

# Pennsylvania College of Technology

## Policy Statement

**Title:** Telecommuting (Formerly Short-term Telecommuting Work Arrangement)      **Number:** P3.03.38

**Approved by:**  
Presidential Action

**Approved Date:** 04/2019  
**Implementation Date:** 04/2019  
**Last Review Date:** 07/2021  
**Last Revision Date:** 07/2021

**Persons/Departments Affected:**  
Administrative, Professional & Technical Staff

**Responsible Department:**  
Human Resources

### Definitions:

**Telecommuter** – An APT employee (Non-faculty) of the College who has been approved for an alternate work arrangement, other than work from the primary office on campus.

**Short-term Telecommuting Work Arrangement** – A period of time ranging from one (1) day to two (2) weeks in length that allows an employee to work at home or elsewhere for part or all of their regular work schedule, and is considered for full- or part-time staff, who are classified as APT exempt or non-exempt (overtime eligible).

**Long-term Telecommuting Hybrid-Work Arrangement** – An established work arrangement that allows an employee to work at home or elsewhere for up to four (4) days per work week of their regular work schedule, with a minimum of one (1) day per week on campus, and is considered for full-time APT exempt level staff. Long-term arrangements will not be approved for part-time or non-exempt (overtime eligible) level staff.

### Policy:

- I. Penn 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 a College-wide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with Penn College.

- II. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement. In accord with Procedure [3.03.38](#)/ Telecommuting, proper levels of prior approval are required.
  
- III. The following considerations to determine employee eligibility for short or long-term telecommuting will apply:
  - A. Employee must have successfully completed their new hire probationary period.
  
  - B. Employee must be in good standing and not be on active discipline.
  
  - C. The employee's position is classified as Administrative, Professional & Technical (APT) Staff.
  
  - D. Short-term arrangements will be considered for APT full- and part-time, exempt and non-exempt staff.
  
  - E. Long-term arrangements will be considered for APT full-time exempt level staff. APT part-time and non-exempt staff are not eligible for long-term arrangements.
  
- IV. **Short-term telecommuting work arrangements**, with no expectation of ongoing continuance, may be considered in the following situations:
  - A. To work on a short-term project
  
  - B. To work remotely contiguous to business travel, to extend a stay in a location for personal reasons
  
  - C. During inclement weather
  
  - D. Employee on family or medical leave, to the extent practical for the employee with the ability to fulfill the needs of the College, and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate (Telecommuting will not be approved while caring for a dependent.)
  
  - E. Ad hoc situations for a partial day to one (1) day (e.g. work from home prior to an appointment to save time on commuting to work and the appointment)

During short-term telecommuting, the work schedule the Telecommuter will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication, should be in accordance with [Policy 3.02.04](#) / Office Hours.

V. **Long-term telecommuting hybrid-work arrangements**, may be considered in the following situation:

- A. Position does not require in-person interactions with students, visitors, customers, and fellow employees,
- B. Work duties can successfully be performed in a location other than the primary office on campus, and
- C. Position is somewhat self-directed and can be performed efficiently and effectively, without disrupting the productivity of the department.

VI. **Guidelines**

A. General Guidelines

- 1. It is the responsibility of departments and the area senior administrator to determine which employee positions are eligible for telecommuting.
- 2. Telecommuting is not appropriate for all employees and jobs, nor all employees in the same or similar jobs, and should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 3. Whenever possible, a supervisor should identify eligible positions, considering position-specific tasks and requirements; impact on students, coworkers, and the public; and any employee performance concerns.
- 4. Telecommuting is neither a universal employee right nor a universal employee benefit; telecommuting is a management option for an alternative work arrangement. Neither telecommuting nor on-campus work should be viewed as a demonstration of employee commitment.
- 5. Telecommuting may be used when appropriate to the specific needs of a department and employee, or under special circumstances.
- 6. Supervisor(s) should consider appropriate on-campus coverage when considering telecommuting agreements.

