

Purpose

To allow eligible employees to work one or more days each work week at a location other than their assigned work location; in other words, to allow telecommuting.

Introduction

A majority of the college’s operations require employees to be physically present on campus; however, there may be situations where telecommuting is appropriate and beneficial to both the College and the employee.

Telecommuting can improve productivity and job performance as well as promote administrative efficiencies (e.g., reducing the need for office space and parking spaces), reduce traffic congestion and transportation costs, support the continuity of operations and sustain the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified workforce by enhancing work/life balance.

No Guarantee

No College employee is entitled to or guaranteed the opportunity to telecommute. Telecommuting is to be allowed judiciously as an exception to working on campus and is determined by business need on a case-by-case basis. It is not a standard employee benefit or an employee right.

Scope

This policy applies to all full-time Lee College staff, administrators and faculty and part-time employees.

Eligibility

Not all positions or employees will be eligible for telecommuting. Several factors should be considered in determining the eligibility of a position for telecommuting, including:

- The supervisor’s ability to adequately oversee the duties performed by the position;
- The need for equipment or tools that cannot be replicated at the telecommuting location;
- The need for face-to-face interaction and coordination of work with other employees;
- The need for in-person interaction with outside colleagues, clients and customers;
- The need to have immediate access to documents or other information located only in the workplace;
- Whether telecommuting will adversely impact service quality or College operations, or increase workload for other employees;
- Whether the position can be structured to be performed independently of others with minimal need for support and little face-to-face interaction; and
- Whether performance can be measured by quantitative or qualitative results-oriented standards, not time spent doing the job.

In addition, the supervisor must determine if the employee is a good candidate for telecommuting. Such assignments should only be approved for employees who:

- Are successful in their current positions/have satisfactory job performance;
- Work independently with minimum supervision;
- Communicate effectively with managers, coworkers and customers;
- Have a full understanding of the operations of their department;

- Have strong organizational, planning and time management skills;
- Are comfortable working alone;
- Can maintain a remote workspace that is distraction free and safe for them; and
- Are fully aware of security threats and consistently practice safe online behaviors.

General Provisions

Supervisor Approval

- Employees in eligible, approved positions may request to telecommute for one day or more per week by completing the Telecommuting Request Form.
- Employees may not telecommute unless the Telecommuting Request Form is approved by their supervisor and the appropriate Vice President and/or President.
- Employees and supervisors must sign and abide to the terms and requirements of the Telecommuting Agreement Form.
- Telecommuting arrangements will be evaluated regularly by the supervisor.

Modification & Termination of Agreement

- The terms of the Telecommuting Agreement may be modified or terminated at any time by the supervisor. Telecommuting Agreements may be modified or terminated for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Business needs are no longer being met;
 - Current coverage or staffing needs changed (i.e., an unexpected staff shortage develops or additional staff is needed to assist during a busy time);
 - Job requirements changed; and/or
 - Employee performance fell below an expected level.

Work Schedule

- Employees who telecommute must work a regular work schedule that is defined in the Telecommuting Agreement and approved by the supervisor(s). Any changes to the work schedule must be reviewed and approved by the supervisor(s) in advance.
- Non-exempt/hourly employees, classified staff, may not work off-the-clock, volunteer hours or work after hours. The restriction for non-exempt/hourly employees applies to all work performed for the College, including checking or responding to emails. Overtime hours must be approved in advance and in accordance with established overtime procedures. The hours the employee works remotely will be considered regular work hours, no special code or distinction for telecommuting hours on timesheets or in Jantek is needed.
- Employees must also follow the standard lunch schedule established by the department.
- Attendance at designated on-campus locations for meetings, conferences, training sessions, special events or similar activities may be required at the discretion of the supervisor(s).

Accessibility & Timely Responses

- While telecommuting, an employee must be accessible via phone, email or through other modes of communication during the agreed upon work hours.
- A telecommuting employee must promptly review and respond to emails, phone calls, and text messages; complete assigned tasks and projects in accordance with supervisor expectations; and be available for regular check-ins with the supervisor.
- A telecommuting employee must be available for emergency situations and may be required to return to a College facility on short notice.
- When applicable, departmental on-call procedures must be adhered to supersede the Telecommuting Agreement.

Conditions of Employment

- The conditions of employment for employees who are telecommuting with the College remain the same as for College employees who work onsite. Like other employees, telecommuting employees are subject to all College policies and procedures, including policies related to confidentiality of records, restrictions on outside employment, the use of benefits and leave, etc.
- There will be no difference in the classification, compensation and benefits for an employee who telecommutes versus an employee who works onsite.
- A telecommuting employee who changes positions or is reassigned is not guaranteed the ability to telecommute in the new position.

