



# Administration & Finance

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**Issuing Office:** Human Resources

**Policy Number:** FY15-HRS-007-00

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**Policy Name:** Telecommuting Policy for Non-Unit Positions

**Original Date Issued:** June 30, 2015

**Purpose of Policy:** The purpose of this policy is to accommodate, in appropriate circumstances, the creation of telecommuting opportunities for employees. The policy promotes work from a home office, using technology to communicate with the office and coworkers, and to produce work products. Depending on the needs of the department, telecommuting may be an alternative to physically commuting to work that supports work/life balance. It is the department head's decision to utilize a telecommuting option; use of telecommuting is dependent on the operational needs of the department as defined by management. Telecommuting is voluntary for both management and employees.

**Applicable to:** Full and part-time employees in non-faculty positions with the exception of those employees whose presence is critical on site during standard work hours of administrative operations.

Telecommuting is not intended to cover instances of medical leave or accommodations. In these cases, campus policy requires consultation with Human Resources and Office of Diversity and Inclusion policies. These policies can be found on <http://www.umb.edu/hr/policies> and <http://www.umb.edu/odi/ada/accommodations>

**Definition:**

Telecommuting is a work arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position, and other authorized activities, from a worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work. In most instances, it is the act of working from home, thus eliminating travel to and from the campus work site. Essentially, employees "commute" to work with telecommunications equipment rather than automobiles, typically one to two (1-2) days a week.

While some jobs are conducive to telecommuting five (5) days per week, most have tasks that could be accomplished while telecommuting one to two (1-2) days per week or on a project-specific basis. These tasks may include, but are not limited to: remote IT system administration, software development, web design and development, administrative tasks such as, large scale text editing, writing detailed reports, policies or procedures, reading and editing documents, and individual non collaborative work. Generally, jobs suitable for



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telecommuting will have defined tasks with clearly measurable results.

Telecommuting is not practical or suitable for all types of work or all positions. Jobs that entail daily supervisory or management responsibilities, oversight of daily work operations, campus based public or client service based contact, require a physical presence at the work station, or require the use of equipment, tools or information that is only available at a campus work site are examples of work that may not be appropriate for a telecommuting work schedule.

### **Policy:**

The University of Massachusetts is committed to providing a reasonable and flexible environment that is supportive of its students, faculty, staff and visitors to carry out the University's teaching, research and public service missions. As part of this commitment, the campus accommodates, in appropriate circumstances, telecommuting opportunities for its employees.

This policy offers voluntary telecommuting options for employees of the university. It is the department head's decision to utilize a telecommuting option; use of telecommuting is dependent on the operational needs of the department as defined by management. Employees who are offered a telecommuting work option have the right to refuse to telecommute.

There will be no change in an employee's current compensation and benefits. Time off must be taken in accordance with applicable leave policies, such as sick, vacation, personal and/or compensatory time leave policies.

Departments that establish the Telecommuting option for their employees must prepare 4 documents:

- **Department Telecommuting Program,**
- **Telecommuting Agreement** and **Telecommuting Work Plan** for each employee that is approved for telecommuting,
- **Property Pass** for university owned equipment,

**AND, the supervisor and employee must attend training** on recording time and measuring assignments/performance.



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Employees will not provide primary care during designated telecommuting hours for dependents or anyone who would otherwise require a provider's care.

Telecommuting schedules that are less than 30 calendar days in duration do not require a Telecommuting Agreement. An informal document (email) agreed upon between employee and supervisor will suffice for a short term telecommuting schedule.

### **Procedure:**

#### **Department Telecommuting Program:**

The decision to have a departmental telecommuting program on campus is at the sole discretion of the department head and appointing authority. Supervision, clear expectations and measurable tasks are essential components in considering whether or not telecommuting would be an option. Department managers must supervise telecommuting employees by developing a system of distributing work appropriate for telecommuting and designating tasks with measurable outputs that can ensure appropriate levels of employee accountability.

Departments that wish to develop a telecommuting program must address all of the following criteria in a formal Department Telecommuting Program document approved by the Appointing Authority or designee:

1. Identify positions permitted to telecommute by their "functional" responsibilities.
2. Consider potential telecommuting candidates based on their demonstrated ability to work independently and with limited supervision.
3. Confirm that the Department will supply the employee with a computer/laptop to perform work. University data may only be accessed with computer equipment provided by the university via secure communication channels. The university provides that the:
  - a. hard drive is encrypted,
  - b. computer has proper Anti-Virus protection, and other tools to manage the computer,
  - c. employee has a VPN account to access such confidential information, and
  - d. a property pass is completed and on file with the property department.
4. Require that telecommuters and supervisors attend training regarding participation in a telecommuting program prior to beginning the arrangement.



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5. Confirm that employees must be available during the UMass Boston core hours of 10am to 3pm to be available for meetings, supervision, and other collaborative work. A department may have alternate core hours or shifts that require other times. Include in department program.
6. Agree to and sign a "Telecommuting Agreement" outlining the specific parameters of their telecommuting arrangement, including the measurement of work assignments, and the method of recording and confirming work time.
7. Create a Telecommuting Work Plan, to be included as part of the Telecommuting Agreement.
8. Work unit productivity must be maintained and appropriate coverage of work responsibilities including customer service must be provided at all times.
9. Other requirements, such as communications or times when the employee must be on campus.

This program should be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate. The template for department programs is Attachment A.

### **Telecommuting Agreement:**

Every employee that is approved to be a telecommuter must complete an agreement that is approved and signed by the employee, his or her supervisor, the Department Head and HR. Submit the original to HR for signature. HR will email the supervisor **within 5 business days** if the schedule is approved. The department and the employee should keep a copy of the agreement.

All Telecommuting Agreements will have an initial three (3) month trial period. If it is agreed to continue at that time, the Telecommuting Agreement will be reviewed by the supervisor and the employee at least every six (6) months thereafter or sooner if needed.

The department may discontinue an arrangement at any time if continuation is not productive, efficient or otherwise not in the best interest of the Department with at least 2 weeks' notice.

Employees may also discontinue the arrangement with at least 2 weeks' notice to the supervisor.

Department supervisors must send an updated Agreement to HR prior to any changes to, or cancellations of, telecommuting arrangements.



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In the event of Campus Closures due to Inclement Weather or Emergency Campus Closures, please refer to the University of Massachusetts Boston's policy on Campus Closure Policy and Procedures, Academic Year 2014-2015 (updated annually)  
[http://www.umb.edu/administration\\_finance/policies](http://www.umb.edu/administration_finance/policies)

During an emergency, business continuity plans may require certain pre-identified employees to telecommute per the department Business Continuity Plan. These employees do not need a Telecommuting Agreement. Please see Business Continuity Planning Policy.

The "Telecommuting Agreement" does not constitute a contract for employment or a modification of any other existing terms and conditions of employment between the employee and the employer.

### Liability:

Telecommuting arrangements may extend employee's entitlement to worker's compensation benefits for job-related accidents that occur in the employee's off-site work location during the employee's established telecommuting work schedule. The campus will not be liable for injury to others in the employee's home or other off-site location during the employee's telecommuting work schedule. UMB reserves the right to inspect the employee's off-site location with proper notice.

In case of injury, it is the employee's responsibility to report the incident to their supervisor as soon as circumstances permit in accordance with the Workers' Compensation Policy.  
<http://www.umb.edu/hr/policies>

### Confidentiality:

The use or access of confidential and/or personally identifiable information (PII) when telecommuting must be approved in advance by the appropriate data steward or custodian of the confidential and/or personally identifiable information and may only be accessed with computer equipment provided by the university via secure communication channels provided by the university. Storage of confidential and/or PII is strictly prohibited. Documents containing confidential and/or PII may only be taken to the telecommuting worksite with the prior approval of the data stewards or custodian of the confidential and/or PII information.

If you have any questions, please contact the Department of Human Resources at 7-5150.



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**Oversight Department:** The Department of Human Resources

**Responsible Party within Department:** Assistant Vice Chancellor of Human Resources

**Monitoring:**

There will be an annual review of this policy, in consultation with any other appropriate offices or when necessary.

HR will post-audit 3 and 6 month reviews.

**Authority:** Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department Telecommuting Program Template—Attachment A  
Telecommuting Agreement—Attachment B  
Telecommuting Work Plan—Attachment C