



North Carolina
School of Science
and Mathematics

TELEWORKING AND FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULE GUIDELINES

This guide was adapted from the [UNC Wilmington Teleworking and Flexible Work Schedules](#), [Telework Suitability Guide for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts](#), [Telework and Remote Work Suitability Guide for Virginia Tech](#) and the [Harvard Flexwork Principles and Guidelines](#).

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Purpose

These guidelines are available to help school leadership, supervisors, and employees determine which positions and employees are well suited for regular or occasional teleworking and/or flexible work schedules.

North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) supports the use of appropriate teleworking and/or flexible scheduling work options for employees. Teleworking is the term used for describing NCSSM work at an "Alternate Work Location" other than the "Central Workplace" where official NCSSM business is performed. The [NCSSM Teleworking and Flexible Work Schedule Policy](#) outlines the requirements for compliance when supporting teleworking and flexible work schedule arrangements for Faculty, SHRA, and EHRA Non-Faculty employees. These Teleworking and Flexible Work Guidelines are designed for use in determining how to operationalize these policies in support of NCSSM's business needs while providing employee flexibility.

Guiding Principles

At NCSSM, students and student success are our top priorities; thus, administrators have established the following guiding principles for the campus community:

- **Principle #1: Safe Workspaces** – Our highest priority is creating workspaces that will promote health and safety while maximizing productivity.
- **Principle #2: The Power of Face-to-Face Interactions** – NCSSM's residential educational experience has been designed around the premise that face-to-face interactions are an important building block of our community.
- **Principle #3: Managing Teams** – Managing a successful team requires personal connection.

Operational Principles

To operationalize these guiding principles, the following operational principles will apply as parameters for which offices and employees should work on campus on a full-time or nearly full-time basis to meet student needs and to ensure students achieve success:

- Employees whose job duties include "front-facing" interactions with students that promote student engagement, student support, and student interaction should work from campus as much as possible.
- Employees whose job duties include regular participation or interactions on campus or in the community or whose responsibilities include office reception should work from campus as much as possible.
- Non-exempt employees should work directly with their managers to establish standard work hours and will be required to get prior approval for any comp or overtime. Supervisors will establish regular eight-hour workdays where applicable for employees that may operate during standard hours (i.e., typically 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM) or a flexible work schedule to expand customer service hours. Non-exempt employees who are teleworking must follow all applicable FLSA regulations for comp time.
- Supervisors managing student-serving or front-facing departments should work from campus as much as possible,

- Supervisors managing employees who have been approved for telework must have an approved teleworking agreement in place.

Suitability for teleworking/flexible work schedule

These guidelines are designed to determine how to use the NCSSM's approved teleworking and flexible work schedule agreement to support employee flexibility and department and university goals.

Teleworking

Teleworking is defined as a flexible work arrangement in which supervisors direct or permit employees to perform some or all of their job duties away from their central workplace in accordance with the same performance expectations and other approved or agreed-upon terms. A formal teleworking agreement is not required for work performed at an alternate work location for an occasional request by an employee to telework as long as the supervisor approves. As a recommended best practice, supervisors should confirm their approval of an occasional request to telework in an email.

Types of Teleworking

Telework/Teleworking:

An alternate work arrangement in which supervisors direct or permit employees to perform **all** their job duties away from their central workplace, in accordance with their same performance expectations and other approved or agreed-upon terms and requires a formal teleworking agreement.

Hybrid Telework/Teleworking:

An alternate work arrangement in which supervisors direct or permit employees to perform **some** of their job duties away from their central workplace, in accordance with their same performance expectations and other approved or agreed upon terms and requires a formal teleworking agreement.

Occasional Teleworking/Flexible Work:

An **occasional** case-by-case basis alternate work arrangement that is infrequent, and not regularly scheduled. Occasional teleworking/Flexible work can provide employees with flexibility to attend to minor personal needs at an alternate work location where work can still be performed such as, household appointment, a workplace disruption, including suspended operations or office move, or for project work, that might require uninterrupted time.

Occasional teleworking/Flexible work does not require a teleworking agreement; however, as a noted best practice, supervisors must confirm their approval of occasional teleworking in writing via email. Occasional teleworking/Flexible work is not a substitute for being absent due to an employee's own or family member's illness/injury if that situation interferes with an employee's ability to perform their work. A combination of leave/teleworking would be permissible only if approved by the supervisor. *(See page 14 of the guidelines for additional guidance.*

Flexible Work Schedules

An alternate work schedule is where hours of work are performed by individual employees outside the typical work schedule for their unit. Supervisors and managers must ensure that flexible work schedules guarantee the business needs of the department/unit can still be met in a timely manner and are communicated with the community. Flexible work schedules may include, but are not limited to, the examples listed below.

Types of Flexible Work Schedules

Split Scheduling:

Employees work a standard full-time workweek (i.e. 40 hours) with start and end times that differ from the regularly scheduled workday (ex. 6 a.m. to 3 p.m., M-F). This could also include a split schedule where the employee works a full 7, 7.5, or 8-hour day in two or more periods (ex. 6-10 a.m. and 4-8 p.m.).

Compressed Work Week:

Employees compress a full-time workload to complete all job responsibilities into fewer than five days per week (usually completing one week's work in four days, known as a "4/5" schedule) or in fewer than ten days over two weeks (usually completing two weeks' work in nine days, or "9/10").

Supervisors must pay close attention to compressed work schedules to ensure no potential payroll complications for overtime eligible employees. Flexible work schedules are not intended to limit the use of professional scheduling for FLSA exempt employees.

Factors for Determining Suitability

In order to determine if teleworking/flexible work scheduling is suitable based on business needs (no negative impact to campus services and student support), evaluation of four critical elements (where evidence exists) must be considered:

- Is the **position** under consideration conducive for a teleworking/flexible work schedule arrangement based on the position job duties and responsibilities?
- Is the **employee** in the position likely to be successful with a teleworking/flexible work schedule arrangement based on past work performance and conduct?
- Is the **employee** in the position professionally equipped to be successful in a teleworking/flexible work schedule arrangement?

Determine which positions are conducive to teleworking/flexible work schedules

A position may be conducive for a teleworking/flexible work schedule arrangement if some or most of the position duties and responsibilities can be performed away from the central workplace.

Position factors:

- The change in work location and/or hours of work should not have any negative impact on productivity, customer service, operational efficiency, or team collaboration.
- The position determination should be based on the type of work that is to be performed at the alternate work location, not just on employee preference.
- Each position should be considered individually and on its own merits based on the responsibilities of the role, connection to on-campus services and student support to determine if the work can be done at an alternate work location and/or alternate work hours.

Additional Questions to Consider:

- Does the employee's core responsibility require access to equipment, materials, and files that can only be accessed on site?
- Does the position require an on-site presence for face-to-face meetings with supervisors, other employees, students, or customers? Alternatively, can this contact be performed virtually?
 - o In addition, some positions may only lend themselves to a limited telework/flexible work assignment because many of the responsibilities must be performed at the central workplace. These positions could be considered for a hybrid teleworking assignment. Supervisors may want to consider desk and office sharing options for positions where a hybrid teleworking assignment is used.
 - o Supervisors should be creative in thinking about how facets of positions lend themselves to teleworking/flexible work schedules in their departments/units to support employee flexibility while continuing to meet business needs.

Determine the suitability of specific employees who are interested in teleworking/flexible work schedules

Once the supervisor has determined that all or some of a position's role and responsibilities can be performed outside of the central workplace and/or during alternate hours, the supervisor must determine if the employee in the position is well matched for a teleworking/flexible work assignment.

The supervisor must consider teleworking/flexible work schedule arrangement suitability on a case-by- case basis for current employees and when interviewing candidates for a position that may have teleworking/flexible work schedule arrangement opportunities.

Employees should complete the self-evaluation checklist ([Is Teleworking Right for You? Employee Self-Assessment Tool](#)) to help managers/supervisors engage in conversations with employees who are requesting a teleworking/flexible work schedule option.

Minimum requirements

At minimum, supervisors should consider the following factors as well as other operational needs in determining an employee's suitability for a teleworking/flexible work schedule option:

- Employee has no active disciplinary actions.
- Employee has a recent full-cycle performance history that has an overall performance rating of meeting or exceeding expectations in the following areas:
 - o Excellent time management and organizational skills
 - o Computer skills and technical competency to complete the required job functions independently, at an alternate work location, while understanding and maintaining the necessary security and confidentiality of all university property and data.
 - o Strong ability to work independently and with minimal supervision, prioritize responsibilities, meet deadlines.
- Employees have or can/will acquire access to secure, reliable internet service sufficient to perform position responsibilities, engage in communication, and participate in video conferences with cameras on with minimal connectivity disruptions.
- Employees have appropriate arrangements in place for personal circumstances such as child, dependent, or elder care needs.

A few things to keep in mind

Probationary Employees

Employees in their probationary period of employment (1st year for SHRA) should not be approved for a new teleworking/flexible work schedule option unless that decision was deemed necessary by the supervisor and with approval of the designated Division Approver.

- This may be waived for a new employee who was hired with a teleworking/flexible work schedule option in place as part of the recruitment for the position hired.

Communication Expectations

If the employee is not well suited for teleworking/flexible work schedules or is denied

based on a previously documented performance or conduct issue, it is best practice to communicate that reasoning to the employee.

- In this instance, the supervisor should discuss job performance and growth opportunities before the option for telework/flexible work schedule arrangements can be re-assessed in the future.
- Supervisors should keep documentation of telework/flexible work schedule agreement approvals and denials for each employee.
- Supervisors must consult with their immediate supervisor and/or HR for guidance and assistance when an employee is not approved for a teleworking/flexible work schedule assignment.

Alternate Work Location

The employee is responsible for setting up designated "office space" at their alternate work location that is:

- Safe. When setting up a workspace at an alternate work location, safety should be a primary consideration. When you are working at your alternate work location, you are responsible for ensuring that the location selected complies with certain [safety guidelines](#).
- Private to conduct NCSSM business that requires confidentiality of data and/or conversations.
- Appropriate to conduct various video conference calls, meetings and phone calls without distractions and interruptions.
- Equipped with adequate access to the internet to complete the functions of the job at an alternate work location.

Additionally, the employee should work with the ITS for remote support on NCSSM issued equipment. Employees should also be cognizant of how their designated office space at their alternate work location appears during video conference calls and meetings and must ensure anything that is viewable is business appropriate.

Documentation

Employees should work with their supervisor to establish a set telework schedule, which will be documented in the [NCSSM Teleworking and Flexible Work Schedule Agreement Form](#).

- The agreed upon work schedule for teleworking/flexible schedules should be reflected in the employees Google calendar and kept up to date.
- Employees are expected to be free from other personal responsibilities during the agreed upon telework work schedule. Teleworking should not be used as a substitution for regular or incidental child, dependent, and/or elder care needs.
- Employees who experience internet service interruptions of 30 minutes or more that impact their ability to perform their job, including being present for scheduled meetings, must notify their supervisor as well as the meeting organizer if a meeting will be missed due to internet service interruptions.
- Employees should not use teleworking to avoid the use of taking vacation leave, sick leave, FMLA, Workers' Compensation, other types of leave or for other incidental or brief periods that are best managed by use of the appropriate leave as approved by the supervisor.

Supervisor responsibility for supporting teleworking/ flexible work schedule success

The supervisor should also consider their individual management and supervision style in determining the suitability of a teleworking/flexible work schedule arrangement.

Use the [\(Telework and Flexible Work Suitability Checklist for Supervisors\)](#) to gauge how teleworking fits the employee, supervisor, business needs, and expectations for performing the duties and responsibilities of the position in totality.

Employee and supervisor resources

Once the supervisor has determined that the position, the employee, and the supervisor are all well suited for teleworking/flexible work scheduling, the next step is for the supervisor and employee to complete and review the resources listed below. The below resources provide helpful information to promote successful teleworking/flexible work schedule agreements.

- [Tips for Managing Remote Teams](#) (for supervisors - video)
- [Supporting Remote Team Members](#) (for supervisors - video)
- [5 tips for Managing Change in the Workplace](#) (Article-Harvard Business School)
- [Working in a Virtual Team](#) (Article-MindTools)
- [Can Technology Help Remote Workers to be Happier?](#) (Article-Greater Good Science Center)
- [How to Overcome Your Reluctance to Ask for Help at Work](#) (Article-Greater Good Science Center)
- [4 Reasons Why Zoom Can be Exhausting](#) (Article- Greater Good Science Center)

Tips for entering into an effective telework/flexible work schedule agreement

After determining that the position, the employee, and the supervisor are all well suited for teleworking/flexible work scheduling and both the supervisor and employee have completed their required training courses, it is time to create a teleworking/flexible work schedule agreement. The teleworking/flexible work schedule agreement is a written, signed agreement that details the specific terms and conditions by which an employee is allowed to engage in a telework/flexible work schedule agreement.

Telework/Flexible Work Schedule Agreement Overview

The teleworking/flexible work schedule agreement includes, and is not limited to, the following:

- Expectations about the schedule, specific days of the week and times that the employee will be teleworking.
- Expectations about the mode and level of communication and responsiveness

expected during the agreed upon times the employee will be teleworking. This should be from both the employee and the supervisor.

- Expectations of attendance for meetings, both virtual and on-site, and any other interactions across the university and with constituents.
- Expectations about periodic travel to and from the central workplace and the alternate work location as needed and/or upon request (note: the distance travelled is not reimbursable.)
- Expectations about documenting the work that will be performed while teleworking and metrics that will be used to determine effectiveness (deadlines, project completion, etc.).
- Expectations about communicating any changes in the agreed upon work schedule (doctor, dentist, family appointments, etc.), including that the supervisor must approve any changes in advance and the employee must adhere to established departmental processes and university policies and procedures.
- The Teleworking/Flexible Work Schedule Agreement does not automatically go with an employee in a new position nor apply when a new employee assumes a position previously done via remote/telework. A new teleworking/flexible work schedule agreement should be requested and reviewed if this situation occurs.

Employee-Supervisor Communication Expectations

Additionally, expectations for the required regular communication between the employee and supervisor should be identified, discussed, and [documented ahead of time](#). These topics should include:

- Performance management expectations and metrics of monitoring work performance.
- Alternate work location physical space arrangement and what technology is necessary to perform work functions outside of the central workplace.
- Communication tools that will be used to maintain contact including Zoom, Google Meets, Skype, email, phone, etc.
- Expectations for the employee to avoid non-work activities that could distract from completing NCSSM business during scheduled teleworking hours. Non-work activities include but are not limited to employee child, dependent and/or eldercare needs.
- Expectations for professionalism including camera being on during Zoom/Google Meets meetings, professional work attire, viewable background in meetings, etc.

Additional Communication Expectations

Finally, arrangements that assure adequate communication between employee, co-workers, supervisor, and customers must be established. For example, the employee and supervisor may:

- Establish regular check-in times or plans to email when workday begins and ends.
- Use shared calendars to post schedules of teleworkers, on-site colleagues, and managers/supervisors.
- Use basic communication tools such as cell phone, landline, email, instant messaging, and/or chat, and consider using NCSSM-supported collaborative

tools such as Meets and Zoom.

- Coordinate staff meetings and telework schedules, promoting team cohesion and social interaction; it may be necessary for the teleworker to come to the workplace for such events.
- Establish methods for including the teleworker/flexible worker in on-campus meetings.
- Supervisors should develop a communication plan and expectations using the [NCSSM: Job Aide: Blended Team Communication Plan](#).

Develop the teleworking and flexible work schedule agreement

Once all the details about expectations have been discussed and agreed upon, the employee completes the [NCSSM Teleworking and Flexible Work Schedule Agreement Form](#) on the My NCSSM website.

NCSSM's position, to the greatest extent practicable, is to employ individuals who reside within or in close proximity to the state of North Carolina and from a place of residence that is within a reasonable commuting distance of the central workplace. The designated Division Approver in consultation with Tax Compliance and Payroll must ensure compliance with tax and other regulations in advance of approving any teleworking assignment where an employee will be based out of state (i.e., residence in a bordering state outside of NC and within commuting distance of NCSSM).

Alternate work location equipment

- NCSSM will provide equipment in accordance with each employee's responsibilities. This usually includes a laptop computer, monitor, mouse, keyboard, headset, and NCSSM phone number. In addition, a printer may be provided if deemed necessary by the supervisor.
- Copiers, scanners, fax machines, shredders, white boards, office chairs, and other traditional office supplies and equipment will be located at the central workplace. Teleworking employees that wish to have these other office supplies and equipment at their alternate work site will need to purchase them with their own resources (unless their supervisor approves as a special situation). Any special situation approved by the supervisor must be documented in the teleworking agreement.
- All equipment provided to an employee for teleworking/flexible work assignments shall be documented on the [NCSSM Teleworking and Flexible Work Schedule Agreement Form](#).
- Employees who are leaving must return any equipment as part of the [offboarding checklist](#).

Conditions of Employment for a Teleworking/ Flexible Work Schedule Assignment

Security of Information

Employee is responsible for protecting all confidential university documents and data from unauthorized access and should refer to the [NCSSM ITS recommendations and guidelines](#) to ensure the following:

- Employees must adhere to all applicable ITS data security procedures to ensure confidentiality and security of data.
- Employees must use a school-owned computer that complies with all NCSSM guidelines for uses of hardware and software including antivirus and antimalware software, software licensing provisions, recommended system security settings, VPN client, and observing password complexity requirements.
- All employee work products (documents and records that are used, developed, or revised while teleworking) remain the property of NCSSM.