Accruals

- Employees who telecommute must submit leave (e.g., vacation, sick, personal day, family emergency, FML, etc.) in accordance with established policies when not working their established work hours.

Dependent Care

- Telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent care. Employees with dependents who telecommute must plan for dependent care during work hours, just as the employee would do if he/she were working at the College facility. If the College determines that the employee is responsible for the care of a dependent during work hours, then the telecommuting arrangement is subject to immediate termination. Employees should contact Human Resources for information about leave options when needing to provide care for a dependent.

Alternative Work Location

- While telecommuting, an employee must be able to maintain a clearly defined workspace that is free from distractions and other obstructions to performing work duties.
- Should the work location change, prior approval from the supervisor(s) is required via updating the Telecommuting Agreement. Employees that move and plan to continue telecommuting must obtain approval and guidance from the supervisor(s) prior to relocating College equipment, records and materials.

Equipment

- Employees who telecommute must have reliable internet access at the telecommuting work location.
- College equipment in the home may not be used for personal purposes and College owned software cannot be duplicated. All employees working remotely must adhere to security measures and computer firewalls used to protect confidential information at the telecommuting work site.
- Under most circumstances, employees who telecommute will be required to utilize their own equipment to work from home including, phone, computer, printer, etc. The College will not provide office furniture.
- The College does not assume any liability for loss, damage or wear of employee-owned equipment, furniture or other property.
- Reasonable office supplies, excluding printer paper, toner and ink, will be provided by the College and should be obtained during the employee's onsite work schedule. Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally available in the office will not be reimbursed.
- If equipment, records and materials are provided by the College, those items shall remain college property and telecommuting employees must agree to provide a secure location for College-owned equipment and materials. Telecommuting employees must sign a promissory note for all College equipment and materials received and must allow the College reasonable access to its equipment and materials. Maintenance and repair of College equipment and materials must be approved by the supervisor(s) and will be done by or through the College's IT department.
- Employees must return all equipment, records and materials immediately upon termination of the Telecommuting Agreement or separation of employment.

Reimbursement

- The College will not reimburse an employee for telecommuting expenses without prior written authorization from the appropriate Vice President and/or President.
- The College will not pay or reimburse employees for repair or maintenance of privately-owned equipment, unauthorized repair or maintenance of College equipment, internet access, long distance or local calls, cell phone charges, utility costs associated with the telecommuting worksite, printer paper, toner or ink cartridges, equipment and office supplies as these shall be obtained from the College, unauthorized travel expenses or any other unauthorized expense associated with telecommuting.
- Telecommuters are encouraged to do everything electronically as printing costs will not be reimbursed by the College.

Workplace Injuries

- While telecommuting, employees must maintain a safe work environment and shall report work-related injuries to their supervisor and Human Resources in accordance with the College's established safety policies and procedures. Telecommuting employees must allow an authorized College representative to inspect the telecommuting worksite if the College determines this is needed.

Disciplinary Action

- Violation of the terms of this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Emergencies

- Emergency telecommuting procedures may be enacted at the discretion of the College President and may supersede the guidelines of this policy for a specific period of time.

Definitions

Telecommuting: An authorized work arrangement that involves an employee routinely working one or more days per week at a location that is not the regularly assigned place of employment. Telecommuting is not an employee right, benefit or requirement, but rather a work arrangement that can be terminated by the supervisor, Vice President or President at any time without notice.

Onsite Work Location: A designated work location either on College property or other location authorized by leadership where normal work, meetings or related business activities are performed on behalf of the College.

Dependent: A parent or spouse who is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability. A biological, adopted, foster child, stepchild, a legal ward or a child or a person standing in loco parentis, who is either under 18 years of age or is 18 years of age or older and is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.

Procedure

1. To request a telecommuting assignment, the employee or supervisor must complete the Telecommuting Request Form.
2. The Telecommuting Request Form must be approved by the employee's chain of command up to the appropriate Vice President and/or College President prior to the employee beginning to telecommute.
3. The employee and the supervisor must sign the Telecommuting Agreement form prior to the employee beginning to telecommute.
4. The supervisor must notify the employee in writing when the telecommuting arrangement is modified or terminated. Modifications or termination take effect immediately upon notification.

Supporting Documentation

- Telecommuting Request Form
- Telecommuting Agreement