

# Telework Remote and Hybrid Work Policy

Effective Date: August 30, 2021

Applies to: College Staff

**PURPOSE** Whitman College is a residential liberal arts college where students live, work, and learn on campus. At our foundation is a belief in the value of community and the power of relationships. Our focus for this policy is on ensuring that students are at the center of what we do. Staff play a critical role in supporting the growth, sense of belonging, and success of students; supporting faculty and other staff members; and sustaining a strong community of traditional liberal arts values like critical thought and academic rigor through teaching and learning in and beyond the classroom.

This policy seeks to expand on options of flexible and responsive work schedules, while sustaining the values of in-person relationships, community and student-centered learning.

- I. **INTRODUCTION** The college considers remote and hybrid telework to be viable, flexible work options when both the position and the staff member are suited for such an arrangement, and when it serves the needs of the department and college.

Each Cabinet Officer will establish the expectations for in-person services and staffing that are needed for their areas. This guidance creates a remote/hybrid-work friendly infrastructure to support department head, manager and employees in developing specific remote and hybrid options. Further, this guidance establishes a college-wide framework in which departments have the ability to determine the best way to meet business needs, provide service to students and other customers, and support for employees of the college.

## DEFINITIONS

- **Telework:** Telework is a flexible work arrangement under which a staff member performs the duties and responsibilities of their position from a site off campus, typically from home.
- **Hybrid:** for the purpose of these guidelines is any employee who maintains a campus workspace and works from a hybrid of home and campus offices.
- **Remote:** for the purposes of these guidelines is defined as an employee working full-time from a location other than Whitman College. Remote work may be performed in the local area (within driving distance of the campus) or with concurrence of human resources within certain designated states that the College can operate as an employer in.
- **Alternate work schedule:** NOT CURRENTLY OFFERED. An alternate work schedule refers to any one of a variety of work arrangements different from traditional schedules. For example, different from Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm on-site work. Might include 4-10's, or 4-9's and a 4.
- **Standard work hours:** 8 am – 5 pm during the academic year, and between 7:30 – 4:30 pm during the summer (see summer hours options). Standard hours are expected unless an alternate schedule is discussed and approved with your manager.
- **Student-Facing Tasks:** There are various types of student-facing roles within the college. Student-facing roles include any position which has direct student contact as a primary component of the employee's role and service.

- **Temporary Work schedule alteration:** A temporary short-term alteration of the set work arrangement due to short-term project, or other reasons.

## II. ELIGIBILITY AND SCOPE

All staff members in full-time or part-time positions are eligible for consideration.

**Short-term** Telework can be an occasional short-term arrangement, such as working from home for a short-term project, or temporary physical accommodation. Short-term arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of continuance. Short term and intermittent telework arrangements between staff member and supervisor are approved and documented on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the college.

**Ongoing** Telework can also be a regular schedule of working off campus, typically from the staff member's primary residence, which must be in certain designated states the college is registered to have employees based in. Either a staff member or a supervisor can suggest telework as a possible work arrangement, subject to approval of department head, and after consultation with Cabinet Officer.

A telework arrangement may be discontinued by the supervisor and/or the department head, and the staff member can at any time request a change in the arrangement. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days' notice of changes to formal telework arrangements in recognition of commuting, dependent care and other issues that may arise from changes to or termination of a telework arrangement. There may be instances, however, when the college can provide only minimal notice.

**Fall 2021 Models** Considering the purpose as described above, and the transitional nature of this first semester while we are still impacted by COVID recovery and experimenting with the opportunities of remote work, department heads may define the following options:

- Some positions will work fully on campus year-round due to nature of work performed. Staff may also choose to work on campus year-round.
- Some positions with student facing tasks will work fully on campus during the academic year, and may work an alternate hybrid work schedule during breaks.
- Some positions, including some student facing positions that can assure adequate service coverage, will work on campus at least 60 % of regular business hours or more (based on department needs). Hybrid work may be based on days per week, or proportion of hours per day.
- Very few positions will be fully remote. Considerations will be the nature of work performed and need for specialized skills not adequately represented in the local market. Cabinet authorization, in consultation with business office and human resources will determine the states and locations in which the college can employ remote workers.

### III. ESTABLISHING A TELEWORK AGREEMENT

A telework agreement requires the staff member, supervisor, human resources and department head (after consultation with the Cabinet Officer) to approve the arrangement.

Before seeking department head approval for any telework agreement, the staff member and supervisor will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

- **Departmental needs.** The staff member and supervisor will discuss the impact of the potential telework arrangement on the department as a whole. There may be a limit to the number of approved telework arrangements within a department, given in-person service needs for students, staff and faculty, and overall departmental and college needs.
- **Staff member fit with Telework demands.** The staff member and supervisor will review the needs and work habits of a successful teleworker, for the purpose of determining whether the staff member can perform their duties successfully in a remote work environment. The supervisor will assess whether the staff member can work well independently of others with minimal need for support and little face-to-face interaction. In addition, the supervisor will determine that the staff member has demonstrated a consistent ability to manage their time well, produce high quality work, and meet their deadlines. See *Self-Assessment for Telework* offered as an optional tool to help the staff member evaluate fit (also attached to this email).
- **Job responsibilities.** The staff member and supervisor will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for and conducive to a successful telework arrangement.
- **Internet, phone, equipment, software and workspace.** The staff member and supervisor will acknowledge that the teleworker is responsible for provision of internet service, phone and appropriate furniture (e.g. suitable desk and chair) and home workspace to successfully complete their work. WCTS can advise on appropriate internet speed requirements, and a plan for reporting to the on-campus office in the event of localized internet or power outages should be developed. They will discuss college provision of required equipment, software and supplies as outlined within this policy.
- **Schedule.** The staff member and supervisor will discuss and identify a work schedule that meets departmental and college needs, including provision of timely service and responses to constituents and participation in departmental meetings and college functions. Unless approved in advance, the teleworker will be available and reachable during the department's usual business hours and any other work schedule will be appropriately communicated to colleagues and constituents.
- **Communication.** The staff member and supervisor will discuss the expectation that they communicate at a level consistent with staff members working on campus or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved. Evaluation of telework performance will include regular interaction by virtual meeting, phone and/or e-mail between the staff member and the supervisor. Evaluation of telework performance will be consistent with that received by staff members working on campus in both content and frequency.
- **Dependent or elder care.** Telework is not designed to be a replacement for dependent or elder care. Although a staff member may request a schedule that better accommodates their dependent or elder care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on successful job performance and meeting departmental and college needs.

If the staff member and supervisor come to agreement on a telework agreement, they should proceed to complete the college's telework agreement form and seek department head approval. The department head will consult the Cabinet officer prior to approving any telework agreement.

#### **IV. DOCUMENT THE TELEWORK AGREEMENT**

The purpose of the telework agreement is to ensure that both the staff member and supervisor have a shared understanding of the telework arrangement and that the department head has approved it as required by this policy.

The staff member and supervisor should discuss the expectation for telework, complete the agreement form, and forward it to their department head for consideration. Telework agreements must be reviewed and renewed at least annually or when there is a substantive change. Modifications should be documented by revising the agreement and forwarding it to the department head for consideration and approval. Telework agreements are both position and person specific. A change in position within the college will require a new evaluation and telework assessment.

If the review indicates expectations are not being met by the employee, the agreement may be revoked by the supervisor.

#### **V. EQUIPMENT**

WCTS will evaluate the telework request and seek to supply the staff member with appropriate equipment and supplies as identified in the telework agreement. If equipment is not available, it will be determined by the Cabinet officer if the college will provide equipment for telework. WTCS will serve as a resource in this matter.

College work that is confidential or proprietary in nature (Colleague, Millennium, etc) should be performed on college-issued computing devices. Approved college-licensed software should be used. Equipment supplied by the college will be maintained by the college. The college accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to staff member-owned equipment. The college reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment. Equipment supplied by the college should be used for college purposes only.

The staff member must provide their own internet and phone service. The college will not be responsible for costs associated with internet, phone or the set up of the staff member's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space. Basic office supplies will be provided.

Upon termination of the telework agreement or employment with the college, the staff member must promptly (within seven days) return to the college all college-owned documents, equipment, supplies and other items.

#### **VI. SECURITY**

Consistent with the college's policies and expectations of information security for staff members, teleworkers will be expected to ensure the protection of college information accessible from their home office. Steps include use of locked file cabinets, and desks, regular password maintenance, and any

other measures appropriate for the job and environment. Questions and concerns can be consulted on with the Information Security Officer.

Teleworkers must abide by all college policies, including the college's Network Account Policy, Privacy Policy and Acceptable Use Policy and any manufacturer's software licensing agreements. No personally owned software should be installed on college equipment.

## **VII. SAFETY AND LIABILITY**

Staff members are expected to maintain a designated home workspace, an extension of the department workspace, in a safe manner and free from safety hazards. Injuries sustained by the staff member in a home office location and in conjunction with their duties are normally covered by the college's workers compensation insurance. If an on-the-job injury occurs within the approved work schedule and in the designated work location in the course of the actual performance of duties, staff members are responsible for notifying the Safety Coordinator and their supervisor of such injuries as soon as possible. The college is not liable for any injuries sustained by household members or other visitors to the staff member's designated home workspace.

## **VIII. TIME WORKED AND WORK HOURS**

Staff members who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act and Washington Overtime rules will be required to promptly and accurately record all hours worked. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the staff member's supervisor. It is important to define the staff member's work schedule with core work hours as part of the telework agreement. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in termination of the telework agreement.