



## **POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **North Dakota State College of Science**

#### Telecommuting Policy

Source: NDSCS President

Applies to: All Employees

Purpose: Telecommuting is a management tool that provides flexibility in meeting customer needs and business goals. The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines for departments in developing and implementing telecommuting agreements.

#### **Policy**

The North Dakota State College of Science considers telecommuting to be a viable option to increase employment opportunities throughout the state, attract and retain a diverse and talented work force, reduce costs, improve productivity among employees, and better address work and family demands.

Telecommuting is an alternative work arrangement in cases where individual, job and supervisor characteristics are best suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting allows an employee to work at home, on the road, or in a satellite location that is linked electronically (via computer, fax, phone, etc) to a central office or principal place of employment, for all or part of their regular workweek. Participation in a telecommuting arrangement is discretionary on the part of management and voluntary on the part of the employee, unless specifically stated as a condition of employment.

Job characteristics that may be suitable for telecommuting include:

- Results-oriented;
- Quantifiable, measurable, reasonably tracked;
- Easily portable;
- Minimal supervision required;
- Information-based;
- Limited requirement of face-to-face internal/external interaction and communication.

Job characteristics that may not be suitable for telecommuting include:

- Frequent campus presence to complete duties assigned;
- Significant face-to-face interaction and communication.

Telecommuting is a cooperative arrangement between NDSCS and an employee, based on the needs of the job, work group and the College. Telecommuting is not an entitlement; it is not a College wide benefit; and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with NDSCS.

### **Procedure/Guidelines:**

#### Short-term/Temporary Telecommuting

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or formal, as will be described below. Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave, to the extent practical for the employee and the organization, and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate. All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case by case basis, focusing on the business needs of the organization first. Such informal arrangements are not the focus of this policy.

#### Eligibility

Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement. Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and supervisor shall evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement. The supervisor shall complete the Telecommuting Feasibility Assessment. The assessment will assist the supervisor in evaluating the feasibility of the telecommuting arrangement for a specific position/department. The Telecommuting Feasibility Assessment shall include a review of the following:

- Job Responsibilities -The employee and supervisor will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting agreement.
- Employee Suitability -The employee and supervisor will assess the needs and work habits of the employee.
- Other Considerations -The employee and the supervisor will assess the equipment needs, work space design considerations, communication, supervision, scheduling issues and other departmental needs.

#### Equipment and Supplies

Information supplied by the employee and the supervisor will assist in determining the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, modems, phone and data lines, facsimile equipment or software, photocopiers, technical support, etc.), Equipment and software must meet organizational standards. The College reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis. The Human Resources and Information Technology Departments may serve as resources in this matter.

Equipment provided by the College is to be used by the employee and for business purposes only. Use by family members or others is prohibited. Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the College, will be maintained by the employee. The College accepts no responsibility for damages or repairs to employee owned equipment. The telecommuter should sign an inventory of all office property and agrees to take appropriate action to protect items

from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment all college property will be returned to the College.

The College should supply material necessary to complete assigned work at the work-site. Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally available through the College should not be reimbursed unless employee has prior approval.

#### Salary and Benefits

An employee's compensation, benefits and work status will not be affected by participation in a telecommuting agreement when job responsibilities are not changed. If an employee accepts modified responsibilities to telecommute, the employee's salary may be modified based upon revised responsibilities. Other benefits will be consistent with college practices.

#### Work Schedules

The employee and supervisor will agree on the number of telecommuting days each week, the work schedule the employee will customarily observe, and the manner and frequency of communication. Work schedules may parallel those on the campus or be structured to meet the needs of the employee and supervisor. The employee agrees to be accessible by phone or e-mail within a reasonable time period during the agreed upon work schedule. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in an immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement. Time recorded and/or paysheets shall be processed in a manner consistent with other campus employees of like positions.

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to record all hours worked in a manner designated by the College. Hours worked in excess of those specified per work week, in accordance with state and federal requirements will require advance approval of the supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in the immediate cessation of the telecommuting agreement.

#### College-Related Travel

College-related travel in the course of the workday is reimbursable. College-related travel does not include traveling to and from the work site and the college campus. If a state fleet vehicle access is available, the College encourages use whenever possible. Prior approval for use of personal vehicle is required.

#### Long Distance Phone Calls

Options for handling college-related long distance telephone calls must have prior supervisor approval and may include:

- Phone credit card for the employee
- Prepaid phone card
- Access to an "800" toll free line
- Reimbursement

#### College Contacts

An employee in a telecommuting arrangement where the work site is their home shall not meet with students, customers, or the public for college purposes, in their home.

### Tax and Other Legal Implication

Tax and other legal implications for the business use of the employee's home are the sole responsibility of the employee. The employee is obligated to abide by IRS, state, and local government restrictions.

### Inclement Weather

If the central office location is closed due to an emergency or inclement weather, the manager will contact the employee. The employee may continue to work at the work site. If there is an emergency, such as a power outage, at the work site, the employee shall notify the manager as soon as possible.

### Termination of Agreement

Any telecommuting agreement may be established on a trial basis for a predetermined period of time. Agreements may be discontinued at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the College. A telecommuting agreement may be suspended temporarily due to operational needs.

### Management Responsibility Highlights:

- Approve the employee's participation in the program.
- Approve worksite arrangements.
- Assess the impact of the telecommuting agreement on the productivity of the office or department, the assigned work, and on any other affected employee.
- Ensure that customer service will not be negatively impacted.
- Assess the portability of the employee's workload away from the central office.
- Maintain regular contact with the employee; address work-related issues.
- Monitor and evaluate the efficiency, the effectiveness, and the cost benefits of the telecommuting agreement.
- Develop, amend, and implement performance standards and measurements for work performed.
- Monitor and evaluate employee's work performance.
- Assure that agreed upon equipment and other materials are available for the employee to adequately perform assigned work.
- Assure all department services are provided during core office hours as appropriate.

### Employee Responsibility Highlights:

- Abide by all work-related policies and regulations, work behavior and expectations as required of any college employee.
- Maintain proper management, retention, and confidentiality of information and records per campus policy. Disclose information and records only to those authorized to have knowledge or access to information or access to information according to FERPA regulations.
- Observe agreed-upon hours of work in accordance with the Telecommuting Agreement.
- Communicate to the supervisor and affected parties variations from the agreed upon hours in an expedient manner or in advance whenever possible (for example, illness, emergencies, inclement weather).

- Assist in the identification of training needs and participate in and/or provide appropriate training.
- Assure the worksite is equipped and maintained in a manner to complete work as assigned and meets Risk Management Telecommuting checklist. The employee is responsible to ensure the guidelines are met. Proof of commercial general liability insurance must be provided.
- Ensure that college equipment and supplies are used in accordance with campus policy.
- Maintain safe conditions in the work area and, if working at home, have adequate home owners insurance as required by State Risk Management.
- Spend previously agreed-upon time on the campus and attend required meetings. All travel costs to their principal place of employment are the responsibility of the employee.
- Provide input during the development and implementation of the Telecommuting Agreement.

**Where to Obtain Additional Information**

You may speak to your supervisor, call the Human Resources Office at 701-671-2903, or email HR at [ndscs.hr@ndscs.edu](mailto:ndscs.hr@ndscs.edu).

Approved by:



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President's Signature

2-14-12  
Date