

# **VOLUNTARY FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS FOR STAFF AND ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES**

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Flexible work practices are increasingly becoming standard in many job sectors and adopting them at Chapman can offer innovative approaches to meeting the University's operational needs while promoting enhanced balance between work and personal life being sought by staff and administrators and providing them greater personal control over their worktime. Such flexible practices also offer significant benefits to the University by attracting and retaining talented employees.

Flexible work arrangements are not an entitlement or University-wide benefit, and do not change an employee's terms and conditions of employment with the university.

## **EMPLOYEES COVERED BY THIS POLICY**

This policy applies only to Staff and Administrators who voluntarily request flexible work arrangements. This policy expressly excludes instruction and research faculty whose employment is covered by the Faculty Manual, Full-Time Faculty Handbook, or Lecturer (Part-Time Faculty) Handbook, as applicable. This policy also expressly excludes student employees whose employment is covered by the Student Employee Handbook. In addition, Flexible Work arrangements or modifications to normal working hours, as defined below, that are assigned by the University or required as a condition of employment are excluded from this policy.

## **REASON FOR THE POLICY**

The intent of this policy is to provide guidance to Staff and Administrative employees and their supervisors when a flexible work arrangement is being considered.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Flexible work arrangement is a term which includes the following types of variations, or combinations thereof:

**Telecommuting** is a work arrangement that allows an employee to work outside of their primary worksite at an alternate location, on a regular basis, for up to three (3) workdays per week. No employee shall be granted telecommuting on both Friday and Monday. The employee is provided space onsite for use on the days that they work on campus.

Occasional, non-regularly occurring out-of-office work arrangements may be allowed on a case-by-case basis if approved by an employee's supervisor. A formal agreement is not required for these occasional telecommuting arrangements.

**Flexible worktime** is an arrangement that allows an employee to modify their normal working hours by altering the starting and/or end time of their workday. Schedules should include the core normal working hours of 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., and the employee is expected to adhere to this schedule as their normal schedule. Flexible worktime days require a lunch period of at least 30 minutes if Staff and Administrators will be working five or more hours in a day. Breaks are also required for non-exempt Staff. Meal periods and breaks may not be combined or used to shorten the workday, and schedules that extend the hours worked in a day beyond eight hours or the hours worked in a week beyond 40 are not available.

**Remote work** is defined as a job that will be performed fully remotely without a dedicated onsite workspace. Voluntary remote work should be used in only limited circumstances and for only limited durations.

**Normal Working Hours** are typically eight a.m. to five p.m., Monday through Friday, with an hour lunch period. However, there are some departments which operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and others whose functions require staffing during evening hours and at weekends. In order to meet these operational needs, normal working hours are subject to modification by the respective Senior Staff leader.

## **POLICY**

Chapman supports the use of flexible work arrangements and encourages supervisors to give serious consideration to all reasonable requests. In reviewing requests, they should be guided primarily by the impact, if any, on the effective functioning of the department, and secondarily by the documented performance of the requesting employee.

All flexible work arrangements requested by the employee are discretionary and require (1) prior supervisory recommendation and (2) the approval of the department's respective Senior Staff leader. The Senior Staff leader's determination is final.

Chapman University recognizes that flexible work arrangements may not be suitable for every job, and that there may be situations where good employees will not be able to participate in flexible work arrangements. Our ultimate responsibility to the campus community is to ensure the effective service delivery of our academic mission. Flexible work arrangements that diminish the quality of service to our community will not be approved.

The success of a flexible work arrangement is dependent upon clear, regular, and frequent supervisor and employee communication. Expectations must be set in advance of implementation regarding topics such as work schedules, type and frequency of communication, and availability. Employees wishing to be considered for flexible work arrangements should complete the Flexible Work Request Form. If the employee's request is supported by the supervisor and approved by the respective Senior Staff leader, the employee and supervisor will complete the appropriate agreement form.

There may be times when operational considerations require an "all-hands" approach, despite the existence of a flexible work arrangement. Some of these may be predictable, such as the beginning

of the academic year, and efforts will be made to inform employees in advance. However, temporary changes in work schedules or assignments may also be required to meet business needs.

For nonexempt (staff) employees, time must be accurately recorded, employees must take mandated meal periods and breaks, and requests to work overtime must be pre-approved in writing by the employee's supervisor. For exempt (administrative) employees, hours of work must be approved by the supervisor.

Participants in telecommuting or remote flexible work arrangements are expected to be as accessible as their on-site counterparts during their agreed upon regular business hours, regardless of work location.

Flexible work arrangements may be for a fixed period of time or ongoing and are subject to periodic review. Telecommuting and flexible worktime arrangements may be revoked by either party. Remote work arrangements may only be revoked by the University. The parties will normally provide two weeks' notice, if feasible.

