

Department Planning Tool for Alternative Work Arrangement

We encourage and support the implementation of remote and flexible work arrangements when they have a neutral or positive impact on a department's operations, budget, delivery of services, and distribution or flow of work.

While there are benefits of remote and flexible work arrangements, employees and supervisors who are considering and making these requests must also carefully consider the arrangement's operational impact and its ability to support high performance by both the employee and the department.

Department:

Department Head:

Senior Staff Member:

The following questions and guidance is designed to help department heads consider how remote and flexible work arrangements might function in their department. Each department must draft a framework document to describe how operational needs and services will be met.

You do not need to respond to each question separately but themes should be addressed in your narrative.

What positions in your area might be eligible and/or interested in remote or flexible work?

Are similarly situated employees and jobs being thought of fairly and consistently? If you are not considering an alternative work arrangement for an individual based on performance, are those concerns documented?

What are the department's expectations as they relate to employee visibility or accessibility?

Even if an employee can fulfill all the specific expectations and objectives of the job under an alternative work arrangement, consideration must be given to any burdens the requested arrangement places on others in the department and any inadvertent barriers it creates to the employee's accessibility in meeting colleagues' and constituents' needs. Including specific steps to help alleviate or address those concerns will be an important factor in a successful arrangement.

Will others perceive the arrangement as fair?

Consider whether approving the request will be perceived as fair, or if approval will open the door to the appearance of favoritism or discrimination.

How will the expectations and objectives of the position be met?

Performance expectations, objectives, and standards should remain the same or be enhanced by an alternative work arrangement, especially as they relate to the interactions the employee may have with students, faculty, staff, and other constituents in the course of the work.

Will the arrangement result in any additional expenses to the department?

In most cases, an arrangement that results in additional cost to the department is not feasible, unless the additional expense can be offset in some way that can be quantified. The request should address possible additional costs and include plans for offsetting those expenses.

Operational considerations:

1. How will employees adjust to not being able to interact as easily with others?
2. How will the employees conduct work or participate in meetings and events that would customarily involve face-to-face contact?
3. Although an individual employee may be confident about their increased productivity working remotely, will the location away from the office affect the productivity of others who rely upon the employee?
4. When will the department be open? What will the department's standard office hours be? Will the department have anchor days or weeks when all members of the department will work on site?
5. Will remote employees be expected to be available at specific times for phone calls, or to respond to instant messages and emails?
6. What technology will be needed?
7. If there are work documents at the remote location, what will happen if those documents are urgently needed at the office?

Once departmental standards are established, employees will draft individual proposals for their supervisor/department head to review. Upon approval by the department head, it will be sent to the department's senior staff member, Human Resources (HR), and the Office for Information Technology (OIT). HR and OIT will submit their input on the impact of the arrangement directly to the department head and the member of senior staff.

Approval is wholly at the discretion of the supervisor, the department head, and the member of senior staff to whom the department reports, with input from HR (and/or College Counsel) to ensure compliance with applicable labor laws.