SUNY Workplace Telecommuting Training for Employees
Purpose of this Program:

- To support implementation of a UAlbany telecommuting program;
- To establish guidelines designed to clearly articulate employee and campus expectations; and
- To provide an additional vehicle for employee development while offering campus management flexibility to operate a successful telecommuting program and plan for future workforce needs.
Participation:

- Telecommuting is not an employee entitlement and is not operationally feasible for many job functions.
- Determining which job functions are eligible for telecommuting is subject to management discretion, based on operational and information security needs.
- Every application will be considered on an individual basis.
- Contextually it is important to note that the SUNY telecommuting policy is focused on the potential long-term application and benefits of telecommuting; it is not primarily driven by COVID-related concerns.
Eligibility:

Employees ARE NOT eligible if:

- 100% of duties require a physical presence on campus (i.e., in-person student support, visitor interaction, classroom presence, teaching and/or patient care or contact, safety, etc.)*
- Employee is expected to engage in significant collaboration with in-person colleagues and or students which may include in-person meetings, both formal and informal*
- Telecommunicating will unduly burden other employees- workload and duties cannot be shifted to other employees to make a telecommuting arrangement “fit”

Employees ARE eligible if:

- They can demonstrate a benefit to operations
- A portion of their duties can be performed remotely
- They are a well performing employee*
Timeframe:

- This program is effective as of July 1, 2021 and shall end December 31, 2021, unless extended by SUNY
  - SUNY Reserves the right to suspend or terminate this telecommuting program prior to December 31, 2021
  - Advance consultation with affected unions and reasonable advance notice to program participants will be provided
- Applications can be submitted at any time
General Guidelines:

- Employees must comply with all NYS, SUNY, campus laws, rules, regulations, policies, and guidance required at the official work site when telecommuting.
  - Failure to abide by these laws and rules may result in exclusion from the Telecommuting Program and/or administrative action, including disciplinary action.

- Employees must complete orientation on the terms of this telecommuting program before any telecommuting is permitted.

- All current laws, regulations, contract provisions and standard rules governing employee work schedules apply including but not limited to, existing call in procedures.

- Unless otherwise directed, telecommuters will not be excused from work when a directed departure is issued for the official work site.

- Conversely, if an emergency occurs at the alternate work site, and the telecommuter is unable to work at the telecommuting site that day or if the telecommuter is unable to, for any reason, continue working during their scheduled hours, the immediate supervisor/manager may direct the telecommuter to come to the official work site or grant authority to charge accruals.
Equipment and Supplies:

- The employer will not provide telecommuters durable equipment such as desks, chairs, file cabinets, or other office related furniture. The employer may, at its discretion, provide a laptop or other similar device to telecommuters to facilitate work at the telecommuting worksite.
  - Alternatively, employees may be allowed to bring work-assigned equipment to the telecommuting worksite where authorized in advance.

- Minimal office supplies may be provided by the employer and should be requested during the telecommuter’s in-office work period.
  - Supplies will not be shipped to the alternate work site.
  - Any out of packet expenses incurred for supplies, equipment, food, commuting, etc. will not be reimbursed.
  - Only UAlbany laptop and associated mobile equipment (headset, mouse, etc) can be taken home.
    - UAlbany desktop, monitor, etc. cannot be removed from campus.
Equipment and Supplies Continued:

➢ The telecommuter is responsible for having a phone for all work-related calls or having other technical support to ensure phone calls related to work are attended to in a timely fashion.

➢ When the telecommuting program ends, the employee must return all SUNY-issued devices and equipment, provided to facilitate work at the alternate worksite, if applicable, and any supplies issues on their next workday unless otherwise specified by management.
Computer Usage:

- The Employee must have suitable internet connection
  - The telecommuter is responsible to secure and pay for an internet connection
  - The agency will not reimburse internet costs

- Avoid storing sensitive data on personal devices

- ITS support is limited for personal devices

- Telecommuters must take appropriate actions to secure UAlbany laptop and other equipment from theft, damage or access by unauthorized individuals

- Limit use by others if a personal device is used for telecommuting. If shared, consider setting up separate user profile just for telecommuting

- Computers must be logged off or powered down when unattended even in a residence
Additional Precautions:

Report the Following Immediately:

▶ Any loss or theft must immediately be reported to ITS and supervisor/manager
▶ Any suspected security incident, include potential data breaches, must be immediately reported to ITS

ITS contact information:

▶ Web/ticket: https://www.albany.edu/its/form.php
▶ Email: askIT@albany.edu
▶ Phone: (518) 442-3700
Internal Controls:

- Existing internal controls must remain in place despite your work location.
- Performing job functions in an alternate location does not alleviate risks in safeguarding university property or information.

