



I. POLICY STATEMENT

The UNC System Office recognizes that flexible work arrangements, including off-site work locations, can serve to promote employee recruitment and retention and provide economies with respect to facilities and other institutional operating costs. Accordingly, UNC System Office managers may implement flexible work arrangements, either management-directed or employee-requested, to meet operational needs and to provide enhanced flexibility to both employees and management. Management in each UNC System Office division is responsible for determining which types of flexibility may be appropriate based on operational need, specific position requirements, and employee performance. Decisions regarding flexible work arrangements are at the discretion of management, consistent with System Office policy. This policy does not create a guarantee, right, or entitlement to any specific flexible work arrangement for any employee.

II. COVERAGE

This policy applies to all permanent and temporary positions and employees.

III. TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

This policy provides permanent or temporary flexible work arrangements in three major categories:

- A. **Flexible Work Schedules.** These are adjustments to an employee's daily or weekly work schedule to respond to employee or operational needs. This may include compressed work weeks (e.g., four 10-hour workdays) or variable daily schedules (e.g., four 9-hour workdays and one 4-hour workday).
- B. **Flexible Work Hours.**¹ These are adjustments to an employee's work hours per week. This may include part-time work (e.g., an employee working 30 hours per week, or a position designed to be 30 hours per week) or job-sharing (e.g., two part-time employees performing the work of a full-time position).
- C. **Flexible Work Locations.** These are adjustments to the employee's customary worksite to respond to the operational needs of the department or the personal needs of an employee. Typically, these arrangements involve the employee primarily working off-site (referred to as a "remote" work arrangement) or a combination of on-site and off-site (referred to as a "hybrid" work arrangement).

IV. ASSESSING SUITABILITY FOR FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Management will determine allowable flexible work arrangements based on factors such as the nature of the work performed, employee productivity and performance, task interdependence, federal and state laws, and operational requirements and constraints. Not every position lends itself to flexible work arrangements, and the establishment of a flexible work arrangement does not create a guarantee, right, or entitlement to such an arrangement by any employee or group of employees on an ongoing basis. To ensure that equitable consideration is given to all requests for flexible work arrangements, the manager and/or division leadership should consider the following items:

- A. **Operational Needs.** The work environment of the unit, including the quality and quantity of customer interaction, the availability of on-site workspace, and all other operational needs that may be unique to an employee's duty station. Changes in work location or schedule must not affect the level of service provided or unduly alter the job duties of the employee or of their co-workers.

¹ Employee compensation is pro-rated to reflect any change in assigned work hours. Employees regularly scheduled for fewer than 30 hours per week are not eligible to participate in state retirement programs (TSERS/ORP), do not receive the employer contribution to their state health plan premium, and receive pro-rated leave earnings and pro-rated longevity (if eligible).



- B. **Equity.** The availability and terms of flexible work arrangements will be administered equitably based on applicable job-related factors and without regard to an employee's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. When selecting employees to engage in flexible work, management must ensure that duties continue to be equitably divided among on-site, hybrid, and remote employees, consistent with their job descriptions.
- C. **Employee Needs.** Employees may have specific needs that may be supported by either short- or long-term flexible work arrangements, or employees may have other work/life balance issues that affect the structure of a flexible work arrangement. Managers should balance an employee's desire for a flexible work arrangement with the operational needs of the work unit and the manageability of any proposed arrangement.
- D. **Oversight and Compliance.** The manager must be able to effectively monitor and assess the employee's work and performance outside of the regular work location or schedule and must be able to ensure continuing compliance with federal wage-hour regulations.

V. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Core Business Hours and On-site Work Locations.

- 1. Employees using flexible work schedules, work hours, or work locations generally should be available during a standard 8-hour business day as determined by their supervisor. A Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement form should be used to indicate if the employee will not be regularly scheduled during these hours. Because PBS NC operates on a twenty-four hour basis, its management may define alternative core business hours for shift workers.
- 2. Management will determine which employees may be required to work fully on-site, work primarily off-site, or work a "hybrid" schedule. Management will also determine if employees will have a dedicated on-site workspace (office, cubicle, etc.) or if employees will use a designated "hoteling" space for hybrid or intermittent on-site work.

