



EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Flexible Work Arrangements for Staff: Operational Framework

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Introduction

Recognizing that supporting students and their education is at the center of our work, Eastern Michigan University aims for inclusive excellence in its operations, the academic experience of its students, and the employment experience it provides its employees.

Remote and flexible work – time-tested approaches to variations on how, where, and when work is performed – in roles and units that are amenable to such work practices contribute to EMU’s excellence by enabling employees to perform consistently at the highest levels while sustaining and exceeding the levels of customer service that stakeholders expect. Within a campus-based community, the roles and functions of some employees will always require physical presence and standard hours. But many others can use flex and remote work principles and practices to work together efficiently and effectively within their teams to meet the University’s, and its students’ academic and business needs.

In the following Framework, EMU intends to encourage and even maximize the value and use of remote and flexible work for all constituents, and to provide guidance for accountability, collaboration, implementation and the use of both flexible scheduling and remote work.

These guidelines (now referred to as the Framework), first produced in 2020, have now gone through a revision, after more than a year of COVID-19 induced experience, to keep them current with the needs of the University, its students, and its employees and to build on our knowledge of what works well. Now, as we enter a new phase of resuming some familiar practices and experimenting with new ones, EMU will use flexible and remote or virtual work as dynamic tools both to discover and to invent our workplace of the future.

There are obviously some emerging questions that will only be resolved over time. These include concerns about maintaining the spontaneous interactions between mission-driven people and teams, savings and costs associated with a redesign of office space and occupancy, distribution and provisioning of resources, and the interests of the individual employee in the context of the needs of the entire EMU community. Considerations of these concerns require a change mindset, a sense of personal responsibility, and a tolerance of a future that has yet to come concretely into focus.

To successfully integrate new ways of working, leaders and managers will need to examine and re-ground themselves in their unit’s core purpose, objectives, deliverables, and student needs and — in consultation with their teams — evaluate how their work has evolved in a mostly remote world.

Through this team-focused approach, leaders and managers are charged with considering available remote and flex work frameworks for the future and with integrating employee proposals where possible and appropriate to establish their team’s best-fit options.

Scope & Purpose

This framework is intended to apply to staff operating units within the University. The purpose of this Framework is to set forth guidelines and parameters for departmental or unit flexible and remote work arrangements. This framework is not intended to apply to individualized requests that should be addressed under the Telecommuting and Remote Work Policy. Supervisors wishing to implement flexible work arrangements pursuant to this Framework are expected to review their plans with departmental and/or divisional leadership. Ultimately, the Executive Council member responsible for the area must submit a consolidated proposal to the Committee for Workforce Planning that describes the flexible work arrangements that are being suggested within their Division.

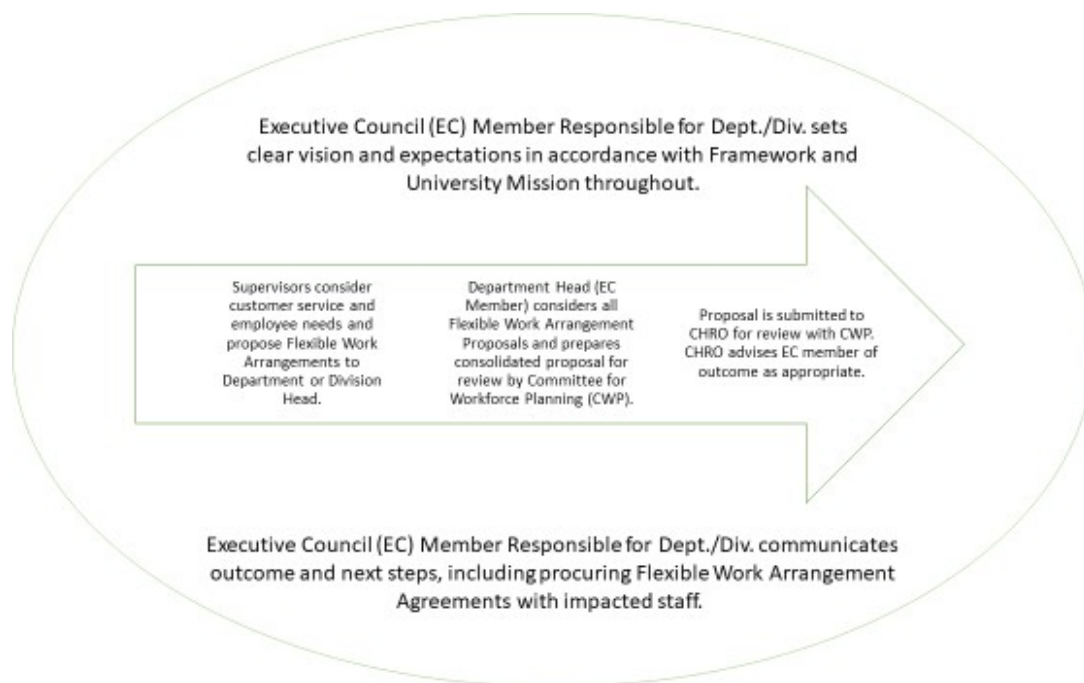
Flexible Work Arrangement Guiding Principles

These principles were thoughtfully considered in the development of this operational Framework and will serve the campus community as it develops the implementation of remote and flexible work:

- **The work drives decisions about where, when, and how it should be done.**
 - Consider both individual and collective productivity and how we provide support to all stakeholders in each decision that we make.
 - Prioritize work locales, methodologies, and practices that best support the advancement of the University's mission.
 - Assess the impact of remote & flexible work arrangements on reach and responsiveness to the needs of students, staff, faculty and/or community members. This must include consideration of in-person office visitation levels and the ability of staff to support the same.
- **Broad University-level operational, legal, and policy guidelines inform departmental or unit level solutions.**
 - Administrative leaders in collaboration with their Executive Council representative define how best to utilize the University guidance to meet the needs of their department, division, or school.
 - Enhance leadership development to help leaders manage/supervise groups of employees working in a hybrid environment.
- **Equity, diversity, and inclusion are considered at every step.**
 - Honor our commitment to community and belonging by

- recruiting and retaining diverse students, faculty, and staff and reducing disparities among underrepresented groups.
- Ensure that our framework continues to encourage employees who may need reasonable accommodations to perform the essential functions of their jobs to engage with the University to consider flexible work arrangements.
 - Use flexible policies to attract and retain employees from diverse backgrounds that may have been less interested in working at EMU in the past.
 - Normalize flexibility to enhance wellbeing and assure fairness in all employment decisions.

Flexible Work Arrangement Development and Approval Process



Ongoing Assessment

Recognizing that the expansion of flexible work arrangements is likely to be unprecedented, it is expected that there will be ongoing review, assessment, and adjustment of initial plans and programs. In this regard, initial arrangements may be considered pilot programs. Central to the ongoing assessment will be the continuity of acceptable customer service levels, team performance, and employee satisfaction. Minor adjustments to departmental flexible work arrangements that are consistent with this Framework and the University Mission do not need re-approval. Significant adjustments that have a material impact on operations or significantly

alter the scope of the arrangements must be approved by the Committee for Workforce Planning.

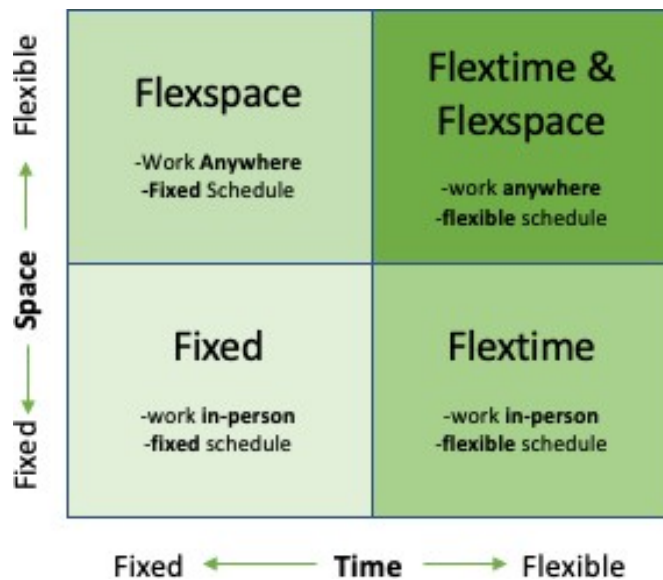
Remote & Flexible Work Definitions

These approaches to scheduling are defined individually but may be combined if appropriate for any individual work arrangement:

