



BOR's Teleworking/Flextime Policy

Policy Statement

The University System of Georgia allows teleworking and flextime, on a voluntary basis, to employees who fill job classifications/positions that have been designated as eligible for telework and/or flextime. The Telework and Flextime program is an employer option, not an employee right and is appropriate only when it results in a benefit to the department. Telework and/or flextime may not be suitable for all employees and/or positions. Institutions may implement teleworking and/or flextime as a work option for certain eligible employees based on specific criteria and procedures consistently applied throughout the department.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define the program for teleworking (also known as telecommuting) and alternative work schedules, hereinafter referred to as flextime, and the guidelines and rules under which it will operate. There are significant economic, personal, and production benefits of telework and flextime, but there are a few potential downfalls. This policy is designed to help managers and employees understand this type of work environment and their associated rights and responsibilities. This policy and its accompanying guidelines provide a general framework for teleworkers and employees approved for flextime at the department. It does not attempt to address the special conditions and needs of all employees, nor is it intended to interfere with existing faculty schedules driven by teaching, research, service and/or clinical responsibilities, which can vary daily.

Entities Affected by This Policy

All units of the University System of Georgia are covered by this policy.

Who Should Read This Policy

This policy applies to all employees approved for teleworking and flextime activities within the University System of Georgia. All managers, supervisors, and employees should be familiar with the contents of this policy and its supporting guidelines.

Definitions

These definitions apply to these terms as they are used in this policy:

- **Alternate Workplace:** A work site other than the employee's usual and customary worksite (primary workplace). The alternate workplace may include the employee's home.

- **Core Operating Hours:** Each institution may establish operating hours per the operating needs of the institution during which all full-time employees are expected to work a minimum of forty (40) hours in a workweek. Core hours, which are a subset of operating hours, are the time period during which all regular professional/administrative and staff employees will normally be expected to be present. During this time, all offices are to be open for business, unless administratively and/or programmatically unfeasible. All offices are to be adequately staffed to transact business during these hours and to provide the necessary and appropriate services. An employee's flexible schedule will always include the core hours to facilitate the scheduling of institutional business.
- **Eligible Employees:** An employee, in an eligible position, who has been identified by the employee's supervisor as satisfactorily meeting performance standards, terms, and conditions of employment of their position. The employee shall have no formal disciplinary actions (reprimands, suspensions, demotions, PIPs, etc.) on file for the current or immediately preceding review period.
- **Eligible Positions:** A position having measurable quantitative or qualitative results-oriented standards of performance that is structured to be performed during a work period that may vary from the core work hours established for a department or school. For teleworking, the position must be structured to be performed independently of others and with minimal need for support and can be scheduled at least one day a pay period to participate in teleworking without impacting service quality or organizational operations. The eligibility of a position for teleworking or flextime may change depending on circumstances.
- **Flextime:** A work period that may vary from the core work hours established for a department or school. Work schedule will include the core hours established by the institution, with the start and end times varying to ensure a forty (40) hour work week. Sample options for flextime, assuming the core hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., may include 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with one (1) hour for lunch, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with thirty (30) minutes for lunch, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with thirty (30) minutes for lunch, or 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with one (1) hour for lunch. Four (4) ten (10) hour days may also be considered by the manager when feasible for the department and position.
- **Flextime Agreement:** The flextime agreement documents the mandatory policies in effect and the results of any other agreements between the supervisor and the flextime worker. The agreement must be signed by both parties prior to the start of flextime, agreeing that both parties will abide by the terms and conditions of flextime. The agreement must be reviewed and renewed at least annually to ensure that the guidelines for participating in the program indicate continued eligibility and are well understood. A supervisor may elect to revise the agreement when a need arises. In addition, the flextime agreement should be reviewed and revised if necessary when there is a change in supervisor, job responsibilities, or change in work circumstances or performance. The agreement must have a place where the employee acknowledges that he or she has read and agreed to the terms of the policy and items listed in the agreement. Any employee who is approved for flextime must sign a Flextime Agreement.
- **Mobile Worker:** An employee who travels continuously and whose current work location is his/her home or an assigned office. The duties of these positions generally require the employee to meet and work off-site with clients/customers who are dispersed

throughout a geographic territory. For the purposes of this policy, mobile workers are not considered teleworkers.