Participants in telecommuting or remote work are responsible for maintaining a safe work environment to minimize the risk of injury. Workers' compensation benefits remain in effect for injuries or illness arising out of and in the course of employment at an approved alternate work location. Staff members must report work-related injuries to their supervisor as soon as an injury occurs.

Participants in telecommuting or remote work are also responsible for taking steps to ensure a productive work environment. This includes making arrangements for dependent care so as not to interfere with their work and keeping personal disruptions such as non-business telephone calls and visitors to a minimum.

Participants in flexible work arrangements must consult with their supervisors to determine what equipment, if any, is needed for the alternative work site. Prior approval is required before taking University equipment off site. Employees will be responsible for setting up equipment offsite and the University does not provide off campus equipment maintenance or service calls. Telephone support will be provided within the standard IS&T support hours.

Consistent with the University's expectations of information security for employees working on campus, telecommuting or remote working employees will be expected to ensure the protection of equipment and confidential or proprietary information accessible from their alternative work location. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks for physical documents, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate to secure University information. Any breach of data security must be immediately reported to Information Security.

Equipment supplied by the University is to be used for business purposes only. Employees working in flexible work arrangements must take appropriate action to protect University equipment from damage or theft. Upon separation of employment, all University property must be returned to the University, unless other arrangements have been made in writing.

Chapman University is not liable for any damages to the employee's property resulting from participation in voluntary telecommuting or remote work. The University will not be responsible for

operating costs, home maintenance, or any other incidental costs (e.g., utilities), associated with the use of the employee's residence during a voluntary flexible work arrangement unless authorized in writing by the University.

There may be tax implications for employees who work remotely. Any such implications are the employee's responsibility.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Eligibility for flexible work arrangements is based primarily on operational decisions, and secondarily on the performance of the requesting employee. Many excellent employees will not be candidates for all types of flexible work arrangements simply based on the requirements of their specific jobs. Flexible work arrangements that diminish the quality of services to our campus community will not be permitted.

In evaluating a flexible work request, supervisors should consider the impact on productivity, cost effectiveness, and service to internal and external clients. Particular consideration should be given to individuals who have demonstrated the ability to work successfully in nonemergency flexible work arrangements without loss in productivity. For example, the arrangement should be achieved without: curtailing normal service hours; incurring overtime costs; impairing the unit's effectiveness in carrying out its mission or administrative function; placing undue burden on others in the unit, whether individual employees or supervisors; or creating problems of safety, security or supervision.

Examples of jobs that may be suitable for telecommuting or remote work arrangements include those that have minimal face-to-face interaction, heavy data entry tasks, or specific objectives and performance standards that can be measured. Face-to-face interaction includes those services that interact not only with students but also with faculty, peer, and community constituents.

Examples of jobs that may not be suitable for telecommuting or remote work arrangements include those that require frequent face-to-face interaction, onsite student support or access to onsite confidential documents.

Effective flexible work arrangements are the result of employees and supervisors working closely together to ensure successful completion of work assignments. Successful participants are strong performers with in-depth knowledge of the job, who are self-disciplined, highly motivated, and productive when working alone. For this reason, Staff and Administrators who, have a rating of at least meets expectations on their most recent performance evaluation, and have had no disciplinary actions in the previous year are eligible to request flexible work arrangements.

Remote assignments will be considered on a case-by-case basis to balance other needs of the University and the required resource allocation. When either hiring employees who are outside of California or when considering allowing existing employees to work outside of California, the Office of Human Resources must be consulted prior to any implementation. The Office of Human Resources will coordinate with the department's respective Senior Staff leader as necessary to make this decision. Out-of-state work will generally require demonstration of a compelling need by the University.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Employee: Flexible work arrangements are voluntary and initiated by the employee. In submitting a request, the employee is responsible for considering the impact on departmental operations and developing a proposal that is in the best interests of the department.

Supervisor: In reviewing requests for flexible work arrangements, supervisors are responsible for evaluating the impact on the operations of their department, and for assessing the suitability of the employee to participate in the proposed flexible work arrangement. When a request is granted, the supervisor is responsible for documenting the agreement, for setting expectations, and for periodically monitoring the arrangement to ensure it continues to be mutually productive. Copies of flexible work arrangements should be provided to Human Resources, IS&T, and Payroll.

Human Resources: Provides guidelines, process and forms to facilitate flexible work arrangements, and consultation as needed.