B. Duty Station and Reasonable Commuting Distance.

- 1. **Duty Station.** The employee's designated on-site university work site is considered their duty station regardless of any approved flexible work arrangement. Employees working from an alternate location cannot charge mileage for travel between their alternate work location and their assigned duty station. Employees traveling for business departing from their alternate work location will be reimbursed mileage for the distance between their on-site duty station and the work destination, consistent with existing state policies. For overtime-eligible employees, certain activities, such as travel to and from required meetings that occur during scheduled work time, may be included as hours worked, consistent with existing state policies.
- 2. **Reasonable Commuting Distance.** Employees approved for flexible work locations are expected to work within a reasonable commuting distance to be able to report to their on-site duty station within a practical period of time when directed due to operational needs and/or due to changes to, or revocation of, their flexible work arrangements. A "reasonable commuting distance" generally means within two hours of the employee's on-site work location. Exceptions may be made to the reasonable commuting distance based on operational needs, including but not limited to recruitment of those with unique or scarce skills and arrival or departure of employees for a transitional period of relocation. All such exceptions must have the written approval of the divisional Senior Vice President and UNC System Human Resources.



3. Out-of-State Work.

- a. As the university is intended in part to contribute to the economy of the State, it is the position of the System Office that to the greatest extent practicable, its employees will reside within the State of North Carolina and will generally avoid long-term flexible work arrangements for employees who reside outside a reasonable commuting distance. This does not apply to positions in which the primary duty station of the employee is located outside of North Carolina due to operational needs or arrangements involving a period of transition for relocating employees when this offers specific benefit and value to the System Office.
- b. Employees with remote work arrangements outside of North Carolina may be subject to the laws and regulations of other states or countries with respect to the employee/employer relationship. The UNC System Office will ensure good faith compliance with such laws and regulations if granting approval for remote work arrangements outside of North Carolina.
- c. Employees are expected to cooperate with the System Office's compliance programs for tax withholding; however, employees remain individually responsible for the payment of employee income taxes, including ensuring that sufficient taxes are remitted to taxing authorities through withholding or estimated payments.

B. Resources for Remote Work Locations. The Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement form includes an inventory of state property authorized for use from the employee's remote work location.

1. **University property and equipment insurance.** The UNC System Office will ensure that all university property used off-site as part of a remote work arrangement is used in compliance with policies governing personal use, including compliance with all software and technology licensing agreements. Employees approved for flexible work arrangements shall be provided with a copy of all applicable policies governing personal use of state-owned equipment
2. **Information Technology.** UNC System Office Information Technology will provide either a university-owned laptop or desktop to employees working remotely along with necessary connective or power cables. Unless approved as an exception, the university will not provide both an on-site and an off-site laptop/desktop. Other specialized technology may be approved if off-site use of the technology is essential to the employee's job duties. IT will provide user support for university-issued IT equipment only. The university will not provide reimbursement for IT resources purchased by the employee for their own convenience, and employees are responsible for providing their own internet service.
3. **Office Furniture.** As a rule, employees are responsible for procuring their own office furniture for their remote workstation unless exceptions are otherwise authorized by directives issued by System Office Facilities. Exceptions may be provided for furniture already purchased as part of an ADA reasonable accommodation for an employee. All items authorized for off-site use by an employee must be inventoried on the Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement form.
4. **Office Supplies.** The university will continue to provide necessary office supplies to employees working remotely. Employees may arrange to pick up supplies periodically at their on-site work location. The university will not reimburse employees for office supplies purchased independently.
5. **Return of Equipment/Supplies.** In the event of an employee's separation from employment or the termination of a flexible work arrangement, employees are responsible for returning all University property and resources used off-site no later than the employee's separation date or date of termination of flexible work arrangement. Employees may be held responsible for any damage to University-issued equipment beyond what would be considered normal "wear and tear."



