

## WOU Remote Work Policy and Guidelines

*The mission of Human Resources is to partner with campus to help create and promote a human-centered organizational culture anchored in diversity, equity, inclusion, and respect.*

### **Purpose**

To establish guidelines and procedures to support remote work as an alternative work arrangement, where appropriate for eligible employees. To allow employees to work at alternate work locations for all or part of their workweek.

The University recognizes that in some circumstances remote work can improve productivity and job performance as well as promote administrative efficiencies, reduce traffic congestion and transportation costs, support continuity of operations plans, and sustain the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified workforce by enhancing work/life balance. At the same time, remote work can introduce challenges such as, hindered cooperation, inefficient communication, and weakened campus connection. We encourage supervisors to determine work plans that optimize the benefits while minimizing the downsides.

### **Responsibility**

Human Resources is responsible for the administration of these guidelines. The individual units are responsible for the initiation and on-going maintenance of remote work agreements within their unit.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time Western Oregon University employees. A remote work arrangement may be approved for an exempt or non-exempt employee when the job tasks align with the goals of the department and University, and benefits the employee. Given the nature of University needs, this is an option for qualified employees as determined by these guidelines.

### **Definitions**

“Campus (WOU) Worksite” or “Centrally located worksite” means the worksite where the employee would be required to work if they did not work remotely. Located on either the WOU Monmouth or WOU-Salem campus.

“Employee regular worksite” means the primary worksite location at which the employee is expected to perform their work.

“Exempt employee” means an employee who, based on duties performed and the manner of compensation, are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) minimum wage and overtime provisions. Exempt employees are paid an established monthly salary and are expected to fulfill the duties of their position(s) regardless of hours worked. Exempt employees are not eligible to receive overtime compensation or compensatory time off and are not required to adhere to strict time, record keeping, and attendance rules for pay purposes. Exempt titles are identified in University-wide title and pay plans.

“Non-exempt employees” means an employee who, based on duties performed and the manner of compensation, are subject to all FLSA provisions. Non-exempt employees are required to account for time worked on an hourly

and fractional hourly basis and are to be compensated for qualified overtime hours at the premium (time-and-one-half) rate. Non-exempt titles are identified in University-wide title and pay plans.

“Remote Access” means any connection to WOU’s network and/or other applications from off-site locations using a computing device of any type (e.g. laptop, web terminal, smartphone, etc). Remote access can be gained from any physical or logical location external to WOU.

“Remote work” means working on a regular or part-time basis, one or more days each workweek from a location other than their centrally located worksite. Working-off site at a location, preferably a home-office, that is part of an established arrangement that allows an employee to work at a work location other than a WOU worksite. Remote work can occur in the Monmouth/Independence area, anywhere in Oregon, or an approved location in the United States. In some situations, remote workers may not have an assigned campus worksite. The remote work arrangement may be a set schedule or variable upon request (see situational remote work).

“Server” means any system that provides a service, information, or manages network resources.

“Situational remote work” means working remotely on an irregular basis, that is not part of a previously established remote work arrangement. Situational remote work may be determined by the supervisor to support university operations but allow employees increased flexibility to manage disaster, weather, work/home life balance scenarios.

“Stakeholders” means a person or party who hold a common interest regarding the operation of the University

“Voluntary” means employees choose to request a remote work arrangement.

“Workstation” means any desktop or laptop that is used by an individual to perform job duties. A workstation may be dedicated to an individual WOU employee or may be shared among multiple employees.

### **Remote Work Eligibility**

The qualifications to work remotely will be determined taking into consideration various factors (see points 1-6 below), including the job position, nature of the work performed, operational needs, impact on the department and employee performance. Such arrangements will grant a greater degree of work flexibility to employees while serving the needs of the University.

Supervisors should apply these factors consistently to all employees and work activities. This does not preclude different determinations for each employee, even for employees with the same job duties.

1. An employee's work must be of a nature that face-to-face interaction with internal or external stakeholders is minimal and the employee's tasks can be performed successfully away from the University with the use of collaboration tools and technology.
2. Characteristics of the employee will include a demonstrated conscientiousness about work time, productivity, self-motivation and ability to work well alone and without immediate supervision.
3. The employee communicates effectively with supervisors, coworkers, and other partners and is available during the University’s established core business hours.
4. The employee must be currently performing at or above an overall satisfactory level in their position as evaluated by their supervisor.

5. The employee must have a basic knowledge of hardware and software programs used to complete work tasks and be able to maintain sound safety and security standards while working remotely.
6. The employee must have access to internet service that is reliable and that is fast enough to support the collaboration tools and technology needed to perform their work remotely, excluding occasional service disruptions that are outside of the control of the employee.

