

# **Ball State University**

## **Telework & Flexible Work Arrangements**

### **Guidelines for Professional and Staff Employees**

#### **Statement**

Flexibility in the workplace is not just a business practice; it's a strategic approach that can lead to more effective and efficient management of people, time, space, and workload. It's a tool that can help us achieve a variety of University goals, from recruitment and retention to sustainability, excellence, financial savings, and well-being. Embracing this flexibility can bring about positive change and growth for all of us.

At Ball State University, supervisors play a crucial and empowering role in considering teleworking and flexible work arrangements. While these options are available on a voluntary or employee-requested basis to employees who hold positions conducive to these arrangements, supervisors are also encouraged to proactively consider using these options for employees they supervise in times of pandemic, natural disasters, or other extraordinary events. This program is appropriate only when it is in the best interest of the institution and may be terminated at any time, aligning with our commitment to effective and efficient management.

#### **Reason for Guidelines**

The University provides guidance on various forms of workplace flexibility, balancing them with required actions and legal concerns. These guidelines provide a framework to help supervisors and employees understand the principles and critical components of telework and flexible work arrangements. These guidelines also help ensure that flexible work arrangements are used appropriately, as they are not appropriate for all employees and positions.

It's important to note that the Office for People & Culture is responsible for managing employee requests for flexible work arrangements due to accessibility or leave issues, which are not included in these guidelines. If an employee needs to request such an arrangement, they should contact the Office for People & Culture.

These guidelines do not apply to temporary or occasional work arrangements due to inclement weather or instances where the employee is approved to work from home for one to two days, as the supervisor may make these arrangements as needed. Flexible work arrangements generally last at least one month.

Each Vice President is responsible for following these guidelines. It's important to note that adopting these guidelines does not automatically confer employees the right to a flexible work arrangement. In addition, each Vice President may elect to implement

additional guidelines consistent with those included in this document. The University may provide separate guidance in the case of a pandemic, natural disaster, or other extraordinary event.

## **Guideline Principles**

1. Document the scope of the arrangement and that the agreement may be modified or terminated at any time.
2. Establish communication expectations
3. Establish performance expectations
4. Ensure appropriate technology & data security
5. Document conditions of employment

## **Forms of Flexible Work Arrangements**

### **1. Flextime**

Fixed start/end times that change periodically, along with consistent core hours or establishing a regular schedule outside regular business hours.

### **2. Alternate Arrival/Departure times**

A unit or department typically identifies a position's core hours on a temporary or consistent basis, which does not usually alter the total number of hours per week the employee works.

### **3. Compressed work**

A compressed work week is one where a 40-hour work week is compressed into fewer than five workdays. This arrangement is usually applicable to non-exempt employees since exempt employees may regularly work beyond 40 hours and five days per week as employment arrangements are defined in terms of "getting the job done" versus working a fixed number of hours.

### **4. Reduction in Time Commitment**

Employees may seek to reduce their time commitment to the University permanently or temporarily to accommodate personal life transitions (e.g., preparing for retirement, pursuing a degree, etc.) Supervisors will consider the feasibility, duration of time, and impact on duties, pay, and benefits and determine if any University policies may apply to the request.

### **5. Telecommuting or Remote work**

A work arrangement in which some or all the work is performed at an off-campus work site such as the home or in an office near home for a specified number of hours per week. When considering these arrangements, supervisors should ensure that the

parameters of remote work are clear and that employees understand any time limits or ongoing approval requirements to continue these arrangements. In general, such arrangements should require a review and renewal at least annually.

## **Eligibility**

While all professional and staff employees are eligible to request flexible work arrangements, not all positions or employees may be approved to participate in these programs. Employees with performance-related issues, as determined by the supervisor, may not be granted telecommuting as an option.

Positions that require regular face-to-face contact with supervised employees, students, or University community or public members are likely not suited to telecommuting. Similarly, positions requiring routine access to information or materials available only at the primary worksite are likely unsuited to telecommuting.

Faculty may receive remote teaching assignments at the discretion of the unit head or college dean. On-campus courses may not be changed to online courses without express permission of the college dean.

## **Process**

### **1. The Employee Submits the Request**

Employees requesting a flexible work arrangement must complete a Flexible Work Application and submit it to their supervisor.