- **Occasional Teleworker:** A teleworker, who with the approval of his/her supervisor, works at home on an infrequent basis. Approval is usually task or project specific and normally approved at least the day before the employee teleworks. Occasional teleworkers do not telework on a scheduled basis. For the purpose of this policy, occasional teleworkers are considered teleworkers. It is not necessary for the occasional teleworker to complete a formal Teleworking Agreement.
- **Primary Workplace:** The teleworker's usual and customary workplace.
- **Teleworker:** A person who for at least one or more days, in a particular pay period, works at home, or a satellite office, to produce an agreed upon work product. All teleworkers should complete the telework agreement and training. A teleworker is not a mobile worker.
- **Teleworking:** Working at a location other than the employee's usual and customary workplace.
- **Teleworking Agreement:** The signed document that outlines the understanding between the agency and the employee regarding the teleworking arrangement. The teleworker agreement documents the mandatory policies in effect and the results of any other agreements between the supervisor and the teleworker. The agreement must be signed by both parties prior to the start of telework period agreeing that both parties will abide by the terms and conditions of teleworking. The agreement must be reviewed and renewed at least annually to ensure that the guidelines for participating in the program indicate continued eligibility and are well understood. A supervisor may elect to revise the agreement when a need arises. In addition, the teleworking agreement should be reviewed and revised if necessary when there is a change in supervisor, job responsibilities, or change in work circumstances or performance. The agreement must have a place where the employee acknowledges that he or she has read and agrees to the terms of the policy and items listed in the agreement. Any employee who teleworks must sign a Telework Agreement.

Overview

Telework and/or flextime may not be suitable for all employees and/or positions. Departments may implement teleworking and/or flextime as a work option for certain eligible employees based on specific criteria and procedures consistently applied throughout the department. Departments will be responsible for designating the positions which will be authorized to approve telework or flextime arrangements. Directors, Department Chair, or other management personnel authorized by a Department to approve telework or flextime shall hereinafter be referred to as the Telework or Flextime Manager for the purposes of this policy.

Telework or Flextime Managers who choose to consider telework for employees shall be responsible for the following:

1. Establishing expectations for and monitoring of employee performance;
2. Identifying eligible positions suitable for telework;
3. Identifying eligible employees (see "Employee Participation");

4. Determining if office-like space is required;
5. Determining if equipment will be provided to the employee to use at home (see “Equipment and Supplies”);
6. Establishing how the teleworker will maintain regular contact with office coworkers and supervisors;
7. Determining how the department will handle restricted access materials, security issues, and taking electronic or paper records from the primary work place (see “Security and Access to Information”);
8. Ensuring that practices are consistent and compliant with state, Board of Regents, and institutional policy and state and federal law in the use of technology;
9. Delivering telework training to employees;
10. Ensuring that individual work schedules and reporting for non-exempt employees are in compliance with FLSA regulations and Board of Regents policy;
11. Ensuring that each employee’s request to telework is considered in relation to the department’s operating and customer needs;
12. Requiring a Teleworking Agreement; and
13. Ensuring that employees approved for telework record their telework days as “TW” for “Teleworking” on the appropriate institutional leave records.

Conditions of Employment

The teleworker’s conditions of employment remain the same as for non-teleworking employees. Employee salary, benefits, and employer-sponsored insurance coverage will not change as a result of teleworking. The employee shall adhere to all policies, rules, and regulations of the institution, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and state while teleworking. Further, an employee must have the willingness of his/her supervisor to perform the necessary supervisory responsibilities required for teleworking. The employee agrees not to conduct personal business while in official duty status at the alternate workplace.

Teleworking Self-Assessment

A successful teleworker has particular traits, a job suitable for telework, and a telework site that is conducive to the work assigned. A self-assessment helps an employee interested in teleworking decide whether telework is right for him or her. A department may elect to provide the employee a self-assessment as part of the application to telework.

Work Site and Work Hours

A defined workspace and defined core work hours are necessary: (1) to reduce University System of Georgia’s exposure to risk, (2) to facilitate proper management of teleworkers, and (3) to ensure work is conducted in a productive environment.

Work Space

As a condition of permission to telework, the employee must verify that home facilities used for telework purposes are safe and suitable for purposes of the employee’s work. The department

may deny an employee the opportunity to telework if the alternate worksite is not conducive to productive work. The department should provide the employee a self-certification checklist, as part of the application to telework. The checklist is necessary to reduce the University System of Georgia's exposure to risk and liability and helps the employee know if his or her alternate workplace is conducive to productive work.

An employee approved to telework shall be responsible for setting up an appropriate work environment within his/her home. The institution will not be responsible for any cost associated with the setup of a home office. Upon request, the University System of Georgia will consult with an employee on any modifications or requirements to operate University System of Georgia-owned equipment at the home office. An employee will be required to provide the University System of Georgia with a statement within ten (10) working days of the request to telework confirming that he/she has met the reasonable standards to include health and safety requirements (including an ergonomically sound workstation) and promise to maintain it in the condition for the duration of the telecommuting period.