## **Remote Work Agreements**

This is an arrangement for remote work on an on-going basis until terminated by either party, or by mutual agreement. Remote work might be from a half a day to five days per week based on the remote work eligibility (see 1-6 above) and supervisory approval.

If the employee meets the qualifications for remote work, the employee and supervisor will jointly develop a written agreement memorialized on the Western Oregon University Remote Work Agreement. This Agreement will outline specific conditions and agreed-upon work arrangements and is subject to ongoing review by the supervisor and may be terminated at any time based on operational or business needs. The employee may terminate the Agreement at any time.

## **Situational Telework**

This is an arrangement for an occasional telework that is not a part of the previous remote work agreement. Situational telework might be from one to five days per week but not to exceed 10 consecutive work days per occasion.

## **Conditions of Employment**

Remote work does not change the conditions of employment, applicability of University policies, or collective bargaining agreement terms including but not limited to overtime, holidays, vacation leave, and sick time. WOU policies, rules and practices apply at the remote work site, including but not limited to those governing communicating internally and with the public, employee rights and responsibilities, facilities and equipment management, financial management, information resource management, purchasing of property and services, and safety. Failure to follow policy, rules and procedures may result in termination of the remote work arrangement and/or disciplinary action.

## **Work Schedule**

A consistent work schedule and days are desirable to ensure regular and predictable contact with supervisor, WOU faculty/staff and others. The agreed upon work schedule will comply with FLSA regulations. Exempt employees will agree to be available during specific agreed-upon core hours. Non-exempt employees must not work overtime without prior approval from their supervisor and are required to accurately report work hours and strictly adhere to required rest and meal breaks in full compliance with policies and federal, state and local guidelines. The employee will not perform personal business or activities during agreed-upon work hours.

## **Working Environment**

While working remotely, the employee is responsible for ensuring a worksite environment suitable for accomplishing their regular job duties during scheduled hours of work and, if applicable, arranging for dependent care just as they would if they were working at the regular WOU worksite. Remote work is not a substitute for dependent or childcare. WOU will review the proposed work location for suitability for the work to be performed.

The employee must establish and maintain a dedicated work space that is quiet, free of distractions, and kept in a clean, professional, and safe condition, with adequate lighting and ventilation. In-person meetings at the remote site with other WOU staff, or vendors will not be permitted unless approved in advance by the employee's supervisor.

### **Communication**

While working remotely, the employee is expected to maintain a presence using agreed-upon technology and to be available to their supervisor, coworkers and customers with the same response times as if at the regular WOU worksite. The employee and supervisor will agree on expected response time and the medium for responses.

The employee must be reachable to attend job-related meetings, training sessions and conferences, as requested by the supervisor. In addition, the employee may be requested to attend meetings on short notice, or alternately, be requested to be part of a teleconference.

Employees using personal phone to answer work call (directly or via forwarding) must have a voicemail greeting identifying the name, position, department, and WOU.

All work mail should be sent to the University Mail center.

### **Duties and Assignments**

While working remotely, the employee is expected to maintain appropriate productivity, performance, communication and responsiveness standards. The employee and supervisor will establish an agreed-upon plan covering general duties and assignments to be performed, receiving and returning of assignments and reporting to the supervisor while working remotely. The supervisor may assign other work, as necessary, at either the WOU worksite to the remote work location. The remote worker will not be paid for time or mileage involved in travel between the remote worksite and the primary worksite.

### **Performance and Evaluation**

The employee's job responsibilities, standards of performance and performance appraisals remain the same as if working at the regular WOU worksite. In addition to the annual performance appraisal, the supervisor and employee will formulate objectives, expected results, and evaluation procedures for work completed while the employee is working remotely. The supervisor will monitor and evaluate performance by relying more heavily on work results rather than direct observation. The supervisor and employee will meet at regular intervals to review the employee's work performance.

### **University Closure / Inclement Weather**

If the University is closed due to an emergency or inclement weather, the supervisor will contact the employee. The employee may be permitted/requested to continue to work at the remote work site, even if either the Monmouth or Salem campus is closed. (Classified employees asked to work remotely during a campus closure should reference Article 58, Section 2 for pay during closures). If there is an emergency at the remote work site, such as a power outage, the employee will notify the supervisor as soon as possible. The employee may be reassigned to the campus worksite or an alternate work site, in the case of an emergency at the remote site.

### **Equipment, Liability & Expenses**

The employee is generally expected to establish their home worksite including furniture. The employee and supervisor shall work with University Computing Solutions to help determine the minimum equipment and

software necessary for the employee to complete assignments from the remote location in a timely, efficient, and professional manner. Any equipment provided by the organization must be properly inventoried and listed in the agreement, and the agreement must be updated if equipment is returned or if new equipment is assigned. The employee is required to return any organization property upon request. Should an employee be provided WOU equipment, the equipment will be used exclusively by the employee and for the purposes of conducting WOU business. The organization will maintain all equipment owned by the organization. The employee will not perform maintenance or repairs on organization-owned equipment without prior approval. The employee is responsible for all maintenance and repairs of employee-owned equipment.

