Sam Houston State University
Telework Plan for Faculty and Staff

Objective

To ensure Sam Houston State University's (SHSU or University) telework practices fully comply with the requirements outlined in legislation from the Texas 89th Legislative Session including Texas House Bill 5196 as codified in the Texas Education Code § 51.992 and Senate Bill 2615 codified in the Texas Government Code Chapter 658 and the SHSU F&O HR-17 Telework Arrangements Policy.

Telework is a temporary arrangement that allows an employee to work from a location other than their regularly assigned place of employment. The purpose of telework may be to address a lack of available office space or to provide flexibility to enhance the University's delivery of services, while supporting SHSU's operational needs and mission. Provided however, that telework **may not be a condition of employment,** and agreement or allowance of such arrangements may be revoked at any time, and the agreement must be renewed annually.

Eligibility

Eligibility for faculty and staff is detailed in FO-HR-17 at § 2.02. Briefly,

- Only employees holding a position that does not require physical presence (e.g., faculty service or a bursar), or in-person interaction with students (e.g., teaching face-to-face or facilitating recreation sports) may telework.
- **Staff** must demonstrate the ability to work remotely through documented performance reviews/evaluations.
- **Full-time faculty** must be assigned only to distance education or dual credit courses or programs.
- All telework for staff or full-time faculty requires **prior written approval** from the Senior or Divisional Vice President.

Part-time faculty who are hired on a semester-by-semester basis (pool faculty) assigned to teach distance education or dual credit courses are authorized to telework with the written approval provided by FO-HR-2.02c.

Teaching Assistants (TAs), Graduate Assistants (GAs), and Research Assistants (RAs) for 100% Remote Programs. TAs, Gas, and RAs enrolled in and working for a 100% remote program may be authorized by this policy (mirroring authorization for part-time faculty) to telework with the approval of the college Dean and the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Positions **ineligible** for telework include student workers and graduate, teaching, or research assistants in programs that are not offered fully online, as detailed in FO-HR-17 § 2.03.

Securing Approval and Attention to the Location of Work

Telework requires advance approval through completion of the Telework Proposal and Agreement, which must be routed through lines of supervision authority, approved by the appropriate Vice President, and sent to HR. An important consideration prior to approval is the location where the employee will perform work. Employment law and mandates for taxes, fees and additional insurance are controlled by the jurisdiction where such work is performed.

Therefore, to ensure the ability to comply with Texas, federal, and the laws of the location where the work is performed, the University does not permit telework from international locations, nor several states in the U.S. For more information on which states beyond Texas are eligible, please contact the Payroll Office. Departments are charged any additional taxes, insurance, or fees required by a state or even county where a teleworking employee may be located.

Length of Telework Arrangements
Telework assignments are temporary. Regardless of the start date, all telework arrangements end on December 15th of each year. When agreed by the supervisor and Vice President, a new Proposal and Agreement may be executed for up to an additional twelve (12) months, beginning December 16th and running through December 15th of the following year.

Criteria for Evaluating Performance of Teleworking Employees:
Performance management is a cycle that builds on continual feedback and ongoing evaluation, both positive and developmental. The process includes setting clear expectations and performance outcome measures in the job description and through supervisor communications. Thereafter the supervisor should continually
- observe performance;
- provide support, corrective action, and recognition of positive outcomes; and
- conduct and communicate regular performance evaluation.

Full-Time Faculty
Faculty are expected to meet the criteria detailed in the Academic Policy Manual, to include APS 980204, 820317, 890301, and 900417. The department chair should ensure a teleworking full-time faculty member is provided an electronic copy of any departmental evaluative or promotional expectations at the beginning of the telework arrangement. Further, the department chair should share any other specific expectations necessary for the effective work of the department or for the development of the faculty member with a deadline. Examples of such expectations might be:
- Submit your complete and policy-compliant syllabus to chair via email by X date.
- Encourage your students to attend virtual office hours and submit a list of those you were able to visit each week.

Staff Employees

1. Set expectations from the outset
When employees know what to expect, they can perform accordingly. It is critical to clearly define work requirements from the beginning. Make sure all employees know what is expected of them, which may include:
- Meeting set performance metrics every week
- Accomplishing predetermined goals
- Providing project updates
- Sticking to task timelines
- Working agreed-upon business hours
Document the expectations and dates the expectations were communicated.

2. Set a schedule for regular check-ins

Regular check-ins are a critical component of effectively managing remote or telecommuting employees. These meetings help ensure that both the supervisor and employee remain aligned on expectations, priorities, and progress towards performance goals. Establishing a set schedule for these meetings provides structure and ensures that performance management remains an ongoing process. These check-ins should go beyond status updates; they offer valuable opportunities for supervisors to provide real-time feedback, offer coaching or support, and address any challenges or barriers the employee may be facing.

