

MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: PERSONNEL
Policy 7XX – Remote Work Arrangements
Adopted: XXXXX XX, 2022

Board Policy:

A. Policy Statement:

The institutions and agencies of the Montana University System are committed to providing students and the public with educational services known for excellence, affordability, and accessibility. To promote and maintain strong MUS programs, a core principle of the system is to have a majority of teaching and educational services provided on campus for students and university community members, live and in person. At the same time, the MUS recognizes that business needs sometimes can be served efficiently and effectively by capable personnel who work from off-campus locations.

Remote work is the practice of employees performing their university jobs from a location other than a central office on campus or premises operated by the MUS. Such locations could include an employee's home, a co-working or other shared space, a private office, or any other place outside the traditional office building on campus. Allowing for flexibility in the workplace for remote work opportunity provides a strategy to recruit and retain highly capable employees to serve students and the public with excellence.

Any Remote Work Arrangement (RWA), whether temporary or in place for an extended period, must advance the university's mission and shall not reduce or impede the quality of instruction or service provided to students, co-workers, or members of the university community. Working remotely is not a right and not every position is eligible for an RWA. It is a privilege extended at management discretion, and, if approved by an authorized supervisor, is subject to individualized conditions that may be amended or revoked.

Campus administration shall develop guidelines, forms, and procedures that are necessary for administering this policy at the institutional level. The campus guidelines, forms, and procedures shall be subject to approval by the campus President, Chancellor, or Dean/CEO of Great Falls or Helena College.

B. Types of Remote Work Arrangements

1. Temporary Remote Work Location (10 or fewer workdays)
A temporary RWA allows a remote option for 10 or fewer workdays. This is subject to approval by the immediate supervisor and the next-level manager. An RWA agreement is not required for this temporary situation, but the details of the arrangement must be documented in writing. For example, documentation may include email between the employee, the supervisor, and the next-level manager.

2. Hybrid Remote Work Arrangement
A hybrid RWA allows a remote option that provides occasional work from an off-campus site (e.g., home or other off-campus location) for part of the employee's assignment, with the remainder of the work being performed on campus. The schedule for each location must be consistent and approved by the immediate supervisor. An RWA agreement is required for a hybrid RWA and must be approved by the supervisor and appropriate appointing authority as designated in campus policy. A regularly scheduled hybrid RWA may not exceed 40% of the stated full-time-equivalency (FTE) for the position. For example, an employee in a 1.0 FTE position who normally works five consecutive days per week could work up to two days per week remotely. The employee must be able to report to campus within four hours' notice by the supervisor. It is the responsibility of the individual approving the agreements to ensure that

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departments and work units are adequately staffed throughout the week (e.g., Mondays and Fridays should not be the only days for RWA).

3. Remote Work Location

This is an option where the employee works from home or from another off-campus location that is not operated by the MUS for all available work. For academic faculty, this arrangement is limited to, but not necessarily required of, those academic faculty who are hired to teach solely in online degree programs. The decision to recommend a RWA for academic faculty to teach solely online is at the discretion of the campus chief academic officer.

C. Accountability

Remote work shall not reduce or impede the quality of service or instruction provided to students, co-workers, and the public. Remote work is a privilege limited to certain positions pursuant to the authorized manager's discretion. Remote work arrangements can be denied, amended, or revoked, and such action does not constitute a basis for a grievance, reconsideration, or appeal. The administration of this policy must comply with all other applicable Board of Regents policies and pertinent state and federal employment statutes.

Related principles:

1. Leaders (managers and supervisors) must be engaged and present whether remote or in-person for the success of the personnel and units they lead.
2. Faculty and staff who provide and support in-person education and services must be engaged and present to deliver a successful educational experience.
3. MUS institutions and agencies are part of Montana state government and must maintain offices open to the public from Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except on authorized state holidays.
4. Remote Work Arrangements (RWA) must have a cost-savings or cost-neutral impact on university finances.
5. Schedules for positions that support university infrastructure, health, life, and safety must ensure delivery of in-person services that meet the needs of the university community.
6. The RWA is a non-traditional working arrangement that maintains the university's teaching, research, scholarly, creative, entrepreneurial, service and business needs without disruption or interruption.
7. Every RWA requires ongoing documentation to prove that the arrangement includes adequate supervisory contact, employee accountability, and a level of service to students and the university community that is equivalent to or better than in-person / on-campus work performance.
8. The RWA is not a right. It is a limited discretionary privilege subject to conditional approval on a case-by-case basis, which may be denied, amended, or revoked by the employer at any time.
9. Employees with a RWA are subject to all university and MUS policies and procedures, and federal and state laws.
10. Standards of performance are the same whether working on-campus or remotely.
11. Denial, amendment, or revocation of an employee's request to work remotely under this policy shall not be subject to any grievance, reconsideration, or appeal.
12. Any Hybrid Remote Work Arrangement or Remote Work Location (Section B2 and B3 of this policy) in which the employee's work site is outside the state of Montana is subject to approval by a campus Vice President or Vice Chancellor (or Associate Dean in the case of Great Falls or Helena Colleges) in consultation with the campus chief human resources officer.

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13. All Remote Work Arrangements shall include documentation of university-owned equipment and any personal equipment that is used to perform work duties.
14. Employees are responsible for completing any required work location assessment and training by university Information Technology or Risk Management authorities and for complying with related university policies.
15. Employees shall hold MUS information that is received or stored at remote work locations in strict confidence except as required for the performance of job duties in accordance with MUS policy and state or federal statutes.