



**FAIRLEIGH  
DICKINSON  
UNIVERSITY**

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Metropolitan Campus**

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## **Fairleigh Dickinson University Flexible Work Policy for Staff**

### **Purpose**

Fairleigh Dickinson University recognizes the many benefits afforded to students, faculty, and staff when our employees work primarily in-person on campus, including ready access to departmental resources and opportunities for ad hoc collaboration with colleagues. At the same time, a more flexible work arrangement that includes remote working options also has many benefits, including offering students the ability to interact with University employees in a variety of modalities, optimizing University office space, and helping employees to improve their work-life balance through reduced commuting time. Accordingly, the University is adapting its business practices to deploy a more flexible approach to work that still maintains, preserves, and even enhances the student and employee experience at FDU.

### **Overview**

A basic requirement for any flexible work arrangement at FDU is to maintain or improve the student experience, including the level of service and responsiveness provided to students and all members of the University community. There must be no loss in professionalism, availability, and diligence when interacting with students, faculty, and staff while working from a remote location. Students must not be referred from one destination to another unless necessary to fulfill their needs and then with assurance that they know and are appropriately assisted with each step of the process.

Hybrid or remote work arrangements (referred to as “flexible” work schedules in this Policy) must be documented in writing by the employee and their supervisor before the start of the arrangement. The arrangements should be for a fixed duration that may be subject to renewal upon review. Flexible work

schedules do not change the basic terms and conditions of employment with the University, including compensation and benefits available to the employee. Employees working through flexible work schedules remain subject to all University policies.

### **Scope**

This Policy applies to all full-time and part-time eligible employees who regularly work at the Florham, Metropolitan or Vancouver campuses and desire to work all or part of their job from a remote location. Eligible employees are primarily salaried/exempt employees whose work duties permit them to work remotely. Non-exempt employees typically have jobs that require on-campus presence at all times; however, non-exempt employees whose positions allow may apply for flexible work schedules consistent with the provisions of this Policy.

Importantly, all employees should understand that unless their position has been identified as fully remote or hybrid upon their hiring (e.g., in their on-boarding letter), employees are not guaranteed a remote option; and FDU retains the right, in its discretion, to decline any request for remote work or to require any person to revert to in-person work, whether in whole or in part, without formal notice or process. In addition, supervisors may require employees working in a flexible work schedule to be on campus from time to time for in-person meetings, trainings, or other functions on days that they would otherwise be working remotely.

*Certain exclusions.* This Policy does not apply to faculty and instructors with regard to teaching and related activities. Classes may not be moved to online instruction except as may be approved by school/college leadership and the University Provost. In addition, this Policy is not intended to cover formal accommodation requests related to the Americans with Disabilities Act or other medical/disability law protections. Any requests for accommodation of this nature should be directed to the Human Resources Department separate from the process outlined in this Policy. This Policy governs regularly scheduled flexible work arrangements, and not one-time or episodic remote arrangements to accommodate individual employee needs (against the backdrop of work demands).

### **Criteria**

Supervisors are responsible for identifying positions that are eligible for flexible work schedules, consistent with the criteria outlined in this Policy. The decision to assign an employee to a flexible work schedule is based on the demands of the job and the needs of the department and the University. When evaluating requests, the supervisor will also consider the employee's past and present levels of performance. Accordingly, new hires must be employed for at least three months to be eligible for a flexible work schedule, except when the position has been designated as a remote position at the time of hire.

All student-facing or employee-service departments must have appropriate staffing levels at all times in-person on campus and available during routine working hours. Both in appearance and in substance, the University must continue to provide thriving and active student-centered campuses; and no student-facing or employee-service departments may "go dark" as a result of flexible working arrangements.

Supervisors should determine the feasibility of a flexible work schedule by evaluating the following:

- Can the employee ensure and demonstrate that they are able to maintain full productivity and meet all job expectations without adversely impacting the productivity of others?
- Will the work require access to resources, including technology? How will these needs be met?
- What steps will be taken to ensure that the employee's communication with all their constituents will not be negatively impacted by remote work?
- Can unplanned interruptions be controlled to a reasonable degree?

Specific factors that go into the decision process include:

- The work to be accomplished;
- The anticipated benefits to, and needs of, the department;
- The level, nature, and frequency of interactions required between the employee and other staff members, faculty, students, suppliers, and other third parties;
- The employee's demonstrated skills, abilities, and overall performance;
- The scope and management level of the employee's role;
- The level of in-person department coverage required during normal business hours; and
- The employee's interest and personal needs.

The supervisor will determine if the employee's job responsibilities are suitable for a remote work arrangement. Supervisors must ensure that decisions are made on a non-discriminatory basis. Final decisions regarding a unit's work in-person and remote assignments are made by the most senior leader in the applicable University function (e.g., for academic units, the University Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs) assisted by the Human Resources Department.

### **Certain Requirements**

Staffing decisions should assure sufficient in-person presence in all student-facing units. Where a flexible schedule is implemented, there should be an appropriate level of staffing at all times, in-person to immediately address student needs, answer general questions, and direct students in need of additional help to the appropriate individuals through a clean "hand-off" either in-person, via Zoom, or telephone. To achieve this, individual units are required to work as a team, in concert with their supervisor, to establish a schedule that provides consistent coverage during normal business hours. This may look different within different units based upon the size of staff, the types of support, and the unique aspects of different functions.

Schedules should be rotated to assure flexible work options are provided with equity, and cross-training of individuals within a unit should take place to assure that general questions can be answered, and student support services can be provided in-person at all times.

Departments should communicate to students any expansion of service hours that may result due to a remote or hybrid schedule.

All units must continue to provide in-person professional, responsive, and prompt services to students. Many of the technical capabilities needed to do this are included in the IT Rules and Requirements section of the **Flexible Work Schedule Agreement Form**. However, to highlight a few examples:

- Employees who are working remotely, should use the Cisco Jabber app (soon to be replaced with Webex Calling), which provides a virtual telephony setup on a computer. Telephone interactions should provide an equivalent experience to calling someone working on campus. Additionally, those working remotely must have access via Zoom to connect with students and other staff members on an as-needed basis to simulate the in-person experience for students and staff needing specific answers or support.
- Employees are expected to be video ready at all times during their scheduled workday. Video calls may be initiated at any time, and employees are generally expected to be present on camera. Video backgrounds should be professional and have the same look and feel as an office.
- No reference or mention should be made on voice mails, phone setups, or email away messages indicating that the person is routinely working from home or not on campus. A best practice suggestion is to explore the use of the Microsoft Office 365 Bookings app for scheduling meeting times via an automated calendaring system. This will allow students to schedule appointments during set times for greater access and support.
- Employees should always be reachable during their regular work hours and must notify their supervisor, in advance, if they will not be available. (If an employee is ill, the normal protocol for reporting a sick day is required.)
- During inclement weather or other emergencies that result in a delayed opening or the closure of one or more campuses, employees that are scheduled to work remotely are expected to continue working as scheduled.

Non-exempt employees should report to their supervisor at the beginning and end of each shift. Employee work hours should be maintained in their current form, unless otherwise documented by the supervisor and employee. Without limitation of other standard practices, supervisors should ensure that any overtime work is authorized, in advance, and correctly logged in accordance with applicable laws and University policy.

Supervisors should assure that they have the means to evaluate, oversee, and manage those employees working from a remote location, whether on a hybrid or fully remote basis. In addition, all FDU policies will continue to apply to employees working from a remote location to the fullest extent applicable, including anti-discrimination, Code of Conduct, and data security policies. This means, for example, that

employees who are injured (or become ill) while working from a remote location should notify Human Resources, as would be routine for an injury or illness occurring on campus.

Normally, the University provides equipment and materials needed by employees to effectively perform their duties; however, the University does not attempt to duplicate resources between the central workplace and the alternate work location. Employees approved for remote work may transport and use University-owned equipment only for legitimate university purposes. Employees are responsible for protecting University-owned equipment from theft, damage, and unauthorized use. In addition, employees may use their own equipment (except for computer as indicated below), provided the use of the equipment (other than telephones, which is permitted) has been approved by their supervisor (in consultation with the Office of Information Resources and Technology, where appropriate).

The University maintains, services, and repairs University-owned equipment used in the normal course of remote working in accordance with the same practices applicable to on-campus work arrangements. FDU is not responsible, however, for the cost, repair, or service of the employee's personal equipment, unless otherwise expressly agreed to in advance, in writing, by their supervisor. In addition, the University is not obligated to assume responsibility for operating costs, home maintenance, or other costs incurred by employees in the use of their homes as alternate work locations. Expenses incurred by the employee should be discussed in advance with their supervisor to assure a common understanding of whether these expenses will be reimbursed by the University, and the understanding must be reflected in writing.

There may be a re-allocation of workspaces to avoid securing offices for individuals who do not regularly work on campus. If and when a person working remotely is on campus, they can work with their supervisor to find access to a remote hoteling space to support their needs.

Remote work generally is voluntary, but FDU may establish remote work as a condition of employment. Normally, the requirement to work remotely would be included in the job posting and in the on-boarding documentation for the position.

Employees wishing to work routinely from a location outside of the State of New Jersey should contact their supervisor and Human Resources before beginning that assignment.

### **Process**

A flexible work arrangement is limited to either (i) a hybrid schedule with a maximum of three remote days per work week or (ii) a fully remote schedule. Any changes to the typical schedule or work location must be reviewed and approved by the supervisor in advance of the change.

The process for application and approval is:

1. Employee and supervisor complete the ***Flexible Work Schedule Assignment and Agreement*** form. The form is available on the Human Resources page on the University website.
2. Supervisor submits the request to the division's senior leadership (e.g., Vice President, Senior Vice President, or Provost) for review and approval.

3. If approved, the division's senior leadership submits the form to Information Resources and Technology to determine the adequacy and security of the technology resources available for the remote work site.

4. Once the Office of Information Resources and Technology approves, the request is returned to the division's senior leadership for final approval.

5. The division's senior leadership forwards the form to Human Resources for final review and to record in the employee's record.

6. Once all approvals have been obtained, the supervisor and employee finalize written arrangements for the employee to begin the flexible work schedule.

**Note: The President and SVP for University Operations will review all approvals for remote working assignments on a quarterly basis to determine that no such approvals have resulted in any deficiencies in services provided to the University or to its students.**