Equipment and Supplies

Office supplies (e.g. pens and paper) shall be provided by the department and should be obtained during the teleworker's in-office work period.

The employee is expected to use his or her own furniture, telephone lines, and other equipment. Any use of private facilities of the employee will be at the employee's discretion and not at the behest or expense of the institution. This applies to all physical improvements and conveniences as well as services.

In no situation should the institution-owned equipment be installed in an employee's home. An institution, however, may give written permission for certain equipment, for example computers and pagers, to be checked out and used at the alternate worksite. As each institution's equipment is the property of the state, each institution must retain the responsibility for the inventory and maintenance of state-owned property following state laws and procedures.

Work Hours

Each employee who teleworks shall develop a work schedule with the employee's supervisor and the employee's supervisor must agree in advance to any changes to the employee's work schedule. Exempt employees will record telework days on the Monthly Record of Leave as "TW" for "Teleworking" to designate the time as work performed off campus under this policy. Nonexempt employees will report telework days to their departmental time and attendance administrator to ensure that such time is accurately reported as hours worked. Non-exempt employees subject to mandatory overtime must obtain approval from their supervisor before performing overtime. A nonexempt employee working overtime without such approval may cause the department to terminate the teleworking option and/or take other appropriate action. The employee must obtain approval in advance from his or her supervisor before taking leave during a designated telework day.

The employee must maintain contact with the office as specified in the work schedule, department policy, and telework agreement. An employee's activities outside the time of work or outside the place designated for work will be deemed to be in the employee's own personal time and place, unconnected with work activities.

Expenses and Compensable Time

Work related long distance phone calls should be planned for in-office days. At the discretion of the supervisor, expenses for business related long distance calls and cell phone calls, which must be made from a teleworker's home, may be reimbursed if the reasons and costs for the calls are documented. The teleworker is responsible for the cost of maintenance, repair, and operation of personal equipment.

Liability

The employee's home workspace when used for telework is an extension of the department workspace. An institution's liability for job-related accidents will continue to exist during the approved work schedule and in the employee's designated work location. The teleworker is covered under the State's Workers' Compensation Law for injuries occurring in the course of the actual performance of official duties at the alternate workplace.

If an injury occurs during teleworking work hours, then the employee shall immediately report the injury to the supervisor. The employee, supervisor, and agency should follow the institution's policies regarding the reporting of injuries for employees injured while at work.

The State of Georgia and each institution are not responsible for any injuries to family members, visitors, and others in the employee's home. The teleworker may not have business guests at the alternate workplace.

To the extent permitted by law, the employee will not attempt to hold an institution or the state responsible or liable for any loss or liability in any way connected to the employee's non-work related use of his or her own home.

The teleworker is responsible for contacting the teleworker's insurance agent and a tax consultant and consulting local ordinances for information regarding home workplaces.

Telework Coordination

Each institution will need to ensure the appropriate coordination of the Telework/Flextime Program. The institution should identify an existing employee to serve as a Telework Coordinator, who will serve as a liaison to departments and the Statewide Telework Coordinator. The Telework Coordinator will provide guidance and clarification to departments on telework, act as a liaison between including compliance with policies, procedures, and guidelines and will report the results of telework in the agency to the Statewide Teleworker Coordinator.

Security and Access to Information

The teleworker is responsible for maintaining confidentiality and security at the alternate workplace, as the teleworker would at the primary work place. The employee must protect the security and integrity of data, information, paper files, and access to agency computer systems. All departmental policies on Information Technology and internet and technology use apply to teleworking, as they would in the primary work place.

Child and Dependent Care

Teleworking is not a substitute for childcare or dependent care. The teleworker shall continue to make arrangements for child or dependent care to the same extent as if the teleworker was working at the primary workplace.

Program Reporting and Evaluation

The employee agrees to participate in studies, inquiries, reports or analyses relating to teleworking at an institution's direction.

Provisions Specific to Telework or Flextime Managers

Telework or Flextime Managers who choose to consider flextime for employees shall be responsible for the following:

- Establishing expectations for and monitoring employee performance;
- Identifying eligible positions suitable for telework and/or flextime;
- Identifying eligible employees (see "Employee Participation");
- Ensuring that each employee's request to telework or for flextime is considered in relation to the department's operating and customer needs; and
- Requiring a Telework/Flextime Agreement.

Employee Participation in Program

Offering the opportunity to work at home or according to a telework or flextime schedule is a management option and is not an employee right. An employee's participation in the telework and/or flextime program is entirely voluntary. The supervisor or manager may terminate teleworking or flextime without cause. Teleworking and flextime are work arrangements between an individual employee and his/her supervisor. A supervisor has no authority to require an employee to telework, unless it was a condition of employment or a requirement of the job description.