

# USNH Flexible Work Arrangements (for full Policy see [USY.V.C.21](#))

## 1. RATIONALE

The University System of New Hampshire (USNH) is pleased to continue providing options for flexible work when possible, given the wide success of work performed remotely during the 2020-2021 Academic Year. Flexible work arrangements can benefit both the institution and the employee by promoting an effective work/life balance, increasing space utilization, reducing impact on the environment, and increasing employee recruitment and retention. Please note that not all USNH jobs can be accomplished using a flexible work arrangement.

The information here provides best practices, policies and processes for staff employees and supervisors.

- a) Faculty members assigned to teach in-person courses may regularly work from home or elsewhere when they do not have specific on-campus responsibilities. For their off-campus work, all aspects of this policy apply, except that a *Flexible Work Agreement* is not necessary, and the *Hours of Work* section 9 below does not apply.
- b) For faculty members hired to teach online, or who request to transfer some or all of their teaching or other responsibilities online, this entire guideline applies, including the required Flexible Work Arrangement request and approval.

### Benefits for USNH institutions:

- Support our employees to face professional challenges.
- Capitalize on new approaches to our work in pursuing our mission of teaching, research, and service.
- Remain competitive in recruiting and retaining talented employees with contemporary workforce practices.
- Utilize campus physical assets more fully to achieve economies and savings.
- Alleviate impacts on the environment from transportation, reduce parking needs and lessen energy consumption.
- Leverage information technology to effectively perform work at home or in remote sites, while maintaining cohesion among work teams.
- Support a strong performance-based culture, focused on results.

### Benefits to USNH Employees:

- Support for balancing professional demands, which may change during their careers.
- Reduce personal expenses for commuting and transportation.
- Develop skills in technology use for collaboration and shared work products.
- Adjust work schedules for best productivity.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY:

- Eligibility for Flexible Work arrangements and approval procedures are determined at each USNH institution.
- Flexible Work Arrangements may be requested by USNH employees who are not covered by collective bargaining agreements.
  - Employee requests are subject to manager review and approval.
  - Work From Anywhere requires approval from HR, as not all states and locations are suitable.
- Flex Work arrangements may also be assigned to a position as a condition of the role.

## 3. OPTIONS AND DEFINITIONS (and corresponding section of policy [USY.V.C.21](#))

- A. **Flextime** (21.1): A change in a work schedule while maintaining the percent-time of the appointment. For example: 40 hours of work may be completed in four 10-hour workdays, with the position remaining 100% FTE.
- B. **Flex-Year** (21.2): The assignment of a position to a specific work period in the fiscal year that is consecutive and less than 12 months. For example, Flex-Year positions supporting academic or student departments during the academic year are typically 75% to 80% appointments, beginning each year at the start of the fall semester and ending after the spring semester.
- C. **Reduced Time** (21.3): Changing the percent time of a position. For the position to remain benefit-eligible, it must be 75% FTE or more. For example, an employee could request a reduction from 5 days per week (100%) to 4 days (80%).
- D. **Hybrid Work** (21.4): Working from different locations without changing the percent time of the appointment, typically alternating between a home office and a USNH location. Hybrid work is intended for positions suited for autonomy and flexibility with an expectation that some work will still be performed at a USNH office location.
- E. **Fully Remote Work** (21.5): Working from remote locations outside USNH locations but within the six New England states (NH, VT, ME, MA, CT and RI) on an ongoing and regular basis. It is limited to positions where employees can successfully execute projects and daily tasks without commuting to a USNH office but where there may be an occasional requirement to do so. Temporary Fully Remote Work may be approved for up to three months.
- F. **Work From Anywhere** (21.6): Working remotely outside USNH locations and outside the six New England states (NH, VT, ME, MA, CT and RI) on a permanent basis, with limited expectation to come to a USNH office. Prior approval from HR is required, as not all states or locations are suitable for Work From Anywhere arrangements.

#### 4. PROCEDURES:

##### A. Voluntarily requested by an employee:

- An employee may request a flexible work arrangement by completing the request form found [here](#).
- The usual core duties and responsibilities of the position description must be fulfilled during a flexible work arrangement, with any changes proposed by the employee in the request.
- Requests should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Please note: Flexible work arrangements are neither a universal employee right nor a universal employee benefit and may not be suitable for all jobs.
- Work From Anywhere is not suitable from all states or locations.
- The Manager or Supervisor will consider the request, discuss with the employee and HR rep as needed, prior to approving or denying the request. The unit's next higher-level manager and HR Representative should be consulted.

##### B. Requirement of the position:

- In response to the business needs of the department, a manager or supervisor may designate a position may be performed using any of the above flex work arrangement options.

Some considerations for implementing Flex Work arrangements:

- a) Consider the possible effects of the change in the job functions and the feasibility of job requirements to be performed remotely or on a changed schedule. This may include a review of equipment and IT needs.
- b) Assess the employee's ability to be successful in a flexible work arrangement.
- c) Consider the potential impacts on students, coworkers, and the public.
- d) Remote or hybrid work is not appropriate for all employees and jobs, nor all employees in the same or similar jobs.
- e) Whether an employee works remotely or on campus should not be viewed as an indication of the employee's commitment to their position. Managers must fairly and equitably assess requests.
- f) Additional points to consider can be reviewed [here](#).

If approved:

- The manager will approve the arrangement in writing and copy HR for the employee's employment file. HR must also approve WFA requests.
  - HR will update the record of work locations (if fully remote or Work From Anywhere) for Worker's Compensation, and in the USNH payroll system as needed.
  - If this is a permanent change in location, the manager will modify the position description in PeopleAdmin.
- The manager will schedule periodic review of the arrangement (with an initial review after six months, and then as needed), assess impacts on the employee's work performance, and any related impact to the department.