7. Telecommuting may be approved on an on-going basis or a time-limited basis, and exceptions may be required to meet department needs.
8. Supervisor(s) should work with the Office of Human Resources when considering authorizing telecommuting. The approval of Human Resources is required for long-term telecommuting arrangements. For short-term telecommuting arrangements, while the approval of Human Resources is not required, consultation is encouraged to ensure all supervisory responsibilities have been satisfied.
9. Supervisors(s) should consult with the appropriate director(s) in Information Technology Services (ITS), to ensure all technology needs and security training have been considered for a specific position/person, and could be met prior to the initiation of a long-term telecommuting arrangement.
10. Short- and long-term telecommuting arrangements should be mutually agreed to by the Telecommuter, department supervisor, and a higher-level supervisor (Director-level or above). Long-term arrangements require the additional approval of the area senior administrator and senior administrator in Human Resources, with the understanding that the arrangements may be discontinued by the College by providing no less than 15 business days' written notice and in the event of performance related concerns, no notice is necessary.
11. Supervisor(s) should work with employees to determine the optimal combination of telecommuting and onsite work that best fits the needs of the College and the employee. A long-term telecommuting hybrid approach of telework and on-campus work requires a minimum of one (1) work days on campus per week.
12. Unless otherwise specified, the Telecommuter's work status, job duties and responsibilities will remain unchanged because of telecommuting.
13. Long-term telecommuting hybrid-work arrangement are required to be reviewed annually, to determine if the arrangement should continue.
14. Supervisors(s) are responsible to develop a means of evaluating Telecommuter hours worked and work performance, and holding the Telecommuter accountable, as they would normally do for an employee working in the office.

15. Irrespective of the number of days per week the Telecommuter reports to campus, the primary work location will be the respective campus and building which the Telecommuter reports to when they work on campus.

#### B. Communication

1. The Telecommuter must remain accessible during work hours (e.g., phone, email, Teams, etc.) and should establish and maintain effective communication and workflow among coworkers, supervisor and customers or other constituents.
2. The Telecommuter and the supervisor should establish procedures for effective communication, including frequency of emails, other electronic communication and/or telephone contact.
3. Telecommuting will be coordinated so that there are opportunities for departments to have everyone physically present during relevant times. In the event an on-campus commitment conflicts with a telework day, the on-campus commitment takes priority and the Telecommuter must plan to attend on-campus.

#### C. Work Space/Safety

1. The Telecommuter is responsible for establishing and maintaining an adequate and safe workspace, ensuring the telework space is free of safety hazards and other dangers.
2. Telecommuters will be covered by the College's Workers Compensation Insurance only for work-related injuries incurred during the normal course and scope of their employment and job duties.
3. A Telecommuter must report any work-related injuries to their supervisor and College Health Services immediately.
4. When telecommuting, the Telecommuter is responsible for establishing a work environment free of interruptions and distractions that would affect performance and professional workplace conduct.
5. Telecommuting is not designed to be a substitute for active dependent care. Work schedules may be discussed as appropriate to accommodate dependent care needs.
6. In accord with [Policy 3.02.26](#) / Disability Accommodations, Telecommuters who need an accommodation may contact the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator in Human

Resource to file a request. The ADA Coordinator will analyze such requests according to established policy and procedures.

7. Onsite workspace may be made available to multiple employees in order to maximize efficiency. It is the responsibility of individual departments to leverage assignments and schedules in a way that distributes peak demand of onsite need in a balanced and equitable manner.

#### D. Hours of Work

1. The Telecommuter and their supervisor will agree on the work schedule the Telecommuter will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication, in accordance with [Policy 3.02.04](#) / Office Hours.
2. When possible, flexibility in work schedules may be accommodated, in accord with [Policy 3.03.29](#) / Flex-time and Alternate Work Schedules.
3. The Telecommuter must agree to be accessible by phone or electronically within a reasonable time period during the agreed-upon work schedule.
4. The Telecommuter is responsible for recording vacation, sick or other leave as they would do at the primary work location. Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for employees to use appropriate leave time.
5. Other than regular brief breaks employees would likely take if they were on-campus (generally less than 10 minutes, e.g., to use the restroom or stretch their legs, etc.), Telecommuters must not report any period of time at home or elsewhere spent in activities other than work as work-time; such a circumstance may constitute falsification of time records to receive pay for time not worked (theft of time) and could be grounds for immediate termination of employment.
6. Employees who request telecommuting due to personal or family medical leave, for more than five consecutive work days are required to request a leave of absence by submitting a *Request for Leave of Absence* to the Human Resources Office for approval in accord with [Policy 3.03.27](#) and [Procedure 3.03.27](#) / Family and Medical Leave. Telecommuting will not be approved while caring for a dependent.

7. In the event of College closure, under [Policy 7.12](#) / Weather and Emergency Closing, the Telecommuter will generally be relieved of all job responsibilities, unless there is a requirement to work communicated by the supervisor, and as such, [Policy 3.02.14](#) / Impact on Employees Work During Closure will apply.

