest to allow employees to work at alternate work sites or from home for all or part of a work week. This policy establishes guidelines for approving and administering teleworking arrangements with university employees.

2. TELEWORK
For purposes of this policy, telework refers to an arrangement that allows an employee to work from home or other location away from the usual workplace on a regular basis.

3. ELIGIBILITY
Telework arrangements may be considered for non-faculty employees who have completed at least six (6) months of service in the position intended to be covered by the telework agreement. In some cases, the university may establish new or open positions in which telework is an expected condition of employment. For those designated telework positions, the job announcement will describe the telework requirement and include a statement advising the ability to work effectively and efficiently from an alternate worksite is one of the qualifications of the position.

4. APPROVAL
For purposes of this policy, occasional out-of-office work arrangements may be allowed on a case-by-case basis if approved by an employee's supervisor. A formal telework agreement is not required for these occasional telework arrangements and a supervisor's approval on one occasion does not imply future requests of a similar nature will also be approved.

Approval of long-term telework arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis by the supervisor, the vice president of the division, and University Human Resources. Both the abilities and characteristics of the employee and the nature of the work must be assessed by the supervisor before entering into, and approving, a telework agreement. Telework is not an entitlement nor is it a university benefit. Any telework arrangement may be approved or discontinued at the discretion of the university.

Telework may be approved if, after evaluation, it is determined the employee can effectively perform the job duties of the position while teleworking, the arrangement conforms to all regulations, policies, and collective bargaining agreements, and a telework agreement is developed by University Human Resources.

5. CONDITIONS OF TELEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

a. Telework assignments do not change the conditions of employment. Work performed at alternate locations is considered official university business and documents created in the course and scope of employment are university business documents. Employees on telework assignments are required to comply with all appropriate policies and procedures. The university may establish additional specific conditions that apply to employees working at alternate locations.

b. The department and the employee shall mutually agree to telework arrangements, which must be approved by University Human Resources to assure compliance with this policy.

c. The university may establish telework as a condition of employment based upon business needs. Any new position which may be designated as a telework position will need to include reference to the telework requirement within the position description and advertising.

d. An employee's compensation and benefits will not change due to telework.

6. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Supervisors may require employees to report to a central workplace as needed to attend work-related meetings or other events. Supervisors may meet the employee in the alternate work location in person or remotely, as needed, to discuss work progress or other work-related issues.

7. HOURS OF WORK

The total number of hours employees are expected to work will not change regardless of work locations. Work hours must be documented in accordance with university policies and procedures, Montana wage and hour laws, and the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.
8. USE OF LEAVE
Telework is not intended to be used in place of sick leave, Family and Medical Leave, Workers’ Compensation leave, or other types of leave. Telework may be appropriate as an opportunity for partial or full return to work following sickness or injury based on university policy and the criteria normally applied to decisions regarding the approval of telework and reasonable accommodations.

9. EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS
The university will typically provide equipment and materials needed by employees to perform their duties effectively. However, telework agreements may require employees to use their own equipment.

a. University-Owned Equipment
Employees may not use university owned equipment for personal use. See Section 2-2-121, MCA and Use of University Property, Services, and Resources policy. Employees are responsible for protecting university-owned equipment from theft, damage, and unauthorized use.

b. University Equipment and Services
The department may provide utility equipment and services generally available in the central work location. Examples include, but are not limited to:

i. Pay for leased telephone lines in the alternate work location,

ii. Install and provide basic telephone service in the alternate work locations, or

iii. Provide cell phones for use in the alternate location.

c. Employee-Owned Equipment
The university will not assume responsibility for cost, repair, or service when authorizing employees use their own equipment unless approved by management.

10. INTEGRITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF WORK INFORMATION
Employees must safeguard university information used or accessed while at the remote worksite. Employees must follow security procedures established by the university to ensure the protection, security, and confidentiality of university information and data.

11. TELEWORK AGREEMENT
The telework agreement should comply with the requirements set forth in the Telework Policy of the Department of Administration.