- C. **Safe and Secure Work Environment.** For remote work, the employee must ensure appropriate data security measures and maintain a work environment that is free from hazards or potential injury.
1. **Information and Data Security.** The security, confidentiality, and integrity of university records and information must always be protected and must comply with all information security requirements that would apply at the on-site work location. Sensitive information and data must not be processed nor stored on a personally owned computer or device, but instead must be processed on institutionally owned systems, stored in approved and secure remote storage, and accessed only by secure network access technologies. Employees must complete and adhere to all information security training required by the UNC System Human Resources and Information Technology offices, and also adhere to any other directives from the UNC System Office Chief Information Security Officer.
 2. **Workers' Compensation.** Employees working under a flexible work arrangement, including at a remote work site, are covered by workers' compensation for job-related injuries that occur in the course and scope of employment during the employee's approved work hours.
- D. **Off-Site Professional Conduct.** When working at a remote location, employees are expected to perform their job duties with the same level of professionalism as is expected for on-site work. Employees must be able to perform their duties free of non-work-related obligations and unreasonable interruptions to the greatest extent practicable. Personal appointments and attending to personal business should be kept to a minimum during normal business hours unless otherwise approved by the employee's manager and covered as needed by accrued personal leave. When participating in video conferences, employees should dress appropriately and take reasonable steps to minimize background noise and disruptions.
- E. **ADA Accommodations.** Flexible work arrangements are determined and administered separately from reasonable workplace accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Flexible work arrangements are not intended to substitute for the interactive reasonable accommodations process under ADA or to meet the university's ADA obligations.
- F. **Compliance with University Policies.** Work performed under a flexible work arrangement remains subject to all applicable laws, policies, and regulations as if it were performed on-site. These provisions include, but are not limited to, recordkeeping for work hours and leave, prohibitions on discrimination and workplace harassment, records retention obligations, and compliance with the North Carolina Public Records Act.

VI. FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENT REQUIREMENTS AND PRE-APPROVALS

The following minimum requirements and pre-approvals have been established to ensure appropriate accountability and oversight of flexible work location arrangements:

- A. **Occasional and Sporadic Flexibility.** Flexibility in work schedules or work locations used to address occasional and sporadic employee or operational needs can be administered informally through the employee's manager and do not require completion of the Flexible Work Arrangements Agreement.
- B. **Permanent Flexible Work Arrangements.** Regular or recurring flexible work arrangements lasting longer than 60 calendar days require completion of a Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement form. Any policy exceptions must be documented on the agreement form and approved by the appropriate Senior Vice President and by UNC System Human Resources prior to being implemented. Completed agreements must be sent to the UNC System Human Resources and are maintained as part of the employee's personnel file.



- C. **Requirements for Continuing Arrangements.** Any arrangement may be provided on a conditional or trial basis. The employee must meet all performance expectations and conduct requirements of their current role and consistently demonstrate the ability to complete tasks and assignments on a timely basis. Employees on continuing flexible work arrangements should have demonstrated good work habits, self-motivation, dependability, the ability to work independently, and the ability to meet deadlines. Employees must also demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this policy and any additional applicable policies, rules, and regulations.
- D. **Review, Modification, or Revocation of Arrangements.** Initial approvals for flexible work arrangements should not exceed 60 calendar days and should be reassessed at that point for viability. Managers will review existing arrangements at least annually, typically during the annual performance appraisal process, to assess continuation, modification, or revocation of the arrangement. Management must provide the employee an advance notice of at least 30 calendar days for revocation of, or significant changes to, the employee's approved flexible work arrangement. Exceptions to this minimum notice may be made, in consultation with UNC System Human Resources, due to employee misconduct, significant and sustained performance deficiencies, and/or to address critical business needs.

VII. DOCUMENT REVIEW AND REVISION INFORMATION

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