



UNIVERSITY OF  
CENTRAL FLORIDA

# Telecommuting Program Manual

## Office of Human Resources

3280 Progress Drive, Suite 100

Orlando, Florida 32826-2912

[LOAandWorkComp@ucf.edu](mailto:LOAandWorkComp@ucf.edu)

Phone: 407.823.2771

Secure eFax: 407.882.9023

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The Telecommuting Program at the University of Central Florida offers a flexible work schedule and the ability to work offsite at an approved home office location, given the employee meets and adheres to the requirements described in this manual.

The University of Central Florida retains the right to terminate this program at any time at its sole discretion. If it is terminated, employees working remotely will be asked to return to their jobs within the university office setting. Also, if an employee's work performance is not acceptable, the supervisor may either pursue the disciplinary process or decide to require the employee to return to work onsite at the university. If the employee does not return on the agreed upon date, this will be deemed a voluntary resignation and will be treated as such per university policies and procedures.

Employees who request to utilize this program do so based on having been provided thorough information about the program and the pros and cons of working remotely. Those approved for the program should typically commit to a minimum initial period of three months.

## UCF HUMAN RESOURCES LEAVE OF ABSENCE & WORKERS' COMP SECTION

407.823.2771

[LOAandWorkComp@ucf.edu](mailto:LOAandWorkComp@ucf.edu)

**Ben Anderson**—Assistant Director, Leave Administration

[Benton.Anderson@ucf.edu](mailto:Benton.Anderson@ucf.edu)

**Todd Coon**—HR Representative

[Todd.Coon@ucf.edu](mailto:Todd.Coon@ucf.edu)

**Lizbed Santiago**—Leave Administration Coordinator

[Lizbed.Santiago@ucf.edu](mailto:Lizbed.Santiago@ucf.edu)

**Alicia Melendez**—Leave Administration Coordinator

[Alicia.Melendez@ucf.edu](mailto:Alicia.Melendez@ucf.edu)

# Introduction

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Telecommuting Program Manual is to provide guidelines for both managers and employees interested in the Telecommuting Program.

## **Definition**

Telecommuting is an arrangement in which an employee performs their regular work at their home, for a specified portion of the workweek, or the entire workweek. The program may be utilized at the departmental managers' discretion, and is not an employee benefit or right.

The Telecommuting Program should not be viewed as a substitute for dependent care. The university expects that telecommuting employees will arrange for dependent care. It is the employees' responsibility to ensure that they are fully able to complete their work assignments and to interact with university personnel over the phone in a professional environment.

In limited circumstances, telecommuting could involve special projects or work for another department. Temporary arrangements for a telecommuting schedule of two weeks or less may be handled informally by the department. A formal telecommuting agreement is required in Human Resources for a schedule of over two weeks. For emergency preparedness, telecommuting agreements must be kept on file with the COOP plan in the college or department.

## **Intention**

Telecommuting is intended to create flexible conditions that will enhance the capability of both the employee and the university to meet/exceed the stated goals and objectives more effectively.

## **Benefits & Disadvantages**

The Telecommuting Program is not designed for every employee. The lure of household chores and family distractions can easily undermine performance. However, when implemented successfully, employees can experience increased productivity, savings on commuting costs, a better work/life balance and enhanced morale.

# Program Policies

## Telecommuting Agreement

Annually, employees that are interested in participating in the UCF Telecommuting Program must complete the UCF Telecommuting Agreement and submit it to their supervisor.

## Employee Eligibility

Eligibility to participate in the Telecommuting Program is conditional upon agreement from the employee that he or she will be able to establish a proper working environment and have the skills necessary to perform the tasks assigned independently. Some important items to consider include:

- The Telecommuting Program is not to be used as a substitute for childcare or other personal responsibilities. It is important to ensure that dependent care obligations or other family obligations do not interfere with work.
- It is expected that employees who telecommute will devote all of their effort to university business during their work. Personal disruptions such as non-university telephone calls and visitors are not acceptable.
- Must possess productive and organized work habits.
- Must have both strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Must be able to adhere to assigned work hours.
- Must have a current performance appraisal of at least "Satisfactory" or "Effective"
- Must not be in any formal phase of the progressive disciplinary process.
- Must have a minimum of one year of experience working for the department.
- Employment history must reflect no chronic recorded lateness and/or absenteeism problems.
- Must be reliable, maintain confidentiality and work well independently.
- Will have the ability to provide an appropriate work environment at home, which meets university standards such as setting up an ergonomically correct workstation.
- Employee will adhere to all university policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Must attend mandatory and other requested meetings on campus, including training sessions, workshops, etc.
- Will return university equipment and files when work from home is terminated by either the employee or the university.
- Employee will take responsibility for notifying the supervisor or designated person, in advance, when requesting vacation or sick leave, during times scheduled to work at home.
- Must display independent problem solving abilities.
- Must be able to work effectively without frequent interaction with other staff members.