- **Flex Schedule/Flex Time.** A flex schedule/flex time refers to an arrangement that permits variations in starting and departure times, but does not alter the total number of hours or days worked in a work week.
- **Compressed Work Week.** A compressed work week refers to a schedule where the total number of hours worked each week are conducted in fewer than five full workdays. The most common compressed schedule is four 10-hour workdays per week.
- **Remote Work/Flex Space (Hybrid Arrangements).** Remote work refers to an arrangement that allows an employee to work at home, from another off-site location or hoteling from another location on EMU's campus. This could include working from a remote location all of the time, on an occasional basis, or a hybrid arrangement where the employee's schedule includes a blend of remote work and work at a University location.

Flexible Work Options

Flexible work arrangements consider both the space and time options, from fixed to flexible, which can be summarized in four quadrants:



Flexible Work Arrangement Elements

Space

Fixed On Campus: work in-person on-site in a traditional workplace

Flex space: work anywhere (home, other designated space) using virtual technology; also known as remote work or work from home or hoteling

Hybrid space: combine fixed and flexible space options

Time

Fixed time: work a fixed, consistent schedule

Flextime: work can be completed using flex schedule/flex time or compressed work week. It can include setting work hours that might differ from the official business hours for a college, department, or unit, including, but not limited to:

- Set hours worked, such as 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Adding break times to the day, such as working from 7:00 to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Hybrid time: combine fixed and flexible time options, such as a five-day

schedule during the academic year and compressed four-day work week during the summer

Departmental Considerations

The type of work that needs to be accomplished may result in members of a department, division or school having different space and time options across its members. Departmental or divisional flexible work arrangements must be approved by the Committee for Workforce Planning or other delegate body as determined by the University President.

Traditional team: everyone in the department works in-person on the same schedule

Flex team: everyone in the department uses flextime and/or flexspace options

Hybrid team: the division has a variety of fixed, flexspace/flextime, and hybrid space and time options within the same team or department.

Working Outside of Michigan

The University will—in most cases—expect employees to live within a reasonably commutable distance from our campus in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Employees who are otherwise approved to work remotely may be required to report to campus upon reasonable notice, and therefore, living outside of a reasonable commuting distance is not typically feasible. There may be some exceptions subject to approval by the Chief Human Resources Officer in consultation with senior leadership as appropriate:

- When the employee is living out of state temporarily and plans to move or return to Michigan within a timeframe approved by their supervisor.
- When the department, division or school demonstrates that the skills/talents of that employee are difficult to find in Michigan.
- When the nature of the work requires it to be carried out somewhere other than Michigan.
- When the work is uniquely positioned such that location has no or minimal relevance e.g. specifically approved online teaching assignments.
- When the work outside of a commutable distance is short term (less than five consecutive University business days) and is approved by the leader responsible for the division. *Note: In considering such requests, the leader should take into account whether the individual's role would otherwise require them to be on campus during any such period of time.*

When employees work outside of Michigan, it requires both the University and the employee to accept accountability and to abide by the unique employment and tax laws of the state of residence. Therefore, any new hires or relocations that would potentially result in out-of-state work beyond a reasonable commuting distance must be approved by the most senior leader of a unit in consultation with Human Resources. An employee approved for such an arrangement is responsible for notifying payroll so that payroll taxes may be paid accordingly. The approval and continuity of these arrangements are solely within the discretion of the University and are subject to change or revocation at any time.

Departments, divisions, and schools should use the **Out of State Departmental Reporting Form** to report employees who are permanently working outside of Michigan for payroll purposes only.

- The form should be submitted to payroll.questions@emich.edu

only by a department head, who must sign the form or email it directly with an electronic signature. Forms cannot be accepted directly from employees.

- Section B of the form must include the address where the employee is doing the work.
- Section B must also include the dates the employee will be working outside of Michigan. If the employee will not return to Michigan, please note that on the form.

Non Instructional Staff-International Work

The University is generally unable to support employees working for sustained periods of time in countries outside of the U.S. Sustained work generally refers to a time period that would, at minimum, require a visa for work in the alternate country as opposed to situations involving short term international travel for University business. Questions about the potential for an employee to work internationally should be directed to the divisional vice president who will consult with Human Resources and Legal Affairs.

