Proposed Policies

STAFF REMOTE WORK AND TELECOMMUTING POLICY

Effective Date:
Policy Number: III.
Supersedes: Not Applicable
Issuing Authority: President
Responsible Officer: Associate Vice President for Human Resources & Compliance
Applicability: All Canisius College staff employees.
History:

PURPOSE

Canisius College recognizes that there can be value in allowing staff members the opportunity to work remotely. The purpose of this policy is to outline under what conditions a remote work arrangement may be approved for staff members whose positions have consisted of primarily on-campus work. Positions that are intended to consist primarily of remote work may require variations from this policy; supervisors should consult Human Resources in this case.

This policy is not intended to regulate one-off remote work exceptions. All staff members may have an occasional remote work need to deal with the demands of life (e.g., waiting for the cable company, temporary inability to drive). In such cases, it is within the supervisor’s purview to grant temporary remote work permission as long as the staff member will be primarily engaged in their work. Such time should be scheduled in advance as much as circumstances permit.

APPLICABILITY

Canisius College staff members.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Canisius College to permit remote working arrangements as provided by this policy when it is in the best interests of the college and when it will enhance the productivity of the employee. Each request to work remotely will be decided on an individual basis pursuant to the eligibility criteria and guidelines set forth in the Procedures section of this policy. In certain limited circumstances, some form of remote working may be a requirement of a position.

The decision to authorize these options is within the college’s discretion based on the nature of the work being performed and other business considerations. The arrangement is voluntary, and participation does not alter an employee’s work relationship with the college, nor does it relieve an employee from the obligation to observe all applicable college and department policies and procedures. All existing terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to the job description, salary, benefits, vacation, sick leave and overtime (if applicable) remain the same as if the employee worked only at the employee’s regularly assigned place of employment.

DEFINITIONS

**College Data:** any information collected, manipulated, stored, reported, or presented in any format, on any medium, at any location by any department, program or office of the college in support of the college’s mission.

**Job Description:** a written description that documents the responsibilities, skills, competencies, essential functions, FSLA status, and duties associated with an employee’s position and defines the qualifications and requirements to perform those duties.

**Non-Exempt Employees:** employees who are covered by minimum wage, overtime, and time-card provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act as amended. These employees receive overtime pay for any hours worked over 40 per week.

**Remote Work or Telecommuting** entails a work-at-home arrangement or a remote-access arrangement for at least part of the workweek on a regular basis.

PROCEDURES

1. **Eligibility**

Eligibility to telecommute will depend on the staff member’s position responsibilities and record of job performance. Many positions are appropriate for remote work, but some require a daily presence on campus. Likewise, a staff member whose performance is not acceptable in their supervisor’s judgement may require closer supervision than telecommuting can allow. Supervisors have the general discretion to determine both whether the position qualifies for regular remote work based on its duties and if the staff member is performing at an adequate level for a remote work arrangement to be considered and/or continued. To be eligible for remote work or telecommuting, staff members will have generally completed at least 90 days of service, unless otherwise approved by the Director of Human Resources and be able to demonstrate a suitable work location at the off-site premises.

   1. **Approval Process**
The college will make reasonable efforts to approve remote work requests when it is in the best interests of the college and will enhance the productivity of the staff member. A staff member may at any time submit a request for remote work in writing or by email to the staff member’s supervisor. The request needs to include the reason they wish to work remotely, describe the proposed working environment (see Guidelines below) and propose a schedule for remote work, typically not exceeding three days per week. The supervisor will consider the eligibility guidelines above and consult with the employee, the area vice president or dean, and the Director of Human Resources to determine if a telecommuting arrangement will meet business needs satisfactorily. The supervisor has the primary responsibility for approving or denying the remote work request. If the request is approved, the supervisor will document any conditions for remote work and file it with Human Resources. Conditions may include, but are not limited to, scheduling limitations, expectations for availability, and measures of effectiveness of the telecommuting arrangement.

Note that approval for remote work may be revoked at the supervisor’s discretion as business needs change or if the staff member fails to maintain the eligibility requirements above. The supervisor will endeavor to give at least two (2) weeks notice of the termination of a remote work arrangement. In addition, the staff member may discontinue participation in a remote working arrangement at any time (except in those circumstances noted earlier where a remote working arrangement is required of the position). In making a remote working arrangement, both the supervisor and the staff member must be mindful that this policy is designed to provide a consistent and stable working arrangement, and it should not be used as a constant series of short-term arrangements. Staff members who change their mind frequently about participating will not be permitted to work remotely.