## Salary, Benefits, Onsite Meetings and Tax Implications

Telecommuting Program employees' salary, job responsibilities and benefits will be identical to those of employees not working remotely. In addition, employees approved for the program agree to comply with all existing position requirements of their regular onsite office setting as well as any newly established requirements in the future.

The departmental supervisor will be responsible for assigning specific work hours to each employee working remotely. The number of working hours will be monitored regularly.

There may be times employees will be asked to come to the office on a day when they were scheduled to work from home. Some of these instances include departmental staff meetings, training sessions, etc. Employees are required to attend these events on the university campus.

It will be the employee's responsibility to determine any income tax implications of maintaining a home office area or traveling or maintaining residence outside of Florida. The university will not provide tax guidance nor will the university assume any additional tax liabilities on an employee's behalf. Employees are encouraged to consult with a qualified tax professional to discuss these matters in greater depth.

### **Work Assignment and Supervision**

The supervisor will decide what tasks will be assigned to the employee. Work assignments for telecommuters will be handled in the same manner as they are for non-telecommuters.

### **Performance Standards**

For each employee participating in the Telecommuting Program, the supervisor will be tasked to clearly define performance requirements and standards that are measurable and results oriented. The supervisor will regularly monitor the employee's performance in accordance with departmental and university policy. If an employee's behavior or performance is not satisfactory, the supervisor has the right to either terminate the program or recommend disciplinary actions as appropriate in accordance with university policy.

### **Confidentiality**

Sensitive university information should not be removed from university facilities without explicit written authorization by appropriate university management. Such information includes, but is not limited to files, employment and financial records.

Sensitive information is governed by various State and Federal laws and regulations as well as university policies, and includes any and all information that, if released, could cause harm to the university by virtue of such release. Therefore, all staff members must adhere to such policies and regulations and maintain confidentiality of such information at all times.

All individuals must understand and abide by all university's policies and procedures. All employees must sign and adhere to the *Confidentiality and Computer Use Agreement* and have these signed documents on file with the University of Central Florida.

### **Overtime Requests and Assignments**

All telecommuting employees are required to obtain their supervisor's approval prior to working overtime.

### **Work Space and Work Site Inspection**

The employee must ensure that the home office is a separate space set aside to allow the employee to work efficiently. Family responsibilities must be arranged so as not to interfere with work time.

The university has the right to visit the employee's home to ensure that the designated work location meets safety, ventilation and ergonomic standards. Such visits will not be scheduled without giving the employee a 24-hour prior notice and will be conducted during normal business hours.

The university does not pay for costs associated with working at home, such as electrical, heating, A/C, etc. (with the possible exception of the voice/data line).

## **Equipment, Office Supplies, and Use of University Equipment**

The university will provide the necessary equipment such as computers, printers, communication, and software needed to perform the employees' work assignments. All of these items remain the property of the University of Central Florida and must be returned to the university upon request. In case of extended illness, resignation or termination, or if the program ends, it is the employee's responsibility to return them personally.

The university may reimburse the employees for the cost of installation and monthly service of telephone/DSL line(s) during the length of the telecommuting program. This is considered to be for the university's purposes only, and not for personal use. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that no one else has access to the equipment.

The following safeguards must be followed:

- Maintain appropriate physical security for computers and computing devices storing or transmitting confidential information. This is especially important for portable devices such as laptops as well as portable USB drives, CDs, memory cards, etc.
- Enable full hard drive data encryption (e.g. MS BitLocker, etc.) to mitigate data breaches.
- Require proper identification and authentication to access the device to ensure authorized use only.
- Use university installed anti-malware protection with daily updating of virus signatures and regular (minimum of once a week) scanning of all local drives enabled.
- Computer firewall must be enabled at all times.
- Keep the operating system current, with the latest security patches installed. Use the auto-update feature that downloads updates when available.
- Do not circumvent security settings to modify the operating system or applications.
- Only officially approved applications are allowed to be downloaded.
- Do not install applications that do not support official university business.
- Connect to the University of Central Florida internal network only through VPN prior to performing your job responsibilities on your officially assigned computer.
- Your department IT staff is responsible for authorizing access to software applications under their control and must ensure their department's employees are suitably documented, tracked, trained, and only granted access appropriate to their role. In addition, IT is responsible for reviewing and revising such access as necessary (e.g., when employees have been transferred or terminated).

