

Policy and Procedure: Telecommuting

Objective

Telecommuting allows employees to work remotely for all or part of their workweek. Goshen College considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not an institution-wide benefit, and it does not change the terms and conditions of employment with Goshen College. For employees who are permitted to telecommute, the following guidelines should be followed.

Procedures

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below. This policy is focused on formal telecommuting arrangements.

Any formal telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for three months and may be suggested or discontinued at will and at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the organization. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days' notice of such change to accommodate commuting, dependent care and other issues that may arise from the termination of a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

Eligibility

Regular, full-time, part-time, exempt and non-exempt staff in good standing with the college (who have a satisfactory performance record) are eligible to be considered for this type of work arrangement. Employees who are not residents of Indiana, Michigan or Minnesota are ineligible, unless explicitly approved by their vice president and the HR Office.

Before entering into a telecommuting agreement, the employee and manager will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas (the HR Office can be consulted if needed):

- Employee suitability. The employee and manager will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
- Job responsibilities. The employee and manager will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
- Equipment needs, workspace design considerations and scheduling issues. The employee and manager will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.

If the employee and manager agree, and the human resource department concurs, [a draft](#)

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[telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties](#), and a three-month trial period will commence.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone and email between the employee and the manager, and regular face-to-face or teleconferencing meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the end of the trial period, the employee and manager will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications. Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by employees working at the office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than on time-based performance.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After conclusion of the trial period, the manager and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

Employment Terms and Conditions

The employee's duties, obligations, responsibilities and conditions of employment with the college remain unchanged when the agreement involves only a change in work location. Salary, retirement plan benefits, and college-sponsored insurance coverage will not change unless mandated by the number of hours worked. Job responsibilities, standards of performance and performance evaluations remain the same as when working at the regular college work site. Work hours, overtime compensation and vacation schedule conform to applicable Human Resources policies. Requests to work overtime, schedule vacation, use sick leave or in any other way alter the agreed upon schedule are subject to the approval of the supervisor the same as when working at the regular college work site. The employee remains obligated to comply with all pertinent college rules, policies and practices, and instructions that would apply if the staff member were working at the regular college work site.

Equipment and Services

On a case-by-case basis, Goshen College will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software and other office equipment) for each telecommuting arrangement. The ITS Office will serve as resources in this matter. The employee will be responsible for internet service, to include any installation and ongoing costs of necessary cable modem/router and communications software required to complete job duties from home. The employee should ensure that there is ongoing, uninterrupted internet and phone service available.

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Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the organization, will be maintained by the employee. Goshen College accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. Goshen College reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all Goshen College property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment, all company property will be returned to the company, unless other arrangements have been made.

Goshen College will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary. Goshen College will also reimburse the employee for business-related expenses, such as phone calls and shipping costs, that are reasonably incurred in carrying out the employee's job.

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within their home for work purposes. Goshen College will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space.

Goshen College has a number of supported solutions in place for remote work. Telecommuting employees are expected to use the supported solutions unless an exception is recommended in conversation with ITS staff. Examples of supported services include:

- Zoom for video conferencing
- Google Docs (or Microsoft Office 365) for document collaboration
- Microsoft RDP for remote desktop work
- Jabber for remote access to the campus phone system
- LastPass for password management
- Duo Security for multi-factor authentication

Security

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to complete any required training and adhere to current security standards to ensure the protection of proprietary Goshen College information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment. By policy, remote access to Jenzabar requires that multi-factor authentication be enabled in coordination with ITS.

Safety

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with their regular work duties are normally covered by the company's workers' compensation policy.

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Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to their home worksite.

Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate dependent care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate dependent care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering a trial period.

Ad Hoc Arrangements

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved by a supervisor for circumstances such as inclement weather, stay-at-home executive orders, special projects or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance and no need for a signed telecommuting agreement.

Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the organization and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate.

All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization.