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| Section 3 | Human Resources Policies | 02/26/01 -Originated |
| Subject 3.5 | Benefits | 08/01/08- Reviewed w/ changes -Reviewed w/o changes |
| Policy 3.1.3 | Telecommuting (Alternate Work Site) | Human Resources -Author |

Telecommuting (Alternate Work Site)

Policy

Telecommuting may be used as an alternative method of meeting UTMB’s workforce needs. This telecommuting policy applies to employees whose primary worksite is a remote location, and to anyone whose regular work schedule includes performance of a portion of their duties at a remote site. Telecommuting is a work alternative that may be offered to employees when such activity enhances the overall productivity of the work unit.

Each [telecommuting arrangement](#) must receive pre-approval by the appropriate department/program head, dean, or vice president, and the director of Human Resources or their designee. A detailed [telecommuting agreement](#) between the employee and supervisor is also required.

Telecommuting does not change the employee’s terms and conditions of employment, salary, job responsibilities, or benefits.

UTMB has the right to refuse to make telecommuting available to an employee and to terminate a telecommuting agreement at any time.

Approval Process

A written justification of “business need” or condition shall be made to the respective department/program head. A justification based on an employee requesting a telecommuting arrangement is not a sufficient “business reason.”

All approvals for telecommuting arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Approvals should be based on the position’s duties and responsibilities, as well as the employee's record of performance and other factors, each independent of one another.

The approval of an employee's telecommuting arrangement does not mean that another employee who later may fill that same position will be automatically authorized to participate in a telecommuting arrangement.

UTMB HANDBOOK OF OPERATING PROCEDURES

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**Telecommuting
Conditions of
Employment**

- Each telecommuter must sign a formal telecommuting agreement, and have a formal work schedule defining standard hours of work in which the employee's duties and responsibilities are to be performed. The same University policies and procedures should be followed regarding starting work times, lunches, breaks, and ending work times.

- Management reserves the right to visit the employee's alternate work site and will be confined to the worksite only. Managers and supervisors must have the employee's permission to enter the employee's home or work site. Refusal of permission to examine the employee's worksite, after notice from UTMB, may be grounds to terminate the telecommuting agreement.

- All Information Resources (IR) used in the performance of a telecommuters assigned job duties, must meet UTMB's minimum IR security standards. Additionally, individual departments may require telecommuters to use UTMB-owned computers, configured by Information Services for the employee's specific job duties. University equipment used in a telecommuting arrangement shall be inventoried by the respective department and signed for by the telecommuting employee.

- Telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent child or elder care. Children under the age of 13 must be under the care of an individual other than the employee while the employee is working at home.

The telecommuter is expected to set up and maintain his or her telecommuting work location in a safe, unobstructed, and clean fashion. The employee should follow basic safety precautions such as: avoiding obstructions in the work area; eliminating trip and fall hazards; ensuring proper lighting, ventilation, and furniture; and setting up the work site in a ergonomically correct fashion.

The University will not be responsible for operating costs, home maintenance, or any other incidental costs (e.g., utilities, telephone, insurance) associated with the use of the employee's residence for telecommuting, unless specifically provided otherwise in advance in writing by the head of the employee's department/program.

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**Telecommuting
Conditions of
Employment
(cont'd)**

- The telecommuter, as an employee of UTMB, is provided Workers Compensation coverage and protection for work-related accidents or illnesses, as long as the accident or illness occurs within the employee's scope of the telecommuting contract. Injured employees must notify their supervisor immediately and complete all requested documents regarding any injury.
- Management reserves the right to end the telecommuting arrangement at any time. Under most circumstances, a reasonable notice period should be provided.
- The telecommuting agreement is not a contract for employment, and the employee's status of employment shall not be changed by the telecommuting agreement.

**Management
Responsibilities**

Managers and supervisors may use the forms and checklists found in the "Telecommuting Manager's Toolkit" located on the Human Resources website to begin their telecommuting program.

Managers should establish a sound communication plan with the telecommuter, to include:

- Periodic scheduling of supervisor/employee meetings
- Attendance at regular employer-sponsored staff meetings
- Notification of office events
- Periodic performance reviews that measure results.

Management should establish with the telecommuter a place of work in the home that is principally used to perform the employee's required work.

Departmental management should establish a process of submitting hours worked.

**Employee
Responsibilities**

The telecommuter is solely responsible for entering into an agreement with his or her supervisor that details the telecommuting agreement's duration, work hours, location, pay and attendance policies, leave policy, equipment issues, liability and reimbursement policy, safety and workers' compensation issues, performance expectations and evaluations, and records.

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Employee Responsibilities, continued

The telecommuter agrees to assume complete responsibility for safeguarding all University-owned equipment which is provided for the work site. University-provided equipment for the home is not an entitlement and will vary, based on the particular job.

The telecommuter agrees not to use, or allow usage by non-University employees, of any University-owned equipment for non-University use.

The telecommuter is responsible for the safekeeping of any confidential materials, so that said confidentiality is not breached.

As per IHOP policy 9.2.6, original medical records may not be removed from UTMB property.

The telecommuter, as a pre-condition to working at home, must establish a place of work (dedicated work space) in the home that is principally used for the performance of his or her work.

The employee must return all University-owned property within two weeks at the request of his or her supervisor.

Time and Leave

The amount of time an employee is expected to work will not change due to telecommuting.

The *Texas Government Code*, [Sec. 659.018](#), prohibits a State employee from accruing equivalent compensatory time for work performed at a location other than the employee's regular place of employment or assigned duty point.

In accordance with established policies, employees must obtain supervisory approval before taking any type of leave.

All time and leave records must be maintained by departments for telecommuting employees as they are for on-site employees.