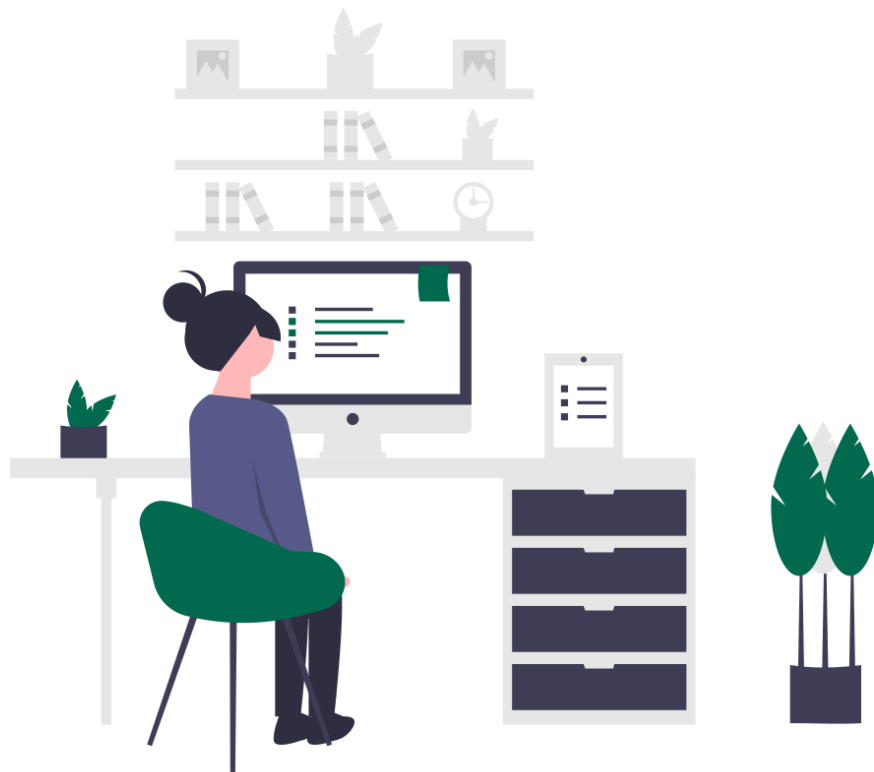




OHIO
UNIVERSITY

FLEXWORK OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES



Introduction

Ohio University is embracing a model for the workplace that enables flexibility, adapts to evolving team and University needs, optimizes collaborative work while respecting the need for focused individual effort, and seamlessly integrates our virtual and physical environments.

These operational guidelines have been developed by multiple working groups, which were comprised of University employees from a variety of colleges, departments, and units, and were approved by President's Council in September 2021. This document is intended to be a resource to guide leaders in making decisions about flexible work arrangements that align with federal and state laws, University policies and procedures, and industry best practices.

College, department, and administrative unit leaders are encouraged to approach planning flexible work arrangements with the following principles and guidelines in mind. Plans should set up employees to achieve the successful outcomes of their work. University Planning and University Human Resources can provide counsel to leaders and supervisors in decision making.

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FlexWork guiding principles

[Ohio University's Flexible Workplace Project](#) was launched in January 2021 with a goal of creating an iterative model for the workplace that will redefine where and when our employees work. Although the formal project concluded in the fall of 2021, University leadership and applicable departments will continue updating and improving policies, technology information, space configurations, and guidance for managers and employees as needed. FlexWork can include many different plans depending upon the role and function of the unit and the individuals who make up its work force, but it should be grounded in our guiding principles:

- We are here to support the University mission. Departments and employees must practice good judgement and know when to deviate from a FlexWork arrangement to meet deadlines or honor commitments.
- We must maintain a connection to each other and the campus experience.
- FlexWork may look different for each position depending on the needs of the department. Evaluation of a position will be given equitable treatment, but the outcomes of those evaluations may be different across departments to ensure productivity, availability, and service levels.
- Any supervisor-approved FlexWork arrangement that does not impede teamwork, reduce productivity, efficiency, or availability, or degrade internal or external service levels is permissible.