If denied:

- The manager indicates "denied" on the request and will communicate the decision with the employee.

## 5. CHANGING OR ENDING AN ARRANGEMENT:

- A voluntary arrangement may be reconsidered or terminated by the employee or the manager. Advance notice of the change should be provided. If performance concerns arise, the arrangement may be suspended or terminated at any time by the manager.
- Resources to support both managers and employees can be found [here](#).

## 6. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AND ARRANGEMENT:

- Departments shall review Flexible Work arrangements within 6 months of implementation, then annually, to determine if the arrangement is successful and should continue.
- Managers should regularly evaluate work performance, as they would normally do for an employee working in the office. The nature of Flexible Work arrangements means that the establishment and measurement of work may shift from an assessment of observable work to be more heavily focused on outcomes. Managers are responsible for defining work, establishing clear expectations and goal, and reviewing employee progress while on a Flexible Work arrangement.
- Managers should consistently communicate, provide supervision, and offer equitable opportunities and support for all their employees, those working on campus or remotely with a flexible work arrangement.
- Employees are responsible for completing assignments and achieving work objectives.

## 7. COMMUNICATION:

- a) The employee must remain accessible during work hours (e.g., by phone, email, video conferencing, etc.) and should establish and maintain effective communication and workflow among coworkers, department manager and customers or other constituents (e.g., students, faculty, etc.).
- b) The employee and manager should establish procedures for effective communication, including frequency of contact and other engagement.
- c) Managers should host virtual work and social meetings to facilitate communication, teambuilding, and workflow. When in-person meetings are scheduled, such as staff meetings, managers should assure that remote works can attend via video conferencing.
- d) Employees working remotely may occasionally be required to attend on campus meetings or events.

## 8. WORKPLACE SAFETY:

- a) The employee is responsible for establishing and maintaining an adequate and safe work environment, in accordance with [USY.V.D.3](#). The employee is

responsible for ensuring the telework space is free of safety hazards and other dangers.

- b) Employees will be covered by the USNH Workers Compensation Insurance only for work-related injuries incurred during the normal course and scope of their employment and job duties, performed during agreed upon work hours, in accordance with [USY.V.A.3.1](#).
- c) An employee must report any work-related injuries to their supervisor immediately, but no later than 24 hours after such injury, using the University's standard injury reporting process.
- d) The employee is responsible for establishing a work environment free of interruptions and distractions that would affect performance and professional workplace conduct.
- e) Telecommuting is not designed to be a substitute for active dependent care (exceptions may be granted for exceptional circumstances, such as a pandemic). Work schedules may be negotiated as appropriate to accommodate dependent care needs.
- f) If off-campus meetings occur between employees and/or students, the location must be safe, secure, and professional for all participants.
- g) An employee with a physical or mental impairment may request reasonable accommodation by contacting their University's ADA Coordinator to file a request.

#### 9. HOURS OF WORK:

- a) The employee and their manager will agree on the regular work schedule that the employee will maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication.
- b) Using the USNH payroll system:
  - A non-exempt (hourly) employee is responsible for recording hours worked.
  - All employees are responsible for recording personal time, sick time or other leaves in accordance with [USY.V.A.4.9.3](#)
- c) Non-exempt hourly employees working remotely must record exact time worked from any location each day.
  - Overtime hours require prior approval by a supervisor.
  - Recording time not actually worked may constitute falsification of records in order to receive pay for time not worked (theft of time), which may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination, in accordance with [USY.V.F.5](#)
- d) Records of time worked during a flexible work arrangement are subject to audits, with or without notice.
- e) Employees on approved FMLA leave, short-term or long-term disability leave are not permitted to work and are not eligible for flexible work arrangements.

#### 10. EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

- a) The [USNH IT Acceptable Use Policy](#) applies to work performed remotely.

- b) University equipment may be assigned to the employee to utilize for remote work. The employee will complete the [USNH ET&S Security Standards form](#) and abide by all standards cited.
- c) An employee will ensure confidentiality of all data, to avoid risk of data exposure or theft, per the [USNH Cybersecurity Policy](#). Employees must report any observed or suspected information security incident upon discovery to their respective IT help desk.
- d) Local Internet Service Providers (ISP's) are necessary for email and internet functions and are the responsibility of the employee. When remotely accessing University information systems, employees should utilize private, secured WIFI networks and avoid using public WIFI.
- e) The employee is responsible for obtaining additional equipment at their own expense to facilitate Hybrid/Remote/WFA arrangements. The employee pays for the internet connection, upkeep of a home workspace, costs of their own equipment operation and maintenance, including telephones; except for a USNH computer.
- f) The employee is responsible for the correct ergonomics of their workspace if working from a home office.
- g) On campus workspaces may be shared by multiple employees with hybrid or remote work arrangements to maximize efficiency when required to work on campus. It is the responsibility of individual departments to leverage assignments and schedules in a way that distributes peak demand of on campus workspace needs in a balanced and equitable manner.

11. POLICY REQUIREMENTS, COVERAGE AND LIABILITY:

- a. Employees with any approved Flexible Work arrangement must comply with all USNH policies and specific policies at their Institution.
- b. Employees are covered by the institution's liability insurance when working outside a USNH location in accordance with the [USNH Defense and Indemnification policy](#).
- c. Any taxes and legal obligations associated with Hybrid/Remote/WFA arrangements are the employee's responsibility.

For additional information and guidance, please contact your HR Representative.

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