The employee may be allowed to install organization-owned equipment or software upon approval. Without approval, the employee must schedule installation with University Computing Solutions. Only organization-owned software may be installed on organization-owned equipment. The employee may not install or download any other software without approval. All software used for remote work must be properly licensed by the software manufacturer. While the employee may be allowed to use their own software, they will not be required to “purchase” software. If new software is required for remote work, it will be provided by the organization. The employee should never purchase or rent equipment, services, or supplies on the assumption that the organization will reimburse the cost. Prior supervisor approval should be obtained.

### **Information Security**

The employee is responsible for reviewing University policies and guidelines for proper record management. The employee will be responsible for the safety and security of University-owned all equipment, records, and materials at the alternate worksite. This includes maintaining data security and record confidentiality in the same manner as when working at the regular University worksite. The employee will implement steps for good information security in the alternate worksite location and will check with their supervisor when security matters are an issue. The employee must report to the supervisor any instances of loss, damage, or unauthorized access at the earliest opportunity.

Products, documents and records that are used, developed, or revised while working remotely will be returned to WOU in hard copy or stored on WOU’s network. Release or destruction of records should be done only in accordance with statute and University policy and procedure and with the knowledge of the employee’s supervisor. Electronic/computer files are considered University records and will be protected as such.

### **Incidental Costs**

Unless otherwise determined in the Agreement, the employee is responsible for ongoing operating costs for non-work-related utility costs, cleaning services, homeowner’s or renter’s insurance and furniture or equipment rental fees unless the organization agrees in writing to pay for or reimburse such costs.

### **Reimbursable Expenses**

Employees working from home or other alternate locations are not on travel status and not eligible for meal reimbursement. Similarly, meals taken at home or other alternate locations (or delivered) during a Zoom business meeting are not reimbursable. Only business-related equipment that can be returned to the office at the end of the arrangement will be reimbursed. If any item needs to be installed, charges related to the installation are the responsibility of the employee. Other expenses (utilities, rent, furniture, etc.) will not be reimbursed.

Departments will evaluate on a case-by-case basis where reimbursement is necessary for employees with specific needs not already met with existing resources and only allowable if the University-issued office

equipment (e.g., computer, printer, keyboard) can't be relocated or the employee does not already have personal equipment at the alternate worksite to enable them to perform their work duties.

Expenses will be reimbursed only if the supervisor agrees to the purchase in advance. Please consult Western Oregon University policies on reimbursable expenses:

### **Safety**

The employee is responsible for maintaining a safe and secure work environment, including maintaining the alternate worksite in an ergonomically sound manner. The employee should direct questions to the University Occupational and Environmental Health & Safety officer as a resource to provide information on a safe and ergonomically sound work environment.

The employee will be covered by workers' compensation for job-related injuries that occur in the designated workspace, if the injury was incurred in the course and scope of the employee's job duties and during the employee's scheduled hours of work since the employee's alternative shall be considered an extension of the regular University worksite.

The employee is responsible for reporting any work-related injuries to the supervisor at the earliest opportunity, and injuries will be handled in the same manner as reports of injury at the primary worksite.

The employee will agree to hold the University harmless for injury to others at the alternate worksite. The employee may not conduct in-person work-related meetings at the alternate worksite.

### **Termination**

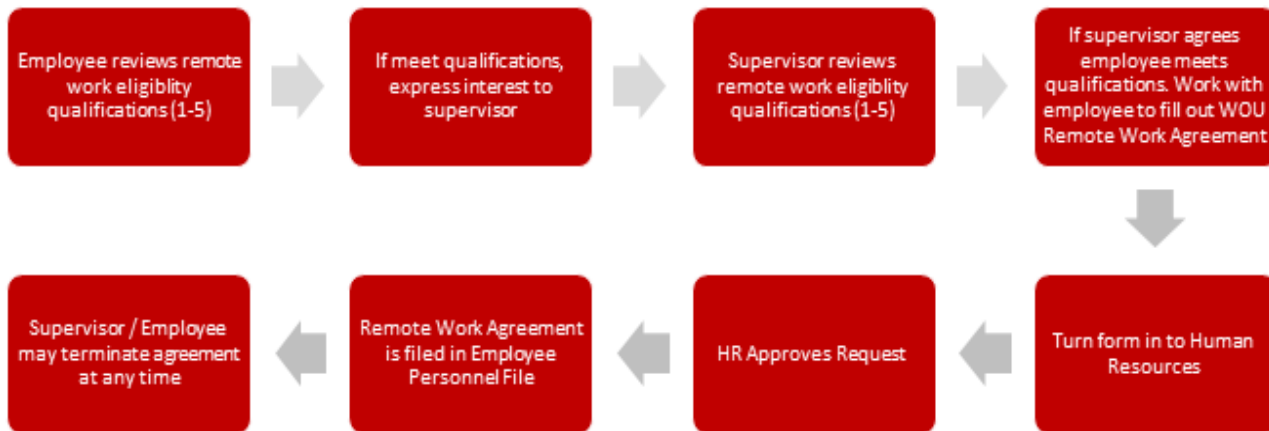
The remote work agreement is not a guarantee of employment, and both the agreement and the employee's employment can be terminated at any time by either the University or the employee. A remote work arrangement may not be allowed to continue uninterrupted if such an arrangement does not meet the needs of the University. In such situations the supervisor will make an effort to work with the employee to resolve the situation, but if the problem cannot be resolved, the supervisor may terminate the agreement.