3. Use of SMART goals to define expectations

Staff supervisors are encouraged to use the SMART Performance Goal model to define expectations:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic *and*
- Time-bound

All staff, but especially those who are teleworking, should be provided with action items and goals with deadlines established by their supervisor. Deadlines help employees to plan work, create task calendars, and clearly understand what is expected of them. Deadlines provide opportunities for regular check-ins to see if an employee is managing assignments according to your expectations. Follow up on action items with employees to see how goals are being met.

Goals work best when they are a stretch to meet, but not so difficult that they are unattainable. The more specific and measurable the goal is, the more likely it is the employee will achieve the desired results.

Effective Examples of SMART Goals:

- By X date launch the web page advertising the new service to students.
- Respond to at least XX service calls per day with fewer than Y callbacks for the same problem.
- Enhance division visibility by publishing an article on X topic by Y date.
- Process travel reimbursements within X business days.
- Publicizing our upcoming event on a variety of social media outlets, resulting in XX event registrations on our website.

4. Use video conferencing for accountability

Communication with employees is vital for success. Technology can make managing remote employees easier with the use of available video conferencing technology such as Zoom, MS Teams or other popular applications, to provide feedback. A supervisor should require that a remote employee have a camera and keep it turned on for such meetings. Discussing items face-to-face requires more attention from the supervisor and accountability from the employee.

Summary of Supervisor Responsibilities for Maintaining Performance Standards:

- Clearly articulate weekly or monthly performance metrics,
- Identify deliverables and timelines during the initial telework proposal discussion, and

- Follow up on action items and hold employees accountable for meeting deadlines.

Appropriate Physical and Information Security Controls at Teleworking Sites

Compliance with University Policies:
- Teleworking employees must adhere to all existing SHSU policies regarding physical security, data protection, and acceptable use of university resources (see generally, https://www.shsu.edu/intranet/policies/information_technology_policies/).
- Telework arrangements do not alter the terms or conditions of employment; employees remain responsible for maintaining information security standards identical to on-campus requirements.

Security Controls:
- A teleworking employee must designate a secure, private workspace at the teleworking site (e.g., a lockable office or room).
- Ensure that any printed or hard-copy university documents are stored in a locked drawer or filing cabinet when not in use.
- Employees are responsible for safeguarding SHSU equipment (laptops, mobile devices) and data from theft or damage.
- Any suspected data breach or security incident must be reported immediately to SHSU Information Security and your supervisor.
- A teleworking employee may not conduct in-person University business or meetings at their personal residence.

Employment Relationship
Telework and remote work arrangements do not alter a staff member's at-will or a faculty member's contract employment status with SHSU. Telework does not alter the salary, benefits, job responsibilities, and expected work hours.

Accountability and Disciplinary Measures:
- Teleworking employees must comply with all university rules, codes of conduct, and performance standards as well as all Texas State University System Rules & Regulations.
- Failure to meet performance expectations or to adhere to SHSU policies (including security, attendance, and conduct) will result in corrective or disciplinary action consistent with SHSU's HR-07 Employee Relations and Discipline Policy.
- Supervisors are responsible for documenting any performance or policy violations and initiating the appropriate corrective action.

Commuting
Teleworking employees may be required to commute to campus for department meetings, training sessions, or other mandatory events. Travel to and from campus is considered commuting and is not reimbursable by state law. Arrangements for occasional on-campus

workdays should be communicated in advance and, whenever possible, documented in the telework agreement.

Documentation and Tracking

To approve telework, the supervisor completes and routes the Telework Proposal & Agreement Form through the vice president. Once the Divisional Vice President signs, a copy is forwarded to:

- The employee's department head
- People Operations Staffing Department (for centralized tracking).
- Office of Payroll Services (for payroll coding and record-keeping).

Other details or requirements should be communicated by the supervisor in writing, when not already detailed in policy.

Supervisor Responsibilities for Ongoing Tracking:
- Maintain copies of the Telework Proposal & Authorization Form in the department's records,
- Ensure that performance criteria are communicated and documented, and
- Report any performance or policy concerns to People Operations for escalation, as needed.
- Ensure a teleworking employee returns to campus at the conclusion of the authorization (on or before December 15th of each year), or at such time the University determines the arrangement ends. The supervisor may submit a request for an additional year, if agreeable to leadership in the appropriate line of authority.

Human Resources Responsibilities:
Maintain a secure, centralized digital repository (organized by employee name and department) of all active and expired telework agreements. Track elements of each agreement, included below:
- Employee name and position,
- Department and supervisor,
- Effective and expiration dates of the telework period, and
- Communicate annual reminders of the end of agreements before December 15th each year.

Payroll Responsibilities:
Payroll is responsible for ensuring registration of the University as an employer in the state or location where a teleworking employee is authorized to work. Further, payroll will arrange required insurance and remit the taxes, fees, and premiums required by the telework jurisdiction and charge those fees to the teleworking employee's department.