### **2. The Supervisor Reviews the Request**

The request for a flexible work arrangement must meet the department's needs. The decision to authorize flexible work is within management's discretion based on the nature of the work being performed and other business considerations. The supervisor will take into consideration:

- a. The nature of duties and overall ability to perform the primary duties.
- b. The volume of work needed along with the operational and customer needs of the department.
- c. The type of communication needed for successful completion of duties, such as meetings, consultations, presentations, conferences, and other approved flexible work arrangements.
- d. For current employees, the requestors demonstrated conscientiousness about work time and productivity and their work habits, including their ability to be self-motivated with minimal face-to-face daily supervision.

### **3. Approval begins with the supervisor and progresses to the area Vice President.**

If the immediate supervisor approves the Flexible Work Application, it must be approved by the next level(s) of supervision and submitted to the unit Vice President or Provost for final approval.

The Flexible Work Application will include an agreement section applicable to those approved for telecommuting in which the employee acknowledges that they will abide by established communication and performance expectations and comply with all general provisions and related IT policies.

The arrangement does not alter an employee's work relationship with the University nor relieve an employee from the obligation to observe all applicable University rules, policies, and procedures. Existing terms and conditions of employment remain unless a substantial reduction in work hours is approved; then, salary and benefits may be adjusted commensurate with the reduction in work hours.

The supervisor and employee will review the arrangement and make adjustments to address concerns/challenges. Ongoing reviews should be scheduled routinely, with an annual documented review of the arrangement. The arrangement may be terminated at the supervisor's discretion. The final copy will be sent to People and Culture Services and placed in the employee's personnel file.

#### **4. Appeal Process**

If the employee would like to appeal the supervisor's decision, the employee may submit their appeal to the next-level supervisor and, if necessary, progress through the chain of command, with the Vice President as the final decision maker.

### **Contacts**

Office for People and Culture 765-285-1834, [humanresources@bsu.edu](mailto:humanresources@bsu.edu)

### **Related Documents/Resources**

- [Telework and Flexible Work Application](#)
- [Information Technology Policies, Procedures, and Forms](#)
- [Human Resource Services Forms, Policies, and Guides](#)

## Telework Agreement Section of Flexible Work Application

1. **Communication:** While teleworking, the employee shall be reachable by telephone, chat, e-mail, or other established methods during agreed-upon work hours. The employee and supervisor shall agree on the expected turnaround time and the response medium.
2. **Equipment:** The teleworker shall generally provide home worksite furniture and equipment. If BSU provides equipment and software at the telework site, such equipment and software shall be used exclusively by the teleworker and for the purposes of conducting official BSU business. Software shall not be unlawfully duplicated. If BSU provides equipment, the teleworker is responsible for safe transportation and set-up of such equipment.

- a. **Hybrid remote positions**

Positions that are partially remote, including positions where the employee receives approval from their Vice President or dean to work remotely full-time after being hired as an on-campus employee.

- Employees are responsible for retrieving and returning equipment to campus at pick up, as needed for repairs, and at the time of employee separation.
- All equipment provided by the University must be returned regardless of value.
- If shipping is utilized, the employee must cover those costs.

- b. **Remote-only positions**

- Positions where the employee was hired with the position defined as 100% remote.
- Ball State University will provide the remote employee with a department-purchased laptop, which Information Technology must set up.
- Departments will cover any shipping costs of the laptop to and from the employee at the time of hire, as needed for repairs, and at the time of employee separation.
- If the department wishes to provide additional equipment beyond the laptop, the department may issue the employee an equipment stipend. The employee would then be able to purchase additional items such as external monitors, keyboards, mice, and specialty equipment deemed necessary for their job function. Items purchased through an equipment stipend become the property of the employee and do not need to be returned.

3. **Equipment liability:** Ball State University will repair and maintain any loaned

equipment. Surge protectors must be used with any University computer. The employee will be responsible for any intentional damage to the equipment, damage resulting from negligence by the employee or any member or guest of the employee's household, damage resulting from a power surge if no surge protector is used, and maintaining the current virus protection for software.

BSU may pursue recovery from the teleworker for University property that is deliberately, or through negligence, damaged, destroyed, or lost while in the teleworker's care, custody, or control. Teleworkers should check their homeowner's/renter's insurance policy for incidental office coverage. The University does not assume liability for employee-owned equipment loss, damage, or wear. The University will cover damage or theft of University equipment that occurs outside the employee's control.