Termination of the Remote Work Agreement may be made for business reasons as determined by the supervisor. In the event this agreement is terminated, the supervisor will provide five (5) business days' notice to allow the employee to make appropriate arrangements. The Organization will not be held responsible for costs, damages or losses to the employee resulting from termination of the agreement.

### **Other**

The employee will be solely responsible for any and all tax and/or insurance consequences/deductions, if any, of this arrangement and for conformance to any local laws/regulations (including but not limited to local zoning laws regulations). The University will not provide any individual guidance to the employee regarding potential tax or insurance implications arising from the Remote Work Agreement nor any guidance regarding any local laws/regulations that may apply. Should the employee have any tax, insurance, or legal questions relating to routine or remote work, the employee is encouraged to consult with their legal and/or tax professional.

### **Process for Establishing a Remote Work Arrangement**



### Working Remotely: Tips for Supervisors

Tell your team how they can reach you. If you manage people, be clear with them about any new or different communication and productivity expectations you have now that your team is working remotely. Most important is telling your team specifically how you want them to communicate with you now that they can't pop into your office or run into you in the halls. Should they call, email, text, IM, Zoom, FaceTime? Don't assume they know.

Tell your team when they can reach you. Do you want people to check in with you first thing in the morning? Send a daily or weekly update on what they've been working on? The more guidance and boundaries you provide, the fewer misunderstandings will occur and the more smoothly work can stay on track.

Overcommunicate. This is especially important when you are working remotely. If you question whether your team will want to know something, share it

Make sure to clarify expectations for your team. Connect with your team around communication, work priorities, and success metrics. Will everyone be expected to work the same hours? Will all the same projects and plans be moving forward? Don't let people make assumptions about anything that's unclear -- answer those questions.

Emphasize one-on-one check-ins. Don't cancel your one-on-ones just because they can't be held in person. Even a two-minute IM chat, video call, or text message chain can make employees feel more connected.

Share Information via a Team Room. Develop a team room where virtual team members can share information and stay connected.

Celebrate success. Create ways to virtually celebrate team successes by sharing photos, videos, emoji's, etc.

### Working remotely: Tips for Employees

Self-Care

Take scheduled breaks. Try setting an alarm to get up and stretch every hour or so. Walk around your home while chatting on the phone with a co-worker. Move to a separate area -- away from your email -- to eat lunch. Breaking up the day and moving your body enables you to refresh and can increase your productivity when you return to your work.

Protect your workspace. Talk to family members or roommates about the hours you are working from home and the ground rules during those hours. Assume that anything that can interrupt you will interrupt you -- like a UPS delivery during a critical negotiation call or a dog barking in the background of a video chat. Be as proactive as you can about avoiding these kinds of incidents.

Turn on a white noise machine or app. This really helps to reduce noise distractions around your work area.

Pay attention to ergonomics. Use the most comfortable chair you can with back support. Pop in your earbuds or use a headset for long phone calls. Sitting in a wooden chair balancing a phone between your chin and shoulder is not a sustainable situation.

Overcommunicate. This especially important when you are working remotely. If you question whether your colleagues will want to know something, share it

Resolve issues quickly with a phone call. Email, text, IM, and other written methods of communication are prone to misunderstandings. When you sense this is happening, be quick to pick up the phone to resolve issues.

Promptly return emails, calls, and voicemails. Keep in mind that people tend to be more aware of time when working remotely. Fair or not, a colleague might find a four-hour response time to an email much too delayed when he or she is picturing you sitting at your desk at home all day.

Keep up more casual communication habits. If you normally catch up with colleagues in person before a big meeting, do the same before dialing in to a group conference call when everyone is remote. If you normally chat with your co-workers first thing in the morning, do the same remotely by IM. Even when at home, you should confirm receipt of messages and check in with colleagues.