#### E. Computer Equipment and Other Work Resources

1. When arrangements are made for telecommuting, College equipment may be assigned to the Telecommuter to utilize from home. If College equipment is used, the telecommuter must exercise reasonable care for the equipment. Information Technology Services (ITS) approval should be obtained, prior to taking College-owned equipment home or elsewhere for the purpose of telecommuting. The Telecommuter may be held liable for damage caused by negligence. Preventable damage (as determined by appropriate College administrator) to any College equipment being used for telecommuting may be the responsibility of the Telecommuter. Normal wear and tear (as determined by appropriate College administrator) on College equipment being used for telecommuting is generally the responsibility of the Telecommuter's department.
2. A Telecommuter who uses their own personal equipment for telecommuting acknowledges and releases the College and their department from any and all responsibility for or liability regarding such personal equipment. Damage to any personal equipment being used is generally the responsibility of the Telecommuter. Normal wear and tear on personal equipment being used for the telecommuting is the responsibility of the Telecommuter.
3. College equipment should not be used for personal/other purposes beyond the incidental personal use it might receive if in the on-campus office.

#### F. Expenses

1. The College is not responsible for any expense associated with establishing an alternate location, including but not limited to, computer, printer, phone, internet, or office furniture.
2. The Telecommuter should seek department manager approval before incurring any business expense. To receive reimbursement for pre-approved expenses, the Telecommuter must present proper documentation to support the expenses, in accordance with all applicable accounting, ethics and financial control policies and procedures.

3. Local Internet Service Providers (ISP's) are necessary for email and internet functions and are generally paid for by the Telecommuter.
4. Personal cell phone usage for local and long-distance calls are not eligible for reimbursements.

G. Information Technology, Information Security and Access to Information

1. All computer and electronic equipment, whether belonging to the Telecommuter or the College, shall comply with [Policy 7.05](#) / Information Technology Resources Acceptable Use and [Policy 5.28](#) and [Procedure 5.28](#) / Information Security, including current and updated versions of appropriate firewall, antivirus and antispyware protections.
2. The Telecommuter must follow all software licensing and copyright laws, as well as all precautions and requirements prescribed by ITS, in accordance with [Policy 5.28](#) and [Procedure 5.28](#) / Information Security.
3. Telecommuters must maintain the protection of sensitive or restricted data in accordance with [Policy 5.28](#) and [Procedure 5.28](#) / Information Security.
4. Telecommuters must not store sensitive or restricted data on personal devices. If personal devices are used for telecommuting, they must be fully compliant with [Policy 7.05](#) / Information Technology Resources Acceptable Use and [Policy 5.28](#) and [Procedure 5.28](#) / Information Security and sensitive or restricted data must be stored on College-approved storage solutions.
5. College devices that store sensitive or restricted data must be encrypted in accordance with [Policy 5.28](#) and [Procedure 5.28](#) / Information Security.
6. Telecommuters shall follow the same physical security habits that are followed in a work setting, such as keeping work equipment in a secure environment and locking equipment when unattended.
7. Telecommuters must ensure that sensitive or restricted information is not overheard (conversations) or seen (screens or documents) by others. Screens should face away from windows. Extra caution should be taken if working in shared Telecommuting spaces.



8. If Telecommuters access sensitive or restricted data, connecting to the College's VPN and/or access via a campus-hosted computer or virtual machine may be required.
  9. When accessing College information systems, Telecommuters should stay on a private, secured Wi-Fi network and avoid using public Wi-Fi. Use of public Wi-Fi when accessing sensitive or restricted data is prohibited.
  10. Telecommuters must report any observed or suspected information security incident upon discovery and as quickly as possible to their respective help desk.
- VII. Nothing within this policy relieves supervisors of the necessity to provide coverage for office hours and work functions. Also, nothing within this policy forbids a supervisor, area senior administrator, and the senior administrator in Human Resources from establishing a more flexible work schedule if it is determined to be in the compelling interest of both the College and the employee.

**Revision History:**

07/2021: Addition of long-term telecommuting hybrid-work arrangements and additional guidelines provided.

**Cross References:**

Information Technology Resources Acceptable Use, [P 7.05](#)

Family and Medical Leave, [P 3.03.27](#) and [PR 3.03.27](#)

Telecommuting, [PR3.03.38](#)

Disability Accommodations, [P 3.02.26](#)

Office Hours, [P 3.02.04](#)

Flex-time and Alternate Work Schedules, [P 3.03.29](#)

Weather and Emergency Closing, [P 7.12](#)

Impact on Employees Work During Closure, [P 3.02.14](#)