III. Guidelines for Remote Work/Telecommuting

The following guidelines apply to remote work for staff members for whom remote work is approved under this policy:

1. The staff member must be primarily engaged in the work of their position while telecommuting. They may not have other substantial responsibilities that may conflict, such as conducting work for another business or organization or caring for children or other dependents.
2. The staff member must be available as scheduled while working remotely and approved absences from work should be handled in the same manner as on campus.
3. The remote work environment must be safe, appropriate to the work being done, and at least as free of distractions as the on-campus office environment.
4. The staff member may use a Canisius-provided laptop for telecommuting purposes and must ensure that all protective software and other firewall technology is used on the laptop at the remote location. The college will not provide other hardware, furniture or other equipment for a remote work environment; this is the responsibility of the staff member as part of the remote work agreement. Exceptions related to technology may be approved at the discretion of the Chief Information Officer.
5. The staff member is responsible for ensuring that they have appropriate internet and/or telephone access to complete their work. Expenses associated with internet and telephone access, including but not limited to monthly fees, is the responsibility of the staff member.
6. Staff members who are regularly scheduled to telecommute on a day on which the campus is closed (such as for snow) will not be expected to work.
7. The staff member is responsible for ensuring that all sensitive College Data remains confidential in the remote work environment (e.g., not leaving files out, avoiding unencrypted wi-fi).
8. Non-Exempt staff members authorized to telecommute must accurately record all worked time, not including unpaid breaks, using the college’s payroll system and may not work outside of their assigned work hours unless specifically authorized the supervisor.
9. There may be times when the staff member’s presence is required on campus on days for which they are scheduled for telecommuting. Their supervisor will inform them of such days.

1. Considerations for Supervisors

Supervisors should also consider the following when reviewing remote work requests:

1. If more than one employee in a work group is requesting a telecommuting arrangement, the supervisor should consider the combined business impact of approving multiple requests and act accordingly.
2. A supervisor with more than one staff member with an approved remote work arrangement may want to consider mandating one day per week when all staff are to be present on campus to facilitate face-to-face interactions among their team.
3. The college may provide access to technologies that facilitate remote work (e.g., Skype, Office 365, virtual private network). Supervisors should ensure that staff members receive appropriate training in these technologies.
4. If the staff member is required to come to campus for business reasons on a day that is typically scheduled for remote work or telecommuting, the supervisor will endeavor to give at least two (2) weeks notice ahead of time.
5. The supervisor may need to adjust their approach to managing staff members who work remotely, given that opportunities for informal interaction become more limited.
6. Work Schedules/Communications

A remote work or telecommuting arrangement does not necessarily alter the staff member’s work schedule. The specific work schedule of a participating staff member shall be agreed upon by the supervisor and employee and described in the conditions of approval documented by the supervisor (see Approval Process above).

1. Work Documentation, Timekeeping and Leave

2. Work Documentation. Participating employees and supervisors should identify work items for review and discussion on an ongoing basis to ensure that tasks are fully described and timely performed and/or completed.
3. Under the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Non-Exempt staff members will be compensated in pay or compensatory time for overtime that has been approved by the supervisor in accordance with the provisions of the FLSA. Non-Exempt staff members must document hours worked in the payroll system.
4. Pursuant to established college policies, employees must obtain supervisory approval before taking accrued and available leave.

VII. Insurance

The college assumes no liability for injuries occurring in the staff member’s remote workspace. Staff employees should note that some homeowners’ insurance policies do not automatically cover injuries arising out of, or relating to, the business use of the home. For the employee’s protection, staff members are encouraged to have their homeowners/renter’s liability policy endorsed to cover bodily injury and property damage to all third parties arising out of or relating to the business use of their home. Staff employees who live in rented property should be aware that their lease may not permit business use of the premises.

RELATED POLICIES


**HISTORY**

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<th>Supersedes Policy</th>
<th>Summarize Change</th>
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**FORMS**

Not Applicable.

**APPENDIX**

Not Applicable.

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**Updates to Remote Work Policy**

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<td>A remote work policy is now necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
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