Technology, Equipment, and Ergonomics

Technology

The employee is responsible for adequate internet and phone service when working in a remote/hybrid work arrangement. Employees may use EMU's Jabber (VoIP phone application) or office phones must be forwarded to their remote location phone, mobile phone or voicemail-to-email.

Departments, divisions, and schools will determine the equipment they will provide to those on remote/hybrid work arrangements based on the work being performed. Please see the [Technology Resources for Remote Work](#) document for assistance in successfully establishing a remote work experience. The University is committed to moving towards an IT equipment refreshment program that is focused on laptops and other peripherals that support remote work in a manner that is realistic given the University's budget requirements.

The University is not responsible for operating costs of any personal equipment, home maintenance of personal equipment, or any other incidental costs associated with an employee working in a remote/hybrid work arrangement. Employees who are required to print out documents as part of their regular working duties should consider batching print jobs so that they may be run on campus or working the need to print jobs on campus into their flexible work arrangement. Unfortunately, the University does not reimburse employees for the costs associated with maintaining at home printers e.g. toner, ink cartridges, etc.

Employees are required to comply with all University policies, including [data security requirements](#), regardless of where they are working.

University Equipment Use

The University has outlined [Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources](#). Equipment, supplies, and other property provided by the University are provided exclusively for use in providing services to the University. University equipment may not be used by any person not employed by the University (including household members), except as may be required for business-related reasons.

All employees moving university computer equipment off-campus to work in a hybrid/remote working arrangement must have on file with IT and/or their supervisor a [Computer Equipment Checkout Form](#).

Employees who are approved to work remotely are responsible for providing a suitable work space. Employees may not generally take furniture or fixtures from the University to furnish their home office.

Ergonomics

Proper ergonomics while working remotely are critical for well-being. All employees should make certain their workstations are set up to ensure comfort and safety. Employees who have specific questions should discuss those with their Supervisors. .

Additional information may be found at the following sites:

[Environmental Health and Safety](#)

[Video Display Terminal & Office Ergonomics](#)

[Tips from the Human Factors Ergonomics Society](#)

[E-Learning Course: Ergonomic Tips for Working From Home](#)

Flexible Work Arrangements and Disability Accommodations

If an employee is seeking a remote or flexible work arrangement to manage a health or care-giving related situation for themselves or a family member, the employee should consult with HR. The University is committed to complying with all applicable laws and regulations such as the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Further, the University is committed to making reasonable accommodations to remove barriers such that

employees may perform the essential functions of their jobs.

Fair Labor Standards Act and Timekeeping

Time Tracking for Non-Exempt Employees:

- It is critical that non-exempt employees who work on site or remotely track all hours worked and are paid for those hours.
- A consistent schedule of remote work hours and days is desirable to ensure regular and predictable contact with University staff and others. For some positions, more flexibility in work hours and days is feasible.
- A specific work schedule will be stated in the [Remote Work Agreement](#).
- Non-exempt employees must accurately report time and leave in my.emich.edu
- A non-exempt employee (as outlined by the Fair Labor Standards Act) shall not work overtime without prior supervisory approval. The employee understands that failure to obtain approval for overtime work may result in discontinuance of working remotely and other disciplinary action.
- Leave must be requested and used pursuant with established University policies. Employees must obtain supervisory approval before taking accrued and available leave.

Exempt Employees

Due to the nature of the exemption for overtime, there are inherent differences around how exempt employees manage their time. These differences must be taken into consideration when developing a plan for flexible work.

Leaders should consider the following in developing flexible work arrangement when thinking through the needs of exempt employees:

- **Making decisions on flexible work.** The decision on hybrid work arrangements for exempt work is based on the types of work that must be accomplished and how to best do so, just as with non-exempt work.
- **Adapting to find creative solutions.** Provided that it is within an approved Flexible Work Arrangement Plan, departments have flexibility as to when and where exempt work is done, so long as the needs of customers, stakeholders, and the overall University are being met. Employees' preferences may also be considered, but the work itself is the most important consideration in determining time and space.

