



Telecommuting

Policy Type: Administrative
Responsible Office: VCU Human Resources
Initial Policy Approved: 10/01/2000
Current Revision Approved: 08/06/2015

Policy Statement and Purpose

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) is interested in using new technologies and ideas, including offsite work where appropriate, to ensure that cost-effective methods are being utilized to provide quality service and to meet the needs of its workforce.

Noncompliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. VCU supports an environment free from retaliation. Retaliation is prohibited against any employee who brings forth a good faith concern, asks a clarifying question or participates in an investigation.

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Who Should Know This Policy

All classified and wage (hourly) employees and their managers are responsible for knowing this policy and familiarizing themselves with its contents and provisions.

Definitions

Offsite

This term means an alternate, pre-approved work site in the Commonwealth of Virginia that may include the employee's home or satellite office where official university business is performed.

Sensitive Data

This term refers to sensitive data, as identified in the VCU Data Classification Standard and the VCU Information Security Standard, which includes the following:

- Education – student records
- Financial records
- Contracts/grants information
- Social security numbers
- Credit card/debit card numbers
- Driver's license or state/federal ID numbers
- Personnel – employee records
- Personally identifiable data
- VCUCard ID number
- Application and database IDs (log-on credentials)
- Health insurance policy numbers
- Protected health information
- Medical or mental history
- Medical treatment or diagnoses information
- Research and intellectual information
- Technical information (including passwords)
- Facility and plant operations security information (floor plans, building control systems and communications systems)
- Investigative and court information

Telecommuting

This term refers to a work arrangement in which the employee is approved to perform his/her job duties away from the usual place of work.

Contacts

VCU Human Resources officially interprets this policy and is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions as required by the policy *Creating and Maintaining Policies and Procedures* through the appropriate governance structures. Please direct policy questions to VCU Human Resources.

Policy Specifics and Procedures

1. **Eligibility:** Although many university positions do not lend themselves to telecommuting, some positions may be suitable for offsite hours on a long-term or short-term basis. Accordingly, VCU will consider and, in the sole discretion of management, allow telecommuting

for employees where such employment arrangements are deemed to be in the best interest of the university and its mission. Generally, employees who are non-exempt from the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and those who provide face-to-face service (i.e., police officers), direct service/care (i.e., clinical or research personnel) or who are designated to work during inclement weather or emergency closings are not eligible for telecommuting agreements.

The manager must evaluate individual jobs for telecommuting suitability and employees for performance and reliability before approving the arrangement. Such positions must have activities that can be measured, be done independently, be easily moved to an offsite or non-office environment, have observable beginning and end points and not require special equipment or information that is available only at the work site. It is recommended that managers use the Telecommuting Eligibility Checklist or contact VCU Human Resources for assistance in determining and documenting specific position eligibility.

- 2. Guidelines:** Offsite work carries with it additional responsibilities for the university and its employees to demonstrate that work duties are properly performed and legal requirements for compensation and safety are met. Telecommuting is not intended to serve as a substitute for child or adult care.

The university will compensate employees as required by FLSA guidelines and university policies and practices for hours worked. An employee's compensation and benefits do not change when telecommuting.

Normally, the employee will supply his/her own equipment to perform work duties offsite. If the equipment is specialized or to be used offsite on a long-term basis and the offsite work provides substantial benefits for VCU, the university may agree to install needed components. Where appropriate and reasonable, the employee also may be reimbursed for work-related long distance or data calls.

Management retains the right to revoke a telecommuting agreement due to changing business and/or staffing needs.

- 3. Department Responsibilities:** Work performed offsite is considered official state business; therefore, managers must establish a specific written description of offsite job duties and performance and work expectations using the Telecommuting Agreement form. The duties and expectations should be fully discussed with the employee prior to implementation of the agreement. The manager will monitor deadlines and work produced and will measure and evaluate offsite work performance.

The manager must establish clear procedures to track time worked and to document hours worked by employees covered under FLSA.

Telecommuting agreements require approval of the immediate supervisor. Telecommuting agreements for employees who work offsite 20 hours per week (50%) or more also require approval from the appropriate dean, director or department head.

- 4. Employee Responsibilities:** Employees telecommuting must comply with all state and university policies, practices and guidelines. They must notify their supervisor immediately of

any situation that interferes with their ability to perform their jobs. If children or adults needing care are in the offsite work location, another person must be present to provide the care.

Employees telecommuting are responsible for the security and confidentiality of any information, documents, records or equipment in their possession. When the offsite work involves remote access of the university's computer network, remote users must abide by the university's security standards relating to network and computer usage, and remote access. All remote access involving data stored on the university network requires encryption. Sensitive data must not be stored on the employee's personal computer offsite. The university will provide the encryption mechanism that is appropriate for the level of access and the data involved. Sensitive data should not be included in email messages unless there is some form of encryption being used. See the VCU security website at <http://www.ts.vcu.edu/askit/essential-computing/information-security/information-security-resources/how-do-i-encrypt-my-email/> for recommendations on email encryption and for further information on encryption for remote access of university data. Any exceptions to university security standards must be approved by VCU's Information Security Officer.

Employees must certify that the offsite work environment is safe, and they must practice the same safety habits they would use on-site at VCU.

Prior supervisory approval for overtime is required and failure to obtain it may be addressed under the state policy on Standards of Conduct.

Employees telecommuting generally are not affected in the event of a university closing due to inclement weather or other emergency, which means they would be expected to continue working. If unable to do so, the employee must contact his/her supervisor for guidance.

Forms

1. VCU Telecommuting Agreement
<http://www.hr.vcu.edu/about/forms.html#employment>
2. VCU Telecommuting Eligibility Checklist
<http://www.hr.vcu.edu/about/forms.html#employment>

Related Documents

1. Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
<http://www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-flsa.htm>
2. State Policy 1.60, Standards of Conduct
http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/docs/default-source/hrpolicy/pol1_60.pdf?sfvrsn=2
3. State Policy 1.61, Telework
http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/docs/default-source/hrpolicy/pol1_61.pdf?sfvrsn=2

4. VCU Data Classification Standard
http://www.ts.vcu.edu/media/technology-services/content-assets/documents/VCU_DataClassificationStandard_Final.pdf
5. VCU Overtime Guidelines
<http://www.hr.vcu.edu/media/hr/documents/OvertimeGuidelines.pdf>
6. VCU Information Security Standard
<http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/VCU%20Information%20Security%20Standard.pdf>

Revision History

January 16, 2009	<i>Telecommuting</i>
August 21, 2012	<i>Telecommuting</i>
August 06, 2015	<i>Telecommuting</i>

FAQs

There are no FAQs associated with this policy and procedures.