FlexWork definitions

Remote work: The practice of an employee working at their home or in some other place that is not an organization's usual place of business.

On-site work: The practice of an employee working at the organization's usual place of business. The employee may have a permanent work location, or a FlexWork location made available to the department and schedulable by the employee.

Hybrid work: The practice of an employee applying a combination of remote and on-site work as needed to perform the expectation of their job duties.

Core hours: Period of hours each day and week when a department must be staffed at an appropriate level.

Peak periods: Cyclical times of the year when business activity or work volume is high during which the department must be staffed on site at a specified level.

University flexspace: Designated areas on campus that are configured of private, semi-private, and open work stations for University employees to utilize. Some work stations are reservable while others are designated for drop-in use.

Flexible schedule: The practice of an employee working a schedule outside of an organization's typical office hours. For example, working from 7:00am-4:00pm five days a week, or working a 10-hour shift four days a week.

This document provides recommendations and guidelines for the following areas:



Compliance



Technology usage



Space design



Caregiving considerations



Supervisor recommendations

Compliance

State and local income tax

Given the University's requirement to appropriately tax each individual employee and our institutional direction towards a more flexible workforce, the University will implement state and municipal tax withholding for each location in which the University has employees located, including remote workers, on campus employees, and employees with split work locations. Employees working in campus locations will have withholding for that municipality. Employees working remotely will have state and local withholding for their home/work location. All employees are expected to keep their arrangements up to date using the [FlexWork Tracker](#) within My Personal Information (MPI).

State unemployment insurance

Unemployment varies from state to state. The University has unemployment insurance set up for each state in which we have a staffing presence. For more information, please contact University Human Resources at uhr@ohio.edu.

Workers' Compensation

Ohio University is committed to making the workplace safe and healthy for all employees, including those working remotely. As with unemployment, Workers' Compensation varies from state to state. Generally, to be covered under Workers' Compensation, the employee must sustain illness or injury occurring from and during the scope of their employment. Each Workers' Compensation situation is unique and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For more information, please contact University Human Resources at uhr@ohio.edu.

Employee and family medical leaves

While the University complies with all applicable Ohio and federal leave laws, several states have different requirements for leaves. For more information, please contact University Human Resources at uhr@ohio.edu.

Additional variances by state

There are several other legal variances from state to state, including payroll compliance, health care benefits, COBRA laws, hiring regulations, and hour regulations. Ohio University is committed

to abiding by all state laws for all employees. For more information or if you have specific questions, please contact University Human Resources at uhr@ohio.edu.

Home office and commuting related expenses

Issuing office furniture, computers, and other equipment is up to the discretion of your unit. Please contact your supervisor for more information.

The following items are not considered taxable income for remote/hybrid employees:

- Reimbursements for the business portion of internet and phone service
- Reimbursements of out-of-pocket costs associated with shipping, standard postage, and printing
- Reimbursements for business and office supplies

The use of business or office supplies must be reasonable and necessary to complete job functions. For more information, please contact your supervisor.

Business mileage and travel reimbursement does not include the normal commute to and from work. Travel to an on-site location for remote/hybrid employees for occasional work is not eligible for mileage or travel reimbursement. Employees traveling directly from one work site to another work site could be eligible for travel reimbursement in accordance with the University travel policy and adhering to the accountable plan rules.



Technology guidelines and recommendations

Technology has made work accessible from anywhere so we must optimize our departments for sharing and collaboration. When selecting technology choices for FlexWork, departments should focus on collaboration and sharing. Providing your employees with a place to communicate and share ideas creates a hub for collaboration and sharing that allows our teams to focus on achieving results. Additionally, departments should choose technology that enhances flexibility. Flexible technology choices allow for a mobile workforce that can perform effectively when working remote or at their workplace.

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) recommends the following technology for departments embracing FlexWork.

