University of Maryland Guidelines for Telework
(Approved by UHR and Senate Executive Committee April 19, 2017)

The University of Maryland supports telework as an option for employees in situations where it is requested by the employee or the supervisor, benefits the Department and business operations, and where the employee’s position is suitable for a telework arrangement.

Telework is an option for suitable positions and eligible employees, though it is not a right for all employees, and is not possible for all positions. The employee’s supervisor is responsible for determining which jobs are suitable for teleworking, regardless of the type, and must define the circumstances under which they are to be performed.

The following information provides insight into telework and the factors that must be considered before a Telework Agreement is approved.

What is telework?

- **Telework** is completing the same work normally performed at the workplace, but doing it from home (or other location away from the office).
- **Remote work** is a specific type of Telework which is designed for off-site work. Remote workers use their home or other remote work location as their primary work location and they are rarely in the organization’s workplace.
- **Telework** is *not* working at home after hours (for example, to write reports or to catch up on email).
- **Telework** is *not* a substitute for childcare, elder care, and/or any type of caregiving; the employee must continue to make arrangements for child or dependent care to the same extent as if the employee was working from the University worksite.
- **Telework can be requested by the employee or supervisor but, must be approved or denied by an employee’s supervisor.** A Telework agreement can be suspended or eliminated at any time by the supervisor or the employee.

What are the benefits of telework?

- Greater work efficiency and productivity resulting from fewer interruptions and/or disruptions that are typical at the University worksite.
- Supports continuity of operations by making working remotely a practiced routine in case a campus emergency prevents workers from being able to access their worksite.
- Staff may save time and money due to reduced commutes, and also reduce carbon dioxide emissions and pollution due to reduced commutes.

How does an employee know if telework is an option for them?

- The employee should review their position description to fully understand all of the duties and responsibilities of the job. A position suitable for telework has documented duties and responsibilities that can be performed off-site.
The employee's position must be deemed suitable for telework by their supervisor or manager. The nature of their work, the scope of responsibility, the impact to co-workers and the overall operation of the unit, as well as other factors, will determine whether or not their position is suitable for telework.

The employee must have successfully completed the required probationary period for their current position (unless working off-site or remotely is part of their position description on file in UHR); must have worked in the current position for a minimum of 12 months; and must have received a rating of *Meets Expectations* in all categories on their most recent PRD for their current position.

Typically, positions that include a high level of customer contact or work that requires employees to be on-site for significant portions of the day are not suitable for telework.

To be eligible for telework, supervisors must consider the employee to be in good standing; rated the most recent PRD at the level of *Meets Expectations* or higher in all categories; and must believe the employee is fully capable of efficiently and effectively working off-site without supervision.

What other factors need to be considered regarding telework?

- Employees are responsible for having an appropriate work area when teleworking – free from hazards to the employee. The University is not responsible for any costs associated with the remote worksite.
- Employees are expected to ensure the confidentiality and security of all information and data with which they are working. Employees who handle sensitive information (such as student or employee names, addresses, University ID numbers, financial or other personnel data) should be extremely careful about transporting such information between home and the office, as well as safeguarding such information while off-site.
- The University is not responsible for any equipment costs associated with teleworking, but may provide necessary equipment at the discretion of the unit.
- Expenses for office supplies should be discussed prior to finalizing the Telework arrangement and prior to any purchase. In accordance with UMD policy, it is unlikely that a department/unit will reimburse an employee for certain expenses, such as internet access or printer supplies (for example, paper and ink cartridges), telephone, and other costs associated with working offsite.
- If an employee is injured in the course of doing their job, including if the employee is Teleworking, the employee may be eligible for Workers’ Compensation.

How does an employee request telework?

- Employees should talk to their supervisor in person about their interest in a Telework arrangement. The discussion should include: the suitability of their position, their eligibility, and their ability to work off-site successfully, including meeting deadlines and timely completion of deliverables. The Office of Staff Relations in University Human Resources (UHR) is available to assist with questions about how to create the Telework Agreement.
- Draft a proposed schedule and time frame (short or long-term) including how they will be accessible, communicate effectively, and what type of work and/or deliverables will be
accomplished while working off-site.

Can a telework request be denied?

- Yes, a telework request can be denied for many reasons including but not limited to:
  - Supervisor determines that position is not suitable for telework
  - Employee has not completed probation period
  - Employee is not in good standing
  - Supervisor determines employee/position needs on-site supervision
- Every supervisor has the right and responsibility to determine what is best for the department and overall business operations. Again, telework is not an entitlement for employees; it is not a guaranteed work arrangement.

What steps are taken once telework has been approved?

- Employee is given the Telework Agreement to review.
- The employee and supervisor determine the telework schedule, including days, hours, and duration of the arrangement. Expectations around communication, deliverables, work flow, work quality, work quantity, and overall performance are outlined and attached to signed agreement. The Remote Workplace Self-Certification checklist will be completed by the employee, returned to the supervisor and attached to signed agreement.
- An effective start date is determined and both the employee and supervisor sign the Telework Agreement.

Signing the Telework Guidelines means that it has been reviewed and agreed upon by the undersigned parties and they agree to abide by the guidelines for telework at UM. A signed copy will be given to the employee, employer, and a copy will be attached to the Telework agreement and placed in the employee’s departmental record.

__________________________     __________________
Teleworker          Date

__________________________     __________________
Supervisor          Date