Preventive Internal Controls:
- Checks and balances/segregation of duties
- Access controls over information
- Physical security of university assets -> Off Campus Use Authorization Form

Monitoring:
- Mandatory internal control reviews of high-risk departments
- Random compliance audits of telecommuting arrangements will be conducted to ensure compliance with the policy.
The Process:

- Employees performing job functions that are not ineligible for telecommuting and meet all other criteria outlined in the pilot SUNY Telecommuting Policy may make a request for a telecommuting arrangement through December 31, 2021 by submitting an application and work plan to their supervisor for consideration.

- As per the policy each application will be reviewed by the AVP/Department Head and applicable VP/Dean.

- No telecommuting arrangement may commence until written approval is received by your Vice President (or designee) and telecommuting training has been completed.
Requesting Participation in The Telecommuting Program:

- Interested employees submit a completed application to immediate supervisor.
  Supervisor/manager review the application and makes initial determination.
  Application sent to Division/Department Leader for review/approval.
  The application is then sent to campus senior leadership (or designee) for final approval.
Step 1: Employee Submits a Telecommuting Application to Direct Supervisor/Manager:

- Interested employees must submit a completed Telecommuting Application to their immediate supervisor or manager.

Components to include in request:

- Explain the benefit of employee telecommuting to the University.
- Identify the preferred number of days and which days per week/pay period they wish to telecommute in the application.
- Days not to exceed 5 workdays per period.
Telecommuting Program Application and Work Plan

A. Employee Information (to be completed by the applicant) – PLEASE PRINT
Please check one: □ New Application □ Application for Renewal

Name: ____________________________
Job Title: __________________________
Work Desk Phone Number: ____________
Supervisor/Manager: __________________
Current Work Schedule (hours/days): ______________
Employee Email Address: ______________
Emergency Contact Information (optional): ______________
Name: ____________________________
Phone Number: ________________________
Are you currently serving a probation period? Yes No

B. Equipment
Do you have a state-issued laptop? Yes No
Inventory Tag #: ______________________
Do you have a personal computer (PC)? Yes No

C. Personal Privacy Protection Law Notification
The information you are providing will be used to determine your eligibility to participate in the Telecommuting Program. This information will be obtained by Human Resources. Failure to provide the requested information may result in a delay in processing or denial of your application.

It is the responsibility of the State of New York to fully comply with the provisions of article 6-A of the Public Officer’s Law, the Public Privacy Protection Law. The Personal Privacy Law protects you from the random collection of personal information by state agencies. The law enables you to access and/or correct information on which pertains to you. It also regulates disclosure of personal information to persons authorized by law to have access for official use.

D. Telecommuting Work Plan

Rationale for the Telecommuting Agreement:
(please describe the reasons for the request/assignment):

Telecommuting Location:
Address of Work Location: ______________
Telephone: _____________________________
Email Address: _________________________

Work Schedule:
I will be available to my manager and other key customers during the following times as part of this agreement:
Start Date of Telecommuting Schedule: ____________
End Date of Telecommuting Schedule: ____________
Regular Telecommuting Schedule [include days/hours you will be working at the telecommuting work location. All other workdays are presumed to be at the campus]: ____________________________

Applicant Name and Title: ____________________________
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Employees:

▶ Please consider the following:

▶ Arrangements will vary based upon on standard forward facing hours of operation which differ by unit (ex. UPD and the libraries work different hours versus HR or the registrar's office with typical 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM hours) or whatever is standard for a specialized unit

▶ An individual, scheduled to be working remotely, can be recalled in order to meet operational needs
  ▶ As noted in the Policy, telecommuting arrangements may be modified or cancelled based on performance or operational need