Devices

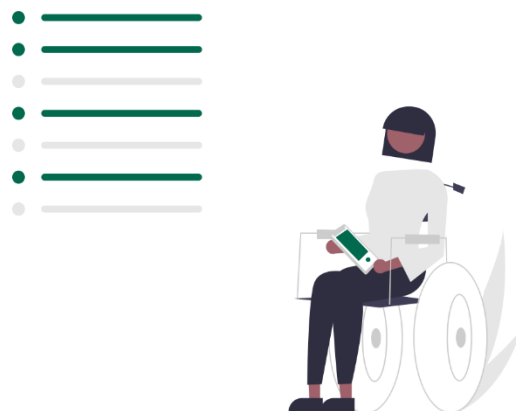
In a flexible workplace, the laptop becomes the device of choice. They are portable, affordable, reliable, powerful, and robust. The Bobcat Depot offers a variety of screen sizes and keyboard layouts giving you options for different types of workers and their differing requirements. Establishing a technology standard to use laptops as the primary device provides the department with flexibility to design innovative shared spaces and team members the ability to work from anywhere.

Collaboration

While [Microsoft Teams](#) is great for personal communication, you can also create a team for your department that improves collaboration and communication by offering a departmental controlled space to chat, share documents, and conference with video and audio capabilities. The Teams Whiteboard application allows for remote brainstorming through a shared whiteboard that works with a pen or mouse-enabled device. Creating social channels in your team lets people chat and replicates the watercooler chat that is vital for developing professional networks and shared interests. Additionally, [Microsoft Groups](#) can be utilized as shared workspaces for email, files, and events that can further enhance communication and collaboration.

Phones

Employees can access their business phones while working remotely. [OIT's website](#) has helpful resources and instructions for team members that require a telephone to perform their job duties. Employees can also consider utilizing the [Calls application within Microsoft Teams](#).



Virtual Private Network (VPN)

OHIO's [Virtual Private Network \(VPN\)](#) allows for fast, secure, off-campus access to online resources such as remote desktop, remote printing, or shared network storage that normally would require you to be connected to the on-campus network. The VPN creates an encrypted "tunnel" that protects your network traffic from being captured by unauthorized individuals.

Security

Every employee is responsible for protecting the electronic resources and data they use to fulfill their job duties. A flexible workplace allows our teams to work in areas outside of our traditional work locations and team members should consider the risk before accessing sensitive data in those environments. The Information Security Office offers a [guide to best security practices for your team while working remotely](#).

Space design

A FlexWork model considers components of *when* employees work and *where* employees work. In addition to working off campus, FlexWork could include access to University flexspace or flexible spaces within a designated unit. University flexspaces are designated areas on campus that are made up of private, semi-private, and open work stations for University employees to utilize. Some work stations are reservable, while others are designated for drop-in use.

Workspace types

The University recognizes that staff thrive in different environments and require varying levels of engagement and focus to do their best work.

- **Individual work stations:** Private, semi-private, and open/shared workspace options that are available to support individual work, focused tasks, participation in virtual meetings, and calls. Each work station includes dual monitors, a keyboard, a mouse, and a docking station/cables for employees to connect their own devices to.
- **Collaboration spaces:** Spaces to convene meetings, gather team members, brainstorm, engage with a group, with consideration for some participants connecting virtually. Collaboration spaces are outfitted with dual displays (televisions), web cameras, and microphones.
- **Informal space:** Spaces to foster unscheduled engagements, team collaboration, and unstructured activities.
- **Group/team space:** Space for multiple employees to gather together for an extended period of time (beyond a 1-2 hour meeting); Space with multiple desks or a meeting table, designed for informal or extended engagement or project work.
- **Outdoor gathering and work areas:** Where possible, consider outdoor seating, tables, and meeting areas to support connection to campus life and informal activities.

Example workspaces

Individual Work Station



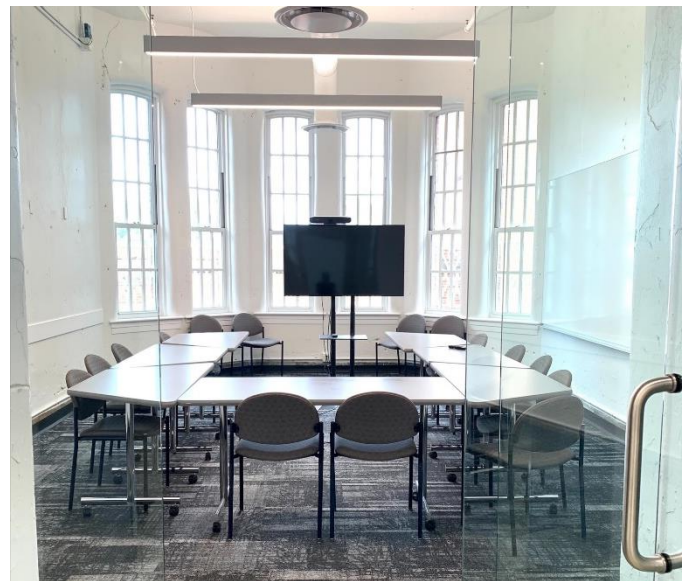
Informal Gathering Space



Medium Collaboration Space



Large Collaboration Space

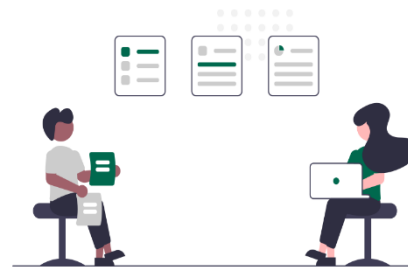


Additionally, all University flexspaces are outfitted with support spaces.

- **Single user restroom:** At least one single user restroom will be located in each flexspace facility
- **Kitchenette, food preparation area:** Food storage and preparation space will be located in proximity to flexspace and be accessible to employees who are using flexspace
- **Lactation room:** A lactation room will be available in each facility with flexspace environments and will be equipped with a hospital grade pump, rocking chair, sink, and refrigerator
- **Storage for personal belongings:** Lockers or a similar type of secure personal storage will be located in each flexspace environment

Space access

Employees should think of University flexspace as their own space, and ease of access is central to ensuring space can serve Ohio University's workforce. Work stations and collaboration spaces are available to schedule up to three months in advance, and staff may book recurring sessions in a specific space through the University's new scheduling software tool, EMS. Approximately 75% of individual work stations will be reservable, while the remaining 25% will be first-come, first-served, drop-in work space.



Additionally, employees can schedule multiple rooms concurrently. For instance, if an employee plans to spend the full day on campus, they could reserve a work station for the full day, while also reserving collaboration space for meetings throughout the day.

Caregiving considerations

Employees are expected to conduct their work in a safe and productive environment that allows them to maintain focus. Employees are expected to keep the same level of job duties when utilizing a FlexWork arrangement as when they perform work in the office. To do this, we recommend that all employees establish a schedule with their family that includes when they are available and unavailable during work hours. Employees are expected to make appropriate childcare and other caregiving arrangements to ensure the safety and well-being of their family when focusing on work duties.

However, we recognize that childcare, school, and other caregiving arrangements are unique to each family. While FlexWork is not a substitute for making appropriate caregiving arrangements during work hours, units should attempt to afford employees the flexibility to meet intermittent caregiving needs, such as illness, snow days, etc.

Recommendations for supervisors

We recognize that transitioning to a FlexWork model might seem daunting for some unit leaders. As part of the Flexible Workplace Project, a group of employees from various departments across campus mobilized to form a Workforce Management Team. This team worked to address the impact that FlexWork has on people and our HR management processes, practices, and policies. Supervisors are encouraged to read the resources available on HR's [FlexWork webpage](#), which provide many practical recommendations for how to implement a flexible workplace model. For more information about supervising in a flexible work environment, please contact University Human Resources at uhr@ohio.edu.