

# HOWARD UNIVERSITY POLICY

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**Policy Number:** 500-015: Human Resources  
**Policy Title:** TELEWORK POLICY  
(Non-union, Non-faculty, Non-student)  
**Responsible Officer:** Chief Human Resources Officer  
**Responsible Office:** Office of Human Resources  
**Effective Date:** September 28, 2020

## I. POLICY STATEMENT

Howard University (“University”) supports telework as a viable work option, when appropriate. Telework allows employees to work from home or an offsite workstation for all or part of their workweek. Howard University considers telework to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telework may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. **Telework is not an entitlement and in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with Howard University.** It is deployed in appropriate situations in which the employee’s work can be performed reasonably at an alternate location to the employee’s HU office, without compromising work quality, productivity, customer service, or required office coverage.

This policy applies to all **regular full-time and part-time, non-union, non-faculty and non-student employees.** Telework as a reasonable accommodation, for a **qualified employee with a disability,** is not the subject of this Telework Policy. Those requests must be submitted to the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity within the Office of Human Resources.

## II. RATIONALE

Telework requires employees to establish appropriate work environments at alternate locations to ensure the continuity of business operations. This policy provides guidance to managers and employees.

## III. ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

This policy applies to all **regular full-time and part-time, non-union, non-faculty and non-student employees.**

## IV. POLICY PROCEDURES

### A. Telework Arrangements

Telework shall only be scheduled as follows:

1. Regular: a recurring arrangement generally consisting of the same day or days each week when an employee works at the alternate location. Regular telework arrangements can be for a finite or indefinite period.
2. Occasional (Non-Emergency): a sporadic occurrence from time to time, generally on an as-needed basis.
3. Emergency: telework precipitated by a crisis or other emergency that significantly disrupts a facility or facilities or the physical operation of a department. When needed to achieve business continuity and to maintain critical functions, operations, and services, telework arrangements may be established until normal operations can be restored at the regular work location.
  - Temporary changes to the telework policy may be made in times of University emergencies. These changes will be communicated via the Human Resources website or through official email communication from University leadership.

In all cases, telework arrangements are revocable and can be discontinued at any time when it is in the judgment of the department or the best interest of the University.

### B. Guidelines for Telework

1. Teleworkers are expected to adhere to all applicable University rules, regulations, policies and procedures while working at their alternate locations, including but not limited to policies regarding security and confidentiality of University property and information, *EEO*, *Title IX* and *Acceptable Use* policies and the *Howard University Employee Handbook*.
2. Work should be equitably distributed so that telework schedules do not require in-office staff to perform the teleworker's duties. Teleworker's phone calls should be forwarded to his/her home office, off-site phone, voice mail or University-issued cell phone. Care should also be taken to ensure that teleworkers continue to have access to needed office support.
3. Communication during telework may be by phone, email, text (which must be stored/saved in the same manner as work-related emails), fax, videoconferencing, or other agreed upon means. The teleworker must be reachable during work hours and follow all policies established by the University's Enterprise Technology Services (ETS).
4. In accordance with the provisions of the *Howard University Employee Handbook*, management must authorize overtime in advance and communicate "call back" times for all nonexempt employees. Compensation or compensatory time off for

exempt employees may be authorized by management according to the provisions of the University's employment policies.

5. Telework is for work purposes only and is not to facilitate, unless authorized for medical purposes, any other personal need. This includes ensuring that teleworkers have regular dependent care and understand that telework is not a substitute for dependent care. Under circumstances of a national or local state of emergency affecting childcare and K-12 education, exceptions may be made for employees with caregiving responsibilities.
6. Either management or the employee may terminate the telework arrangement for any reason and at any time. Management may terminate an employee's telework arrangement without notice but, when possible, should provide an employee with as much advance notice as feasible, but no less than two consecutive workdays.
7. Office needs take precedence over telework days. A worker must forgo telework for any scheduled telework day if their supervisor determines they are needed in the office.

### **C. Process for Regular and Occasional Telework**

1. Either employee or management may propose a telework arrangement. Employee selection shall not be based on seniority. Prospective teleworkers and their supervisors and managers should assess whether telework is a viable work option by determining whether the job is amenable, in part or in whole, to being effectively performed away from the regular workstation. Approval for participation rests solely with management of the University and will be approved on a case-by-case basis depending upon the needs of the University. Additionally, departmental staffing needs, space and budgetary concerns should be considered. Examples of applicable telework job components include researching, dispensing information, report writing, or communications that can be done from a distance. Accordingly, the candidate for telework should display work-related behaviors consistent with those of successful teleworkers. Therefore, teleworkers must have:
  - a. Successfully completed six (6) months of employment. Managers may consider telework for employees with under six (6) months of tenure in extenuating circumstances. No employee shall be granted a telework arrangement under this policy until after they have been employed at the University for 90 days except in times of emergency;
  - b. Proven ability to work independently, proven ability to establish priorities, demonstrated effective time management habits and ability to work effectively with minimal supervision;
  - c. A full understanding of the operations of his/her work unit;
  - d. Accessibility by phone and email during assigned work hours; and
  - e. Appropriate tools and a work environment conducive to performing job duties remotely.

2. After receiving a verbal confirmation to telework from their manager, employees should complete a copy of the *Telework Request/Agreement* (posted on the Human Resources website) and submit it to their supervisor.
3. The manager or supervisor must give the employee a copy of this Telework Policy and a copy of the signed *Telework Request/Agreement* once the arrangement is accepted. A signed copy should be retained by the supervisor and submitted to the Office of Human Resources. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that a copy of the signed *Telework Request/Agreement* is transmitted to and received by the Office of Human Resources before teleworking can begin.
4. Should the supervisor or manager deny the request to telework, or does not deem it conducive to organizational needs, the supervisor or manager must advise the employee about the denial as soon as is feasible after the decision is made.

#### **D. Confidential and Sensitive Information**

Teleworkers are expected to adhere to University rules, regulations, policies and procedures regarding security and confidentiality for the computer, its data and information, and any other information handled in the course of work (See **ETS Policies and Procedures**). Employees must use appropriate telework procedures established by the University.

#### **E. Maintenance, Repair and Replacement of Equipment**

1. The University is responsible for maintaining, repairing and replacing University owned equipment. In the event of equipment malfunction, the teleworker must notify his/her supervisor immediately. If repairs are estimated to take an amount of time that the supervisor or manager considers disruptive to the telework arrangement, the supervisor or manager must find alternative means to continue the teleworker's work, including requiring the teleworker to report to the regular workstation until the equipment is usable. For this policy, an amount of time that is considered disruptive to telework is more than two consecutive workdays or the equivalent of two workdays within the span of seven calendar days.
2. Should the employee opt to use his/her own personal equipment for telework purposes, the employee is responsible for maintaining and repairing that equipment at his/her personal expense and on his/her personal time. Should that personal equipment become unavailable for some reason, the employee may request equipment from the University and/or return to the regular workstation until the personal equipment is available for use. If the employee is not able to access equipment for a time that is disruptive to University operations, their supervisor may ask them to return to campus for work. The amount of time considered disruptive to telework is more than two consecutive workdays or the equivalent of two workdays within the span of seven calendar days.

#### **F. Health and Safety**

Teleworking employees are responsible for setting aside a space in their home or off-site workstation and ensuring that it is ergonomically sound, clean, safe, and free of

obstructions and hazardous materials, and that it complies with proper health and safety requirements. The University may verify, as needed, that the home office or off-site workstation meets these requirements.

#### **G. Periodic Performance Reviews**

Supervisors should continue to meet regularly with their teleworkers in the same manner as with all employees to review performance, including any issues related to the telework arrangement.

#### **H. Telework Expenses**

1. Responsibility for maintaining the teleworker's home equipment should be defined before the start of telework. The employee is responsible for maintaining personal equipment at the employee's own expense.
2. Each department must arrange to pay for any pre-authorized business expenses incurred by teleworkers out of their budgets. The department may reimburse the teleworker for usual and ordinary University expenses according to the University's procedures for reimbursement. Employees should retain copies of appropriate reimbursable bills.
3. Each department must pay for charges for business-related telephone calls and services on University-issued devices.
4. The University will not pay for the following types of expenses:
  - a. Usage fees for privately-owned computers and mobile devices.
  - b. Utility costs associated with the use of the computer or occupation of the home.
  - c. The cost of maintaining adequate internet access to enable telework.
  - d. Travel to the regular workstation or parking during telework days.
  - e. Teleworker-purchased office supplies that were not pre-authorized. Teleworkers should obtain supplies from the regular workstation during non-telework days only with pre-approval from their managers.

#### **I. Renewal of Telework Request/Agreements**

1. The teleworker and supervisor should review their *Telework Request/Agreement* every six (6) months, whenever there is a major job change (such as a promotion), or whenever the teleworker or supervisor changes positions. A change in job, employee/supervisor characteristics may require a review of the telework arrangement.
2. Teleworkers and new supervisors are encouraged to continue telework arrangements by mutual agreement, if feasible, for the new position and unit. Neither should be required to do so when it is not in the best interests of either or both parties.

## **V. SANCTIONS**

Failure to adhere to the requirements of this policy will result in termination of the telework arrangement and may additionally result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## **VI. HYPERLINKS**

**Howard University Employee Handbook**  
**Enterprise Technology Services Homepage**  
<http://www.howard.edu/policy>