▶ Supervisors, unit heads and senior leadership must follow the guidelines established in the [SUNY Telecommuting Policy](#) for review and approval/denial of telecommuting requests within specified timeframes

▶ Initial telecommuting arrangements may be limited to assess performance and operational feasibility
General Guidelines:

- Workplans are necessary:
  - Workplan must be submitted - Telecommuters are responsible for submitting telecommuting work plans to their immediate supervisor/manager
  - Work plans can be modified
  - Regular progress reports are required
  - Employees must be available & meet set expectations
Projects/Job Functions to be performed while telecommuting

Observable measures that demonstrate successful progress on each Project/Job Function (SMART GOALS)

Contacts/Others involved in completion of project

Deadline Date
Step 2: Supervisor/Manager Review:

- Supervisor/manager reviews the application and makes an *initial* determination whether an employee meets the criteria.
  - Supervisor/Manager must affirm that they’ve reviewed the sensitivity of the data being handled by the telecommuter.
  - Supervisor/Manager must review the specified days per week.
  - Supervisor/Manager must make the initial determination within 7 (seven) calendar days.
  - Supervisor/Manager must discuss and make any possible modifications to the number of days or identified days requested by the applicant prior to processing the application further.
Additional Factors: Performance Related Denials

- Employee performance, past and ongoing, is a consideration for approval, denial or modifications to a telecommuting agreement
- Reminder: This can be based upon formal or informal evaluation or experiences with an employee
- Initial Telecommuting requests may be denied based on performance or may provide for a limited initial telecommuting arrangement, i.e.- 1-2 days per pay period. Then, after a month, the arrangement may be re-evaluated
- If two or more employees perform the same job functions, telecommuting approval can be dependent on prior performance and not approved for all employees in the same role
Additional Factors: Collaborative Needs

- Positions that require a significant amount of collaboration and/or meeting attendance may not be a good candidate for remote work.
- Not all meetings will be conducive to meeting remotely.
- High pace work environments that involve frequent troubleshooting may not lend themselves to telecommuting.
- If an office primarily conducts business in person, then having only a couple or a few employees work remotely will only serve to inhibit operations.
- If a position deals with hard copies of materials and resources, telecommuting may not be best, particularly if paper travels through many hands throughout the day.
Communication is Vital:

- Telecommuters must be available via all required methods of communication throughout the workday
  - Should a telecommuter not be available through official channels, management may contact the telecommuter via their personal contact information provided via the workplan
  - Jabber on desktop or mobile should be used for using University phone. Forwarding of office phone not recommended due to legal exposures/risk
  - In person meetings at the telecommuter’s alternative work site are prohibited
    - This restriction does not preclude a telecommuter from participating in, or being required to participate in, phone or web-based meetings from their alternative work site
- Teams, Jabber, Zoom, Email, etc. can be used on personal devices, including phones and computers
- SMS/Texting should not be used for official work communications, only for emergencies
- Avoid non-university supported platforms such as Slack, Discord, Gmail, etc.
E. Attestation

I have received, read, and will comply with the SUNY Telecommuting Program, my campus employee handbooks, and the following policies if any (to be completed by manager):

By entering your name, you are signing this document and agree to abide by all rules and guidelines:

Employee Name

Date

*Submit the application to your immediate supervisor/manager for review.

This section should be completed by immediate Supervisor/Manager within 7 days of receipt.

Date submitted to immediate Supervisor/Manager (or designee): ___________________________

I have reviewed the application and the employee:

[ ] Meets criteria
[ ] Does not meet criteria (If this option is selected, you must complete both boxes below)

Circle all that apply:

- Performance concerns
- Date limitations on physical presence at critical work sites
- Technology/equipment limitations
- Operational barriers
- Task cannot be executed
- Other

Provide additional information to support your decision:

By entering your name, you are signing this document:

Supervisor/Manager Name: __________________________

Supervisor/Manager Title: __________________________

Supervisor/Manager Email Address: __________________________

*Supervisor/manager: submit application to your division/department head (or designee).