Phone and Internet Access

Phone Access

All employees are assigned a university phone number. Employees who work full-time at the central workplace are provided a desktop phone if requested. Teleworking employees can utilize their NCSSM phone number via a soft phone application that can be installed on NCSSM-owned or personal devices (including computers running Windows/macOS, and iOS and Android devices).

Internet Access

A teleworking employee must obtain and maintain their own internet connectivity at their own expense. This is not reimbursable by NCSSM. A teleworking agreement may be discontinued if an employee is unable to maintain stable and consistent connectivity during the work schedule outlined in the teleworking agreement.

Hours of Work

- The required number of work hours will not change, and employees are still responsible for reporting time worked, leave used, and for adhering to university attendance policies. The supervisor must approve days and hours of work at the alternate location.
- Overtime worked during telework/flexible work scheduling will not be treated differently than regular work hours. Supervisors must approve any overtime in advance. Failure to obtain supervisory approval in advance of working overtime may result in termination of the telework/flexible work schedule arrangement

and/or disciplinary action. [\(See **Compensatory Time \(Overtime\)**\)](#)

- Non-exempt employees must record hours worked the same as they would record their hours if working at the central location.
- Sick/annual leave is recorded based on the number of hours an employee is scheduled to work on the day the leave is used, whether the employee is at the central work location or the alternate work location.
- Paid holidays will count as 8 hours if falling on a day scheduled for telework.
- A meal break of at least 30 minutes must be provided to employees working more than six (6) consecutive hours. The 30-minute meal break is not included as hours worked and may not be used to have a later start or end time of work schedule.
- Authorized closings will apply to the teleworker, unless otherwise agreed upon with the supervisor. Essential employees are the exception.
- Supervisors may require employees to report to a central workplace as needed and as requested for any work-related events.
- Teleworking is not to be used in place of vacation, sick, or other available leave; however, in consultation with HR, a department may be able to offer telework arrangements as an opportunity for partial or full return to work based on NCSSM policy and the criteria normally applied to decisions regarding the approval of telework.
- All leave policies, procedures and leave accrual rules must be followed.

Safety

The teleworking agreement must include a confirmation by the employee that the alternate work location is, to the best of their knowledge, free of recognized hazards that could cause physical harm. The teleworking agreement must also include a confirmation by the employee that they agree to practice the same safety habits they would use while at the central workplace and to maintain safe conditions in their alternate work location. (See [NCSSM Alternate Work Location Safety Guidelines](#))

- NCSSM does not assume responsibility for an injury incurred by any other person who is present at the teleworker's alternative work location.
- Teleworking employees are covered by the NCSSM's Workers' Compensation Program if injured while performing official duties at the central workplace or at an alternate work location during the set work schedule.
- An injured worker must immediately notify their supervisor of an injury sustained at an alternate work location and complete the [Employee Incident Report Form](#). Once an employee reports a job-related injury, the supervisor or department personnel must immediately complete the [North Carolina Supervisor Incident Investigation Report](#). Please contact Human Resources at hr@ncssm.edu for other necessary Workers' Compensation Forms and related information.

Other Considerations

- These guidelines do not apply to requests for, or management of, workplace disability accommodation(s) and the Americans with Disabilities Act or under any other applicable federal, state or local laws or regulations. Employees seeking disability accommodation(s) should contact the Associate VC in Human Resources.
- Performance expectations and evaluation of work performed does not change because of teleworking/flexible work schedule assignments. Conditions of employment will remain the same, and expectations should be clear and measurable. The supervisor will evaluate employee's job performance in accordance with applicable performance planning and evaluation, and probationary policies.
- Salary and benefits will not be affected by telework/flexible work schedule agreements.
- In the event the campus is operating under the special provisions of emergency conditions, the provisions of the guidelines in this document may not be applicable.

Telework/Flexible Work Schedule Resources & Forms

- ✓ [Is Teleworking Right for You? Employee Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- ✓ [Telework and Flexible Work Suitability Checklist for Supervisors](#)
- ✓ [Job Aid:/Blended Team Communication Plan](#)
- ✓ [Teleworking and Flexible Work Agreement Form](#)
- ✓ [Teleworking and Flexible Work Remote Safety Checklist/Attestation](#)

Telework/Flexible Work Schedule Related Policies

- [NCSSM Teleworking and Flexible Work Schedule Policy](#)