- **Focusing on their performance and tracking goals.** Supervisors should set goals with each employee through the University's performance management process, and frequently discuss these goals throughout the year. These routine conversations should ensure that progress is made towards goals, manage expectations, and allow adjustment of goals when necessary and strategic.
- **Tracking of time.** Exempt, salaried employees do not track or submit specific hours. The focus is on the departmental and University needs and ensuring that the necessary work is being performed within reasonable expectations. Full-time exempt employees, like non-exempt employees, however, are generally expected to work a full-time complement of time each work week.
- **Agreeing on a core set of hours.** Whether staff is working remotely or in-person, agreeing on a core set of hours is also recommended. This intentional planning will allow for presence and support during collaborative or collective work, as well as facilitate work requiring regular interactions between employees. A core set of hours can establish a reasonable expectation of availability that would support these needs, regardless of employees' locations.

Transportation Costs

University employees are responsible for the regular commuting costs for travel to their primary campus or office location regardless of their flexible work arrangement. Employees should consult the [University Travel Procedures](#) for information related to traveling on University business.

Caregiving Considerations

- School, childcare, and other caregiving arrangements are unique to each family.
- While remote or hybrid work is not a substitute for childcare, departments should, where it is possible to ensure continuity of services and operations, consider solutions for employees that may give them the flexibility to meet intermittent caregiving needs such as during illness, snow days, etc.
- Employees requesting remote or hybrid work arrangements are responsible for ensuring ongoing caregiving arrangements to allow for uninterrupted work time and focus.

Unexpected University Closures

The University's [Extreme Weather Policy](#) describes the process of closing campus, cancelling classes, or cancelling or postponing activities in the event that a situation poses a serious risk to the health, safety, or security of the University community.

Work, Operational, and Customer Service Standards

For remote employees to work together efficiently and effectively within their teams to meet the University's, and its students' academic and business needs, certain work standards must be maintained.

- ***Remote employees need to remain productive and responsive during their scheduled work hours.*** The employee is expected to maintain the same response times as if they were at their regular EMU location and will make themselves available to attend scheduled work meetings as required/requested.
- ***Remote employees are expected to maintain a presence with their department, division, or school while working remotely.*** Presence may be maintained by using appropriate technology including, but not limited to, a computer, email, telephone, messaging applications, video conferencing, and/or text messages.
- ***Personal tasks and errands should only be performed during the employee's scheduled breaks and lunches.***
- ***Supervisors should clearly communicate expectations to all remote employees.*** Weekly check-ins at a minimum should occur.
- ***Supervisors with remote employees will work to maintain a sense of a unified team utilizing online meetings and other technologies/techniques.***
- ***In-person business meetings may not be held at the employee's alternate work location unless a supervisor provides prior approval or the employee is traveling and conducting University business.***
- ***Departments are required to clearly communicate customer service standards to all stakeholders.*** On campus availability and overall office hours of operation should be posted where they may be easily found both internally and externally. Departments are responsible for submitting required operational plans as a prerequisite to the approval of departmental flexible work arrangements.

Changes & Modifications to Flexible Work Arrangements

- The University reserves the right to modify or discontinue any flexible work arrangement. An employee may also request that the elements of a flexible work arrangement be modified. Any approved modifications must be reflected in a new/updated flexible work agreement.
- This Framework is not intended to affect any rights or obligations included within any collective bargaining agreements. Flexible work arrangements are voluntary and bargained-for employees may continue to exercise any rights afforded them in collective bargaining agreements.
- Any dispute over the elements of a Remote Work Agreement will be resolved with the appropriate HR representative, based upon the principles of an equitable decision making process, and the input of the parties involved in the dispute. The decision made by HR is final, subject to any additional processes that may be available to employees through other applicable University policies, procedures, or collective bargaining agreements.

Employee Resources

Resources are available to help employees build the skills needed for successful remote and hybrid work.

- [Remote and Hybrid Work Resources](#)
- [Remote and Hybrid Work Technology Resources](#)

Leadership Resources

Resources are available to help supervisors build the skills needed to make decisions about working with flexibility and managing flexible teams.

- [Remote Work Agreement](#). (*Login with NetID, if prompted*) This form will be completed by the supervisor and employee and submitted to UHR.
- EMU Leader Job Aid: Flexible Work Arrangement Scenarios for Leaders (Link TBD)
- *Additional Job Aids in Development.*