

# Telecommuting Arrangements for Staff Employees

**Original Implementation:** January 29, 2019

**Last Revision:** July 21, 2020

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and expectations for utilizing short-term and long-term remote working and telecommuting options for staff employees at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA).

## Definitions

**Telecommuting** is an authorized work arrangement that involves an employee routinely working one or more days per week at a location that is not the regularly assigned work location. Telecommuting requires a formal agreement approved by the department head and president or designee.

**Remote Working** is the occasional, non-routine, short-term (up to five consecutive business days) performance of an employee's job duties at a location away from the employee's regular work location, most often the employee's home. Verbal or written approval by department head is required.

**Regularly Assigned Work Location** is a worksite on the university campus or on property under control of the university where an employee usually and customarily reports to work.

## General

The university normally requires that work be performed on university property or property controlled by the university. In order to promote general work efficiencies, the university may permit or direct employees to work at alternate work locations when doing so serves the best interest of the university and is approved in advance as outlined in this policy. Remote working or telecommuting arrangements may be implemented as a means of supporting business continuity plans and supporting the hiring and retention of a highly competent workforce.

A remote working or telecommuting arrangement is considered a privilege and not an entitlement. All remote working arrangements must be approved by the department head, and telecommuting arrangements require a formal agreement approved by the department head and president or designee.

Telecommuting agreements are subject to termination at any time due to performance concerns, employee discipline, a change in policy, law, or the needs of the university as interpreted by the department head, division head, or president. Telecommuting agreements do not constitute an employment contract and end upon the employee's separation of employment.

Telecommuting does not alter a staff employee's relationship with the university, including responsibilities, salary, benefits, leave, nor expected hours of work.

## **Eligibility**

To be eligible for remote working or telecommuting, an employee must:

- a. Hold a position that, in the judgement of the department head and the division head, may be performed effectively from a remote location.
- b. Be able to maintain confidentiality of information at a remote location.
- c. Provide a remote workplace at which SFA equipment and work related materials will be safe and where required job duties can be performed.
- d. Utilize appropriate secure equipment and software as prescribed by university information technology services, utilizing VPN to access category 2 or higher data.
- e. Have the ability to perform job responsibilities with minimal supervision.
- f. Have and maintain satisfactory performance in the judgement of the department head, as reflected in performance reviews or evaluations.

Positions ineligible for telecommuting are those that:

- a. Require regular face-to-face contact with members of the SFA community or the public; or
- b. Require routine access to information or materials only available at the regular work location.

## **Work Schedule and Hours**

Telecommuting employees will work hours that comply with SFA policy 12.24, Working Hours and Holidays. Nonexempt telecommuting employees must maintain a 40-hour work week and will not be allowed to work in excess of 40 hours without prior approval from the department head. Exempt telecommuting employees must work the number of hours necessary to complete the requirements of the job, but no less than 40 hours per week. Telecommuting employees are not eligible to claim or earn state compensatory time unless it is approved in compliance with Texas Government Code, 659.018(b). Telecommuting employees must comply with all SFA policies and procedures.

Telecommuting employees must travel to campus to attend meetings and events as assigned by the department head.

## **Agreement and Approvals Required**

A Staff Telecommuting Request and Agreement must be completed and signed by the employee, the department head, human resources, and the president or designee.

## **Termination of Agreement**

The university reserves the right to terminate the agreement with ten (10) business days' notice if the university determines that the telecommuting arrangement no longer is in the best interest of the university. The university also reserves the right to terminate without a notice period for any violations of university policy, a violation of the conditions of the agreement, or when there is a relevant change in university policy or law.

When the agreement is terminated, the employee must promptly return all notes, data, reference materials, sketches, drawings, memoranda, reports, records, equipment, software, supplies, and any other university property in the employee's possession or control.

The university shall not be held responsible for costs, damages, or losses associated with this agreement.

**Cross Reference:** Tex. Gov't Code §§ 658.010, 659.018(b); Overtime and Compensatory Time (12.14); Working Hours and Holidays (12.24); Acceptable Use of Information Resources (14.2).

**Responsible for Implementation:** Vice President of Finance and Administration

**Contact for Revision:** Director of Human Resources

**Forms:** The Staff Telecommuting Request and Agreement form is available on the Employee tab of mySFA.

**Board Committee Assignment:** Academic and Student Affairs