4. **Dependent Care.** Telework is not a substitute for childcare or other dependent care. Teleworkers shall make or maintain childcare or elder care arrangements to permit concentration on work assignments.
5. **Home Work Site.** The teleworker must establish and maintain a dedicated workspace that is quiet, clean, and safe, with adequate lighting and ventilation. The teleworker will not hold in-person business visits or meetings with professional colleagues, customers, or the public at the home worksite.
6. **Hours of Work.** The teleworker will have regularly scheduled work hours agreed upon with the supervisor, including specific core hours and telephone accessibility.
7. **Work Schedule.** The agreed-upon work schedule shall comply with FLSA regulations and timekeeping requirements. Overtime work for a non-exempt employee must be pre-approved by the supervisor. The teleworker will attend job-related meetings, training sessions, and conferences, as requested by the supervisor. In addition, the teleworker may be asked to participate in "short notice" meetings.
8. **Inclement Weather.** If BSU is closed due to an emergency or inclement weather, the teleworker may continue to work at the telework site. If there is an emergency at the telework site, such as a power outage, the teleworker will notify the supervisor as soon as possible. The teleworker may be reassigned to the primary worksite or an alternate worksite.
9. **Inspections.** In case of injury, theft, loss, or tort liability related to telework, the teleworker must allow university representatives to investigate and inspect the telework site.
10. **Injuries.** Workers' compensation will cover the employee for job-related injuries in the designated workspace, including the teleworker's home, during the defined work period. If an injury occurs during the specified work period, the employee shall

immediately report it to their supervisor and Employee Relations, who will direct any necessary medical care. Workers' compensation will not apply to non-job-related injuries that might occur in the home. The University does not assume responsibility for injuries to persons other than the teleworker at the telework site.

11. **Intellectual Property.** Products, documents, and records developed while teleworking are the property of BSU.
12. **Network Access.** The University is committed to supporting telework by supporting network access to remote locations. However, network access is not guaranteed. Teleworkers are responsible for providing and paying for their own internet and phone service at their telework site.
13. **Office Supplies.** Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies ordinarily available in the office will not be reimbursed.
14. **Personal Business.** Telework employees shall not perform personal business during the agreed-upon work hours.
15. **Policies.** University policies, rules, and practices shall apply at the telework site, including those governing communicating internally and with the public, employee rights and responsibilities, facilities and equipment management, financial management, information resource management, purchasing property and services, and safety. Failure to follow policy, rules, and procedures may result in termination of the telework arrangement and disciplinary action.
16. **Record Retention.** Products, documents, and records used, developed, or revised while teleworking shall be copied or restored to the University's computerized record system. All telework-related information shall be stored and backed up whenever possible on University-supported file storage systems, such as the assigned University OneDrive account.
17. **Security.** The teleworker shall maintain security and confidentiality at the same level as expected at all worksites. Restricted access or confidential material shall not be taken out of the primary worksite or accessed through a computer unless approved by the supervisor. All remote access to University data must be in accordance with Information Technology policies. The teleworker is responsible for ensuring that non-employees do not access BSU data in print or electronic form.
18. **Taxes.** A home office is not an automatic tax deduction. Teleworkers should consult with a tax expert to examine the tax implications of a home office.
19. **Travel.** The teleworker will not be paid for time or mileage spent traveling between the telework site and the primary worksite.
20. **Worksite.** Telework sites outside Indiana must be reported to Payroll Services, as there

are work tax implications and other state employment laws that may apply.

## **IT Policy section of Flexible Work Agreement**

All remote work must adhere to the University's data security requirements, the IT user's privileges and responsibilities policy, and information security requirements outlined in the [Keep Teaching and Working](#) guide.

All remote workers must agree to:

- Understand and abide by all University Information Technology policies as may be applicable, located at <https://www.bsu.edu/security/itpolicy/>. All of the policies described below can be found on this website.
- Keep your University account password secret and never share it with anyone, including family members. Note that the Helpdesk and support staff will never ask for a remote user's password or any user's BSU account password.
- Lock your workstation before leaving it unattended, even if you expect your time away to be brief.
- Abide by *Data Handling Guidelines* for protecting and controlling sensitive or restricted information in hardcopy and electronic format. Understand and adhere to the *Technology Data Management Procedures and Governance Structure*.
- Understand and abide by the *University's Information Technology Users' Privileges and Responsibility Policy*. Work with your supervisor to consider these privileges and responsibilities when establishing the use of this remote work agreement.
- Follow the *Data Management Procedures and Governance Structure*, *Authentication And Access Control Standards*, and any additional guidelines from my department or Information Technology.