

Christopher Newport University

Policy: Alternative Work Schedules and Remote Work

Policy Number: 5090

Executive Oversight: Vice President for Finance and Planning/CFO
Contact Office: Human Resources
Frequency of Review: Annually
Date of Last Review: September 2021

A. PURPOSE

Christopher Newport is committed to a work, instruction and learning environment characterized by relationship. We encourage and expect employees to engage in collaboration, mutual support and commitment to the University community. This environment depends upon the in-person presence of our employees and students for work, instruction and learning. However, flexibility is valuable to employees and the University. Therefore, this policy is adopted to allow for alternative work schedules, alternative work hours, flexible work schedules and remote work under limited and appropriate circumstances, as tools to provide for and support the recruitment and retention of a workforce of the highest quality, promote administrative efficiencies, and encourage work/life balance, while maintaining the University's high standard of service and always meeting the administrative and operational needs of Christopher Newport.

B. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Christopher Newport University to promote work efficiencies, employee satisfaction and work/life balance by allowing its employees to work at alternative work locations for all or part of their work week or to work alternative schedules, temporarily or regularly, on a case by case basis, subject to the requirements and limitations set out below. This policy is intended to complement the University's successful culture of in-person work, learning and service and sets out the parameters for implementing these flexible employment tools. Not all positions at the University are appropriate to designate or approve for remote work or alternative work schedules. Some positions – by design and nature – cannot be considered for remote work or alternative work schedules because of the duties of the position or how the positions' work is performed.

C. DEFINITIONS

Alternative Work Location: Approved work sites other than the employee's on-campus workplace.

Alternative Work Schedule: Schedules that differ from the standard 40-hour workweek schedule. Alternative work schedules may include, but are not limited to, four 10-hour days, rotational shifts, flexible hours, and job sharing.

On Campus Workplace: An employee's University designated place of work on University operated property.

Remote Work: A defined work arrangement in which the University permits employees, under approved circumstances, to perform their usual job duties away from their on-campus workplace in accordance with a pre-approved agreement.

Remote Work Agreement: A written agreement between the University and an employee that details the terms and conditions of an employee's work away from their central workplace. Remote work agreements are required for remote work.

D. PROCEDURES FOR REMOTE WORK

1. **Identifying Positions Eligible for Remote Work:** In order to determine whether a position might be considered for remote work, the following questions must be considered:
 - a. Can the duties of the job be effectively performed outside the office or normal business hours?
 - b. Will working away from the central workplace negatively impact the University's ability to provide quality and timely service to students, fellow employees and visitors?
 - c. Do the duties of the job require face-to-face interaction?
 - d. Do the duties of the job involve independent work?
 - e. Does the employee's work result in specific, measurable work products?
 - f. Can employee performance can be measured by output, rather than time spent doing the job?
 - g. Can the security of University data and systems be assured for the work handled at an alternative work site? and;
 - h. Is the technology needed to perform the job off-site currently available?

Remote work will only be approved in response to the submission of a specific request, for a specific employee.

2. **Working Conditions Under Remote Work:** The following issues must be resolved between a supervisor and an employee before a request to allow remote work is submitted. Supervisors are encouraged to contact Human Resources for guidance when considering a remote work arrangement.

- a. **Security of Records:** Supervisors must discuss with employees which records may or may not be taken from the office and any procedures for removing and returning them. Employees are responsible for the security of all documents, data and records to which they have access. This includes hard copy files, as well as databases or electronic files.
- b. **Hours of Work:** The amount of time the employee is expected to work per pay period will not change due to participation in the remote work program. Hours of work must remain the same unless specified in the remote work agreement. The procedures for approval of overtime and the approval and use of leave also remain the same.

Non-exempt employees are responsible for reporting all hours worked each week on their timesheets. Failure to report time, as with failure to obtain approval for overtime, can result in the termination of the remote work arrangement or other disciplinary action. Supervisors should periodically remind employees about their record-keeping duties, and promptly discuss with the employee any discrepancies between the work product/availability and the hours reported.

- c. **Role and Compensation:** Employees' classification, compensation and benefits do not change upon approval of the agreement for remote work.
- d. **Use of Leave:** Remote work is not intended to be used in place of paid leave. The University may determine whether or not it is appropriate to offer remote work arrangements as an opportunity for temporary, partial, or full return to work from illness/injury or for disability accommodations pursuant to paragraph D.2. of this policy and otherwise applicable procedures.
- e. **Employee Performance:** Annual performance evaluations of employees who engage in remote work must indicate performance at or above Contributor/Meets Expectations. Additionally, the employee may not have any written disciplinary action on file.
- f. **Remote Work for Unplanned or Temporary Circumstances:** Remote work for unplanned circumstances such as school closings, family illness, etc. may be approved on a case by case basis. A supervisor may exercise discretion in determining whether an employee can accomplish at least some or part of their duties from the remote work site in such a situation on a temporary basis and when leave should be used.
- g. **Primary Care:** Remote work can be a helpful tool for employees to seamlessly continue their work and fulfill their responsibilities at home. However, it is not intended to be a substitute for regular child or adult care. An employee's total weekly hours required by the job, and agreed upon output, and availability to the University will not change due to a remote work agreement.

h. **Expenses of the Home:** The University is not responsible for providing services or operating costs (such as electricity, internet, etc.), home maintenance, or other costs incurred by employees in the use of their homes as a remote work location. Where appropriate and reasonable, the employee may be reimbursed for business-related costs associated with remote work according to the [Virginia Department of Accounts Remote Work Expense Payment Policy](#). These costs must be clarified and specified in the Remote Work Agreement.

i. **Equipment and Supplies:** University owned or issued equipment and supplies may be used at the alternative work location for work purposes only. To use University equipment at home, employees must complete an [Equipment Relocation Form](#), when removing equipment from campus. Employees are responsible for protecting University owned or issued equipment from theft, damage and unauthorized use. University owned or issued equipment used in the normal course of employment will be maintained, serviced and repaired by the agency. When employees are authorized to use their own equipment, agencies will not assume responsibility for the cost of equipment, repair, or service.