Listed are some additional minimum recommendations if a home wireless network is being used:

- Change the default administrator password for the wireless router. The password should be difficult to guess (eight characters or more, mixture of letters, numbers and symbols).
- Turn on the highest level of encryption supported by your wireless router and the devices connecting to it (128-bit WEP, WPA, etc.). The encryption keys should be long and difficult to guess.
- Change the default SSID and disable SSID broadcasting.
- The wireless router's built-in firewall should be enabled.

The university, as needed, will provide telecommuting employees with office supplies. Employees' out-of-pocket expenses for other supplies will not be reimbursed unless prior written approval of the manager has been received.

## **Travel and Home Expenses**

Travel and mileage between home and office will not be reimbursed.

Any home-related expenses such as construction, renovations, heating/air conditioning, lighting, or electricity are not reimbursable.

The university will repair and replace damaged equipment unless it is lost, damaged or stolen through the employee's negligence or abuse.

## **Accidents and Injuries**

The university will be responsible for any work-related injuries under Florida State's Workers Compensation laws, but this liability is limited to injuries resulting directly from work and only if the injury occurs in the designated work area during the assigned work hours. Any claims will be handled according to the normal university procedure for Workers' Compensation claims.

As stated in the worker's compensation laws, the university will be responsible for injuries at the work from home site if the site is ergonomically maintained. The employee is responsible for any injuries and liabilities arising from his/her own negligence.

## **University's Right to End a Telecommuting Status**

The university or department manager has the right to end arrangements for working remotely at their sole discretion with a fourteen (14) day prior written notification. If the employee chooses not to return on the expected date, this will be considered a voluntary resignation and will be treated as such under university standard policies and procedures.

## **Insurance**

The employee agrees to carry a sufficient amount of homeowner's or renters insurance to cover any loss or damage to the equipment provided by the university. A copy of the policy is required to be given to the employee's supervisor. Employees who work remotely from their home should consult with their insurance company or broker to purchase a business pursuits type rider on their homeowner's or renter's insurance policies. Current policies may be null and void without these riders or endorsements as a result of the worker's compensation coverage that is provided by the university for work related injury while on work time.

## **Work Hours**

Work hours will be determined by the supervisor and communicated to team members, clients, and co-workers. Telecommuting employees must understand and agree that their supervisor may monitor their activities, including, but not limited to, randomly checking their presence or the hours that they are working by telephone or electronic monitoring.



# Conditions & Terms of Employment

Conditions and terms of employment will not change as a result of an employee participating in the Telecommuting Program. Salary, benefits, vacation, leaves, and other rights and responsibilities will be equal to those of an employee working onsite.

Telecommuting employees are subject to and must abide by all university policies. University policies governing the use of university equipment, facilities, including but not limited to, software, support services, internet, telephones, vehicle, etc. shall apply at the home work site.

## Performance Evaluation

The employee will participate in and be subject to the university performance evaluation process of goal setting review and evaluation as do the non-telecommuting employees. As part of the on-going supervisory and management activities, the employee will discuss with their supervisor the specific work assignments, time expectations for completion of such assignments and will review these goals and objectives as necessary. The employee's assigned work will be completed according to procedures agreed upon by the supervisor, in accordance with guidelines and standards set forth in the employee's performance evaluation document, and in accordance with departmental and university policies and procedures. Work performance expectations will remain the same as of those employees who work at their regular work location.

## Management Controls

The employee will comply with established management directives, which will include, but are not limited to:

- Scheduled meetings in person, at the usual place of business.
- Regular communication (recommended to be not less than twice weekly) with supervisor.
- Participation in staff meetings (via phone or in person).
- Submittal of periodic activity/status report and/or other update processes as required by the supervisor.
- Periodic and scheduled meetings with management on an as-needed basis.

## University Policies and Procedures

The employee is required to comply with all university and departmental policies and procedures, including work-time assigned and reported.

## Sick Days, Vacation, Floating Holidays, and Leaves of Absence

Any use of sick days, vacation time, or personal business must be approved by the supervisor. The employee must obtain prior approval before taking vacation, floating holidays or a leave of absence, in accordance with established university procedures. Sick time must be reported as per policy.

## Privacy

The employee acknowledges that the university-provided electronic mail, all forms of electronic data communication systems, voice message systems, all forms of electronic storage systems, and computer systems are not private and may be monitored, reviewed, or searched by the university.

**Amendments**

The telecommuting assignment may be amended, modified or supplemented by the department or university, as necessary, to conform to the department's needs or desires in connection with the telecommuting employee's alternate worksite arrangements, to conform to changes in the policy or procedure, or as otherwise necessary to address business needs or to comply with laws, rules, or regulations.

**Program Agreement**

Nothing in this agreement shall be deemed to create any right, interest, or expectancy of continued employment. The university reserves the right to terminate this agreement with a fourteen (14) day notice.