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Attestation and Supervisor/Manager Review:

- Employee completes top portion
- Direct Supervisor/Manager completes bottom portion as part of their review- state if the employee meets/does not meet criteria
Step 3: Division/Department Leader Review:

- The Division/Department Leader will complete their review and provide approval within 7 (Seven) calendar days of receipt.
Step 4: Campus Senior Leadership Review:

- Campus Senior Leadership will complete their review
  - Must provide approval within 7 (Seven) calendar days of receipt
    - All responses will be in writing
    - If denied- an explanation of the basis for the denial will be provided to the employee
Division/Department Head review & Senior Campus Leader Review:

➢ Top of Page completed by Division/Department Head
➢ Bottom of page completed by Senior Campus Leader
Once a Telecommuting Plan is Approved:

- A Telecommuting work arrangement shall not commence until it has received final approval.
- Participation and start dates may be subject to equipment availability and management discretion.
Biweekly Progress Reports

▷ Employees approved for telecommuting must submit timely biweekly progress reports to their supervisors

▷ Supervisors/Managers must collect and review these biweekly progress reports from approved employee
Modifications Can Be Made:

- Modifications can be made to the Approved Telecommuting Arrangement:
  - An individual’s participation in the telecommuting arrangement can be modified, suspended, or cancelled AT ANY TIME by management:
    - 30 calendar days advance written notice must be given to the employees where feasible
    - Employees who had arrangement cancelled or suspended may reapply 6 (six) months from the date of cancellation or suspension
    - An employee may suspend or cancel their participation with 30 calendar days advance written notice to their immediate supervisor/manager
Appeal Process:

- If an employee in a job function deemed eligible for telecommuting has their telecommuting application disapproved, they may appeal:
  - Appeal to the Chief Human Resource Officer or their designee
    - Must be in writing 7 (seven) calendar days following receipt of denial
    - The appeal should state the reasons for disagreement with management’s determination
  - A decision on the appeal shall be rendered by the Chief Human Resource Officer or designee
    - Must be within 7 (seven) calendar days of the receipt of the appeal stating the reasons for the decision if denied
    - Denials of applications are not grievable under any collective bargaining agreements
    - Employees who have had an application denied may reapply 6 (six) months from the date of the decision on the appeal referenced herein
    - An employee can suspend or cancel their participation with 30 calendar days
Summary - Specific Employee Responsibilities:

- Employees are actively working towards and are fully focused on business goals and professional obligations during normally scheduled hours of work.
- Employees are easily accessible throughout the workday, and respond to inquiries in a prompt/timely manner.
- Employees meet or exceed all performance goals and expectations as outlined in performance program.
- Employees ensure effective and productive communication.
- Employees’ behavior is professional, courteous, service oriented and aligned with codes of conduct, campus values, etc.
- Employee return to campus for onsite meetings, teambuilding activities, trainings, etc., as required.
- Employees submit requests for scheduled time off (vacations, holidays, etc.) in accordance with established policies and/or contracts and charge appropriate time off benefits.
- Employees notify immediate supervisor/manager of unanticipated full day or partial day absences or lateness in accordance with established policies and/or contracts and charge appropriate time off benefits.
Summary - Specific Employee Responsibilities:

- Telecommuting should not be considered as a substitute for child or elder care nor should a campus mandate or monitor such arrangements. Employees are expected to make such arrangements for child or elder care so as not to adversely impact telecommuting workflow and productivity.

- Employees who have childcare obligations, family care obligations and/or any other obligations that would prevent them from focusing their full time and attention on work, must follow all leave and/or time off policies as needed.

- While NYS Workers Compensation through the State Insurance Fund covers the employee working from a flexible location, it is the employee's responsibility to also ensure that this type of arrangement is permissible under their homeowners or renters insurance policy. Employees must practice safe work habits.

- Employees understand and acknowledge that telecommuting arrangements are not an entitlement and can be modified or discontinued by management at any time.

- Employees understand and acknowledge that telecommuting arrangements do not change the employee's terms and conditions of employment including employee's classification, base compensation, or benefits.

- Employees understand and acknowledge that the SUNY is not responsible for equipping their telecommuting location(s) and the specific policies of individual related to loaning, borrowing, transporting and/or supporting supplies and equipment will apply.
Contact Us for More Information:

Employee Relations Contact Information: (Also address to submit appeals)
emprelations@albany.edu

ITS contact information:
Web/ticket: https://www.albany.edu/its/form.php
Email: askIT@albany.edu
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Internal Controls Contact Information:
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