Temporary Telecommute Guidance in response to COVID-19

Purpose

In response to COVID-19 UC Merced is expanding current telecommute guidance to support the health and well-being of staff and the campus community. UC Merced encourages all managers and supervisors to think creatively about how to support their employees in caring for their health and reducing risk of exposure to COVID-19. One such option is implementing "social distancing" by reducing the density of individuals at campus locations. One tool that may be used to achieve this goal is to increase our use of telecommuting during the pandemic crisis.

This Temporary Telecommute Agreement should be used in all instances where management has determined that work may temporarily be performed from home or an alternate location as a means to reduce the density of employees on campus during the crisis.

Authority

Departments may enter into telecommuting arrangements with the approval of the Department Head and in consultation with the respective Division Head/Dean. Telecommute agreements may be used to address the safety and well-being of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic in concert with balancing University operations.

All collective bargaining agreements must be followed. Please contact Human Resources Employee and Labor Relations for questions about collective bargaining agreements.

Designating staff that are able to telecommute

We continue to encourage all managers and supervisors to think **creatively** about how to support all employees, including student employees, in caring for their health - and reducing their risk of exposure to COVID-19 - while still enabling them to continue to perform the important work they do. Our employees have different jobs and responsibilities and the modifications we can make to their work will vary based on those differences. **There will not be one solution that works for all and some individuals, due to the nature of their work, will be asked to continue to report to work.**

'Designated staff' are those who are not eligible to telecommute. These staff members must perform their jobs on campus to:

- Ensure the health and safety of the campus community
- Provide direct customer service that cannot be performed from another location
- Ensure critical continuity of operations on campus that cannot be performed from another location

- Respond timely to an emergency

In situations where work can temporarily be performed from home or an alternate location, we encourage managers and employees to work together to identify opportunities to allow employees to work remotely and document such arrangements on a Temporary Telecommute Agreement.

Alternate (Flexible) Work Schedules
Subject to the needs of the University, managers should consider flexible work arrangements. Examples of alternate work schedules include:

- Rotating staff to working half-day on site and half-day at telecommute location
- Rotating staff for coverage (example Tuesday/Thursday or Monday/Wednesday/Friday)
- Nine-eighty (9/80): An employee works eight 9-hour days and one 8-hour day in the pay period with an extra day off.
- Four-Tens (4/10): An employee works four 10-hour days each week with an extra day off.
- Flexible Work Schedule (Non-Exempt): Employees work within a 40 hour work week and 8 hours/day, provides flexibility with regard to start time, lunch, and/or end time.

For more information, please refer to our website [here](#).

Managers and Supervisors should determine
- The positions and tasks where work can be performed remotely
- The appropriate level of work for telecommuters and how work will be assigned and how performance is measured
- The working days, hours, and times of work on telecommuting days
- Availability and methods of communication for staff that are telecommuting

Equitable Considerations
For all employees, especially those whose work cannot easily be done remotely (including hourly, represented, and student workers), managers and employees should work together to develop a work plan for those special assignments, projects, job-related reading or training that *could* be completed remotely.

Balancing Operational Continuity and Telecommuting
In the event that employees request telecommuting arrangements due to their own high risk circumstances, Department Heads should give priority to these requests. For employees in a unit who are not 'designated' as defined above, the Department Head should organize remote work consistent with these Guidelines in ways that are fair to all employees and in the best interest of the department. Among the measures that might be adopted are rotating periods of telecommuting between employees or reducing the duration of telecommuting shifts in order to accommodate more individuals.