

# HENRY FORD COLLEGE

## REMOTE WORK POLICY

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2022

### PURPOSE

This policy provides a general framework for employees working remotely as part of a consistent work schedule. It is not designed to address unique circumstances, such as the occasional need to work remotely, to establish whether specific positions or employees are eligible for remote work, to interfere with existing work responsibilities, or hours of operation, or to affect scheduling and workload of instructional faculty governed by the American Federation of Teachers Local 1650 or Adjunct Faculty Organization contracts. **This policy does not apply to requests for reasonable accommodation for a disability. Employees requesting to remotely work as a reasonable accommodation should contact Human Resources.**

### POLICY STATEMENT

Henry Ford College (HFC) considers remote work to be a viable work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Designating employees for remote work is an employer option that an employee may request. The employer is under no obligation to provide remote work options.

For this policy, “remote work” is defined as a flexible working arrangement that allows an employee, with authorization from the employee’s supervisor, to work outside the College’s campus offices for their assigned work hours under certain circumstances. The general College standard for hybrid schedules is no more than two days remote, with the remaining days on campus. Remote work is only permitted to be performed from a location in Michigan.

The terms and conditions of remote work are governed by this policy and the Remote Work Agreement which must be executed between the employee and their supervisor, with approval of the department Vice President, prior to the commencement of remote work.

While remote work may be appropriate for some employees and jobs, it is not appropriate for all positