

University Policy 3008: Telework

Category: Human Resources

Subcategory: Rights & Responsibilities

Covered Individuals: All Employees

Responsible Executive: Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Policy Custodian: Office of Human Resources, Senior Associate Vice President of Human Resources

Last Revised: 2024/10/08

Previous USU Policy Number: 330: Telework

3008.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Utah State University (USU) permits telework arrangements, when doing so benefits both the department and the employee. Telework arrangements are successful when the job, person, environment, and work situation are appropriate. Telework can improve productivity and job performance; promote administrative efficiencies (e.g., reduce office and parking space needs); reduce traffic congestion, pollution, and transportation costs; and recruit and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce.

3008.2 POLICY

Telework is a privilege, subject to university approval, and is not a university-wide benefit. Telework arrangements must serve the department's objectives. The arrangement can be discontinued by and at the discretion of the department head/director and/or responsible dean/vice president at any time based on business and performance management considerations. Depending on the nature of work to be performed, not all positions will qualify for telework. Each telework decision will be made on a case-by-case basis by considering the employee's work responsibilities and performance, whether the position must be performed in person at a campus location, the needs and desires of both the department and the employee, schedules, and the overall likelihood for success. If USU establishes telework as a condition of employment, based on the university's business needs, it will be stated when the position is advertised and/or when telework is approved.

The dean/vice president, department head/director, supervisor, and teleworker must agree to the work arrangements and expectations by signing a [telework agreement](#) prior to commencing telework. The telework agreement must address expected job performance and deliverables.

Regular, hybrid, or flexible telework may be approved on a temporary, trial, or ongoing basis as follows:

- Regular telework - An employee works every workday at a location other than a USU location.
- Hybrid telework - An employee works one or more workdays at a location other than a USU location and the remainder of the week's workdays at a USU location (e.g., M-W alternative work location from home; Th-F work from USU workplace). The schedule is fixed to be the same each week to facilitate meeting schedules and other office activities.
- Flexible telework - Employees vary their work location throughout the week based on business and/or personal work/life needs. Only positions that can support this variety should be approved using this method.

Surge telework is for those positions that a dean/vice president and department head/director has identified as being able to temporarily telework on days where the [Utah Division of Air Quality](#) has forecast an air quality of "unhealthy" (red) or higher at least 48 hours in advance for that county/location. Since surge telework is expected to be temporary and infrequent, it does not require a formal telework agreement. USU

positions that provide in-person services or have an in-place-duties requirement are not eligible for surge telework and will still report to their normal work location as scheduled.

Surge telework may also be approved by appropriate campus leaders during other special circumstances, such as predicted heavy snowfall or other situations that could pose a risk to employee safety or health.

Campus Leaders Who Can Authorize Surge Telework for Special Circumstances:

- Main Campus in Logan - USU president or designee.
- Statewide Campuses - Vice President of Statewide Campuses in consultation with the respective campus associate vice president.
- Extension Offices - Vice President for Extension.

Employees or supervisors with questions about Americans with Disabilities (ADA) accommodations that involve telework should contact the Office of Human Resources for more information.

The USU president may approve telework in response to community crises, natural disasters, pandemics, or similar events.

2.1 Evaluating Positions for Telework

Departments may consult with the Office of Human Resources to analyze the nature of a position and how the work is performed to determine which positions are appropriate to designate or approve for telework.

Several factors should be considered in determining the feasibility of telework, including the supervisor's ability to adequately supervise the employee, whether any duties require the use of systems, equipment, or tools that cannot be replicated or provided at the alternative work location, and the potential impact to other team members' workload.

Telework should be performed within the state of Utah. Requests for an exception that would permit employees to telework from an out-of-state location for any period longer than 30 days must be recommended by the responsible dean/vice president and reviewed and approved by a telework eligibility committee. This committee includes representatives from Payroll/Finance, Risk Management, Office of Research, Civil Rights and Title IX Office, Information Technology, and Human Resources and is advised by the Office of General Counsel. The committee will evaluate the need for the out-of-state work location and the legal and compliance requirements related to payroll, unemployment, workers' compensation, state-mandated leave, and other associated requirements, which can vary significantly from state to state. The restriction on work locations outlined in this policy does not apply to sabbatical leave (see USU [Policy 3116: Sabbatical Leave](#)) and research fieldwork.

2.2 Eligibility

2.2.1 Evaluating Employees for Telework

When a telework request is made, the supervisor and department head/director determine if telework is feasible either on a trial or ongoing basis by completing the [Telework Position Assessment form](#).

Current employees must meet performance requirements as outlined in the employee's [Telework Performance Assessment form](#). (See USU [Policy 3001: Setting Expectations and Managing Performance](#).)

Once the supervisor and department head/director have confirmed eligibility for telework and approved the request, it will be sent to the respective dean/vice president for final approval.

A teleworking employee is responsible for any personal tax and insurance implications of a telework arrangement and for conforming to any local zoning regulations.

2.2.2 Ineligible Positions

This policy applies only to those who work away from their USU location for one or more days per week regularly and not for ad hoc situations. Ad hoc situations will be coordinated and approved by the employee's supervisor in accordance with that department's practices.

Some positions are not typically eligible for telework, such as faculty roles tied to on-campus programs and instruction; direct service positions; facilities trades workers; custodial workers; student-health staff; residence-life staff; coaches and athletic support; receptionist positions; agricultural production staff; research animal and plant care staff; library circulation staff; IT direct support positions; environmental health and safety staff; and place-specific positions, such as police officers, grounds workers, and parking support staff. The responsible dean or vice president has discretion in making the final determination as to whether a position is eligible for telework.

2.3 General Expectations and Conditions

2.3.1 Compliance

Teleworking employees must comply with all federal, state, and local laws as well as university rules, policies, and practices and agree and understand that violation of such may result in the termination of the telework arrangement and/or corrective or disciplinary action.

2.3.2 Hours and Location of Work

The teleworker is responsible for recording all hours worked in the same manner as they would in the normal USU workplace. Overtime hours for nonexempt employees require the advance approval of the supervisor. The university continues to expect the same level of productivity and availability from remote locations as from the normal USU workplace. (See USU Policies [3001: Setting Expectations and Managing Performance](#) and [3203: Overtime](#).)

Supervisors may require employees to report to a central USU workplace for work-related meetings or other events or via virtual tools/technology to discuss work progress or other work-related issues.

Supervisors should provide enough notice to ensure the teleworker can be in attendance in person when required. Commuting to or from a central worksite at the beginning or end of the day will not be considered compensable time or be eligible for mileage reimbursement unless otherwise specified in the approved telework agreement.

2.3.3 Setting Up an Alternative Workspace

Teleworkers are expected to secure and maintain an efficient and safe workspace that provides adequate connectivity to systems and resources to complete duties and communicate effectively.

Employees with questions should consult with the Office of Environmental Health and Safety for general safe office standards and office ergonomics. Because telework is considered an extension of the USU workplace, injuries or illnesses that occur as a result of their university assignment, during scheduled work hours, and within their alternative workspace are eligible for coverage under USU [Policy 3109: Worker's Compensation](#).

USU assumes no liability for damages to an employee's real or personal property throughout telework participation.

2.3.4 Alternative Workspace Distractions

Teleworking employees are expected to be productive and available as agreed in the approved telework agreement. This includes ensuring that teleworking employees are free from unnecessary or excessive distractions that could affect productivity, attendance, and participation at virtual meetings or limit the ability to return to campus for work when requested. Examples of distractions include but are not limited to, the need to care for other adults, children, or pets in the home during agreed-upon work times. Teleworking employees should make necessary arrangements to ensure the alternative workspace is conducive to work productivity and minimizes the potential negative impact on the teleworker or other departmental colleagues.

Excessive distractions that impact productivity or ability to attend and participate in meetings may be considered a performance issue and result in the modification or termination of a telework agreement. Alternatively, employees may collaborate with their supervisor on other options such as flexible scheduling, reduction of FTE, etc.

2.3.5 Equipment and Materials

USU will provide the appropriate equipment and materials employees need to effectively perform their duties as agreed upon between the employee and their supervisor. The department may, but is not required to, duplicate resources between the normal USU workplace and the alternative work location. Telework employees may use university-owned equipment only for legitimate university purposes.

Unapproved out-of-pocket expenses will not be reimbursed. All university policies and procedures regarding equipment will apply to teleworkers as they do for all other employees (e.g., inventory controls, data security, equipment disposal, etc.)

The teleworker must exercise reasonable care for the equipment and take appropriate action to protect the items from damage, theft, or unauthorized use. The employee will be held liable for damage caused by negligence. University equipment will be maintained, serviced, and repaired by university personnel, and all safety standards will be met. Supervisors will ensure that training on equipment usage will be provided where needed. The department will document who is responsible for installing equipment and transportation to and from the normal USU workplace for repairs or services.

The telework agreement may permit employees to use their own equipment, provided such equipment has been approved and meets IT security, management, and policy requirements. In this situation, USU is not responsible for the cost, repair, or service of the employee's personal equipment unless otherwise expressly agreed to in advance of the telework agreement.

2.3.6 Costs of Telework

USU is not obligated to assume responsibility for operating costs, home maintenance, or other costs incurred by employees in their alternative work location. USU may provide a communication allowance per USU [Policy 3312: Cell Phones](#).

If a position is approved for out-of-state telework, a monthly fee shall be charged to the employing department to cover compliance costs unless such position is eligible for a [fee waiver](#). Costs related to the payment of out-of-state wages or benefits shall be borne by the department or employee if not able to be covered by the monthly fee.

2.3.7 Information Security and Data Protection

Employees must safeguard university information used or accessed from the alternative work location in accordance with Utah State University's policies. (See [USU Policy 3004: Employee Privacy and Confidentiality](#)) Telework employees must agree to follow university-approved security procedures to ensure confidentiality and security of data. Teleworking employees should not save files locally or on non-USU equipment. All computer and communications devices connected to the USU network are subject to monitoring, whether or not they are owned or operated by USU. The teleworker must notify university personnel immediately if any unauthorized access to university systems occurs. For additional information about information security and data protection see policies:

- Policy 5201: Appropriate Use of Computing, Networking, and Information Resources
- Policy 5200: Information Security
- Policy 5203: Internal Bulk Email
- Policy 5204: Banner Identification Number
- Policy 5205: Network Monitoring and vulnerability Scanning Policy
- Policy 3016: Data Privacy
- Policy 5207: Institutional Email Service
- Policy 5209: University Website Policy
- Policy 5208: Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility

2.3.8 Intellectual Property

Intellectual property created by USU employees within the scope of their employment, regardless of their work location, falls under the scope of USU [Policy 4106: Intellectual Property](#).

3008.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

.1 Teleworker

- Establish a work environment that is safe and free from distractions.
- Carry out the agreed-upon work duties while working at the alternative work location.
- Be productive and available during agreed upon work hours.
- Be responsible for any tax implications that affect telework.
- Report to the normal USU workplace as scheduled or requested.
- Safeguard all sensitive or confidential information.

.2 Supervisor

- Consult with the department head/director and the Office of Human Resources to determine if telework arrangements are appropriate. Supervisors must ensure that telework decisions are made for appropriate, nondiscriminatory reasons and provide clear benefits to USU operations.
- Require employees who request a telework arrangement to sign the telework agreement and then send a copy of the signed agreement to the Office of Human Resources.
- Work with the employee to set clear expectations, requirements, availability, communication protocols and methods, engagement, etc., to ensure the department's needs are met and that the employee may succeed.
- Clarify on-site and off-site schedule requirements and provide as much notice as practicable for call-back situations for on-site meetings or work needs.
- Develop a means to accurately record hours worked and evaluate work performance.
- Meet with the Out-of-State Telework Eligibility Committee if the employee requests to work out of state.

.3 Department Head/Director & Dean/Vice President

- Approve, deny, or revoke any telework agreement.
- Ensure that telework decisions are made for appropriate, nondiscriminatory reasons, provide clear benefits to USU operations, and are handled equitably across departments.

.4 Office of Human Resources

- Answer questions, provide guidance as needed, and file telework agreements.
- Chair the telework eligibility committee and provide compliance support to supervisors employing out-of-state employees.

3008.4 REFERENCES

- [Utah Executive Order No. 2021-03](#)
- [Utah Executive Order No. 2021-04](#)
- [A New Workplace: Modernizing Where, How, and When Utah Works](#)

3008.5 RELATED USU POLICIES

- [USU Policy 3001: Setting Expectations and Managing Performance](#)
- [USU Policy 3004: Employee Privacy and Confidentiality](#)
- USU Policy 3016: Data Privacy
- [USU Policy 3109: Worker's Compensation](#)
- [USU Policy 3203: Overtime](#)
- [USU Policy 3312: Cell Phones \(Communication Allowance\)](#)
- [USU Policy 4106: Intellectual Property](#)
- USU Policy 5201: Appropriate Use of Computing, Networking, and Information Resources
- USU Policy 5200: Information Security
- USU Policy 5203: Internal Bulk Email
- USU Policy 5204: Banner Identification Number
- USU Policy 5205: Network Monitoring and vulnerability Scanning Policy
- USU Policy 3016: Data Privacy
- USU Policy 5207: Institutional Email Service
- USU Policy 5209: University Website Policy

- USU Policy 5208: Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility

3008.6 DEFINITIONS

- **Alternative Work Locations.** Approved locations, other than a USU workplace, where official university business is performed. The most common alternative work location is the employee's home.
 - **Surge Telework.** Work done by employees whose position has been identified as telework eligible and/or a position identified as able to telework temporarily for red air days or other special circumstances (e.g., predicted heavy snowfall, etc.) as approved by the appropriate campus leader. Not all positions qualify for surge telework.
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- **Telework.** A remote work arrangement that allows an employee to work in an alternative work location for part, or all of, their regular work schedule. Other terms synonymous with telework are "telecommuting" or "remote work."
 - **Teleworker.** A university employee who has been approved to work at an alternative work location, other than a university location, on a regular basis.
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Information below is not included as part of the contents of the official policy. It is provided only as a convenience for readers/users and may be changed at any time by persons authorized by the president.

RESOURCES

Guidance

- [Utah Department of Environmental Quality Air Quality Forecast](#)

Related Forms and Tools

- [Telework Agreement](#)

POLICY HISTORY

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