## **OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY**

Human Resources

Contact information for questions about this policy:

Employee Relations, [er@chapman.edu](mailto:er@chapman.edu)

## **WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR THIS POLICY**

[https://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/\\_files/policies/voluntary-flexible-work-policy-staff-admin.pdf](https://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/_files/policies/voluntary-flexible-work-policy-staff-admin.pdf)

## **APPROVAL AND PUBLICATION DATES**

Senior Staff Date Approved: 5/28/2021

(signed)

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President

## **RELATED MATERIALS**

# Implementing Procedures for Flexible Work Arrangements for Staff and Administrative Employees

These implementing procedures are designed to support successful flexible work arrangements where feasible. We have attempted to anticipate the types of information that might be needed, but if you need additional assistance, please contact the Employee Relations team in HR at [er@chapman.edu](mailto:er@chapman.edu).

When initiating a request for a flexible work arrangement, the employee should complete the Flexible Work Request form. It is in the requestor's interest to complete the form as fully as possible, and to proactively consider how the proposed arrangement benefits their department (e.g., an early morning start might provide time for uninterrupted project work in an office with heavy foot traffic) and how to address any challenges that might be created by the proposed arrangement.

In reviewing a request for a flexible work arrangement, the supervisor and the respective Senior Staff leader are responsible for determining both job and employee suitability through the following steps:

- Review the employee's job responsibilities and determine if the duties of their position are appropriate for the requested flexible work arrangement.
- Examine the employee's role in meeting the needs of the department, including frequency of meetings, department goals and projects, other departments' schedules, and space constraints.
- If the job duties can reasonably be performed under the proposed flexible work arrangement, then assess the performance of the employee to ensure that the employee is in good standing and to determine if the employee demonstrates work habits that will support a flexible work arrangement, such as reliability, responsiveness, and the ability to work independently.
- When assessing the eligibility of flexible work arrangements, supervisors may wish to begin with one (1) day per week, assess the impact on the service delivery to internal and external clients, and consider additional days only if service quality can be maintained.

## Next steps:

If the supervisor agrees that a flexible work arrangement is feasible, the supervisor must receive the approval of their respective Senior Staff leader prior to communicating approval to the employee. Once approved by their respective Senior Staff leader, the supervisor should facilitate a discussion with the employee regarding the proposed work hours and schedule that the employee will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of regular communication (i.e., via phone, video conferencing, and/or in person, etc.) with the supervisor and others in the department, University, vendors, etc. If the flexible work arrangement includes telecommuting, it can be for up to three (3) workdays in a week. Telecommuting days can be adjacent business days; however, no employee may be granted telecommuting on Friday *and* on Monday.

Flexible worktime schedules must comply with the University's established policy regarding breaks and meal periods, incorporating a meal period of at least thirty minutes for all employees working five or more hours per day. Employees who are scheduled to work six hours or less per day may waive the meal period by mutual consent of the employee and the University.

The parties should discuss and complete the flexible work arrangement agreement together and ensure that all parties understand what is expected of them.

Once an agreement is signed by all parties, the supervisor is responsible for sending a copy of any signed flexible work agreement to Human Resources, IS&T, and Payroll.

## Expectations

- Communication is key to ensuring a successful flexible work arrangement.
- Employees are expected to work their agreed upon schedule, unless they receive their supervisor's prior approval to adjust their schedule.
- Employees with flexible work schedules may be required to modify their schedules as needed to meet operational needs. To the extent that there are predictable situations which may necessitate a change to the schedule (e.g., the first week of instruction, fiscal closing) that can be identified at the onset of the agreement, it would be helpful to do so. When changes to the schedule become necessary during the course of a flexible work arrangement, employees should be informed in writing and with advance notice where feasible.
- Flexible work arrangements should be reviewed at least annually to evaluate their continued effectiveness.

## Alternate Work Locations

If an employee's flexible work arrangement includes an alternate work location, then there are some additional considerations that all participants should be aware of:

- It's important that any work done remotely is performed under safe and ergonomically appropriate conditions. Employees should review the Ergonomics information at <https://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/ergonomics.aspx> and utilize these resources to assess and maintain their remote worksite in a safe and

ergonomically appropriate manner. In those situations where the flexible work arrangement is for the employee's convenience, Chapman University is not responsible for costs associated with setup of telecommuters' alternate office spaces, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, repairs or modifications to alternate office spaces, or operating costs of any personal equipment. Telecommuters and remote workers are responsible for notifying their employer of any injuries sustained while at their alternate work location and in conjunction with their regular work duties in accordance with Chapman University's workers' compensation procedures.

- To support you in meeting your obligation to keep Chapman information safe, please refer to Chapman University's IS&T Information Security Policy for more information <https://www.chapman.edu/campus-services/information-systems/security/index.aspx>

### **Ending Flexible Work Arrangements**

Telecommuting and Flexible work arrangements may be ended by either party at any time. Voluntary Remote Work arrangements may only be revoked by the University. Two weeks' notice will be provided where feasible. When executed, the Cancellation Form should be submitted to Human Resources, IS&T, and Payroll.