While the use of equipment, other than University equipment, by employees for remote work is permissible, the equipment must be in compliance with the current Information Technology Services (ITS) policies and requirements.

j. **Security of Records and Information:** Employees must safeguard state and University information used or accessed while working remotely and comply with all related ITS and University requirements, including required training.

k. **Liability:** The University may be responsible for job-related injuries that occur during employees' established work hours in their remote work location. However, the University assumes no responsibility for injuries occurring in the employee's at-home work space outside the agreed upon work hours, or for damages to employees' real or personal property resulting from participation in a remote work agreement. Workers compensation coverage is limited to injuries that occur in designated work areas in employees' homes or alternative work locations. Employees agree to practice the same safety habits they would use while at Christopher Newport and to maintain safe conditions in their alternative work locations. Employees must follow the normal reporting procedures for reporting work-related injury.

l. **Inspection of the Work Location:** Prior to the start of remote work, an employee must certify that the remote work location meets applicable safety guidelines. If an employee identifies a safety hazard, a University representative shall conduct an on-site inspection prior to the start of remote work.

m. **Emergency Closings:** In the event of an emergency closing, **employees working remotely shall** follow the policy on Emergency Closings.

3. **Requests, Approval Process and Work Agreements:** Requests for remote work shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests for remote work must be made in writing and include rationale, impact to the position's chief objectives, department and service delivery, number of hours requested and defined schedule, benefits to Christopher Newport, and remote work site requested. This information must be included in the [Remote Work Agreement](#), using the University's standard form.

a. **Remote Work Agreement and Approval Process:** A Remote Work Agreement must be completed and submitted with a request for approval of remote work. The request must be approved through the reporting line of supervision up to and through the appropriate Vice President, Provost or Chief of Staff and through Human Resources. Human Resources maintains the final approval and remote work agreement in their records. Individual supervisors must maintain a copy for operational use and monitoring. Approval of a Remote Work Agreement is at the sole discretion of the appropriate Vice President, Provost or Chief of Staff.

The approval of an employee's request to remote work does not mean that any employee who later may fill that same position would be authorized for remote work.

b. **Termination of the Remote Work Agreement:** Christopher Newport reserves the right to modify or terminate a remote work agreement at any time. Employees may be required to return to the work place immediately if the supervisor feels it is in the best interest of the University and/or the employee to change or end the arrangement, either permanently or temporarily. This decision is at the sole discretion of the University. Failure to follow policies, rules, procedures or directions at any time may result in the termination of the remote work agreement and/or disciplinary action.

E. PROCEDURES FOR ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES

1. **Identifying Positions Eligible for Alternative Work Schedules:** In order to determine whether or not a position might be available for alternative work schedules, the following questions must be considered:

- a. Will schedules that differ from the standard work schedule impede efficiency of agency operations or increase agency overtime liability?
- b. What are the core business hours for operations and will an alternative work schedule meet the University's business needs?
- c. What are the standard work schedules for similarly situated non-exempt employees in order to determine when overtime pay is due?
- d. Would an assignment to an alternative work schedule affect the total number of hours an employee is scheduled to work?
- e. How will meal periods and breaks be managed?

- f. How will leave and holidays be managed?
- g. How will emergency closing be managed?

For timekeeping purposes, Human Resources must be notified of employees approved to work alternative work schedules.

2. **Working Conditions under Alternative Work Schedules:** There are a variety of issues that must be resolved between a supervisor and an employee before a request for an alternative work schedule is approved. The following is a list of topics that must be considered. Supervisors are encouraged to contact Human Resources for guidance when considering an alternative work schedule.

- a. Salaried employees are expected to work the equivalent of a minimum of 40 hours per week.
- b. Management may adjust an employee's work schedule temporarily to avoid overtime liability or to meet operational needs.
- c. At management's discretion, employees' schedules may be adjusted to meet the employees' needs while fulfilling work responsibilities.
- d. Substitution of work hours for leave:
 - i. An employee taking approved annual or sick leave during the week may also be asked to work additional hours during the same week. With the approval of the employee, the agency may substitute the additional hours worked for the hours of leave, thus reducing or eliminating the need for the employee to use leave.
 - ii. Managers should ensure that employees are able to use their leave as intended within the business demands of the agency.

3. **Requests, Approval Process and Work Agreements:** Requests for an alternative work schedule shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. One-time work schedule changes may be approved by supervisors. Alternative work schedules for an extended period must be approved by the appropriate Vice President. Requests for alternative work schedules must be made and approved in writing and include rationale, impact to position's chief objectives, department and service delivery, defined schedule, and benefits to Christopher Newport.

- a. If a condition of employment, the alternative work schedule should be included when the position is advertised for recruitment.
- b. Supervisors may terminate an alternative work schedule at any time. At minimum, supervisors must give employees at least 5 business days advance notice of the date the agreement will end.

F. REFERENCES

[Department of Human Resources Management Policy 1.61 on Remote working](#)

[Department of Human Resources Management Policy 1.25 on Hours of Work](#)
[University Policy on Emergency Closings](#)
[Remote Work Agreement Form](#)

F. APPROVAL AND REVISIONS:

Approved By: President, October 12, 2021

G. NEXT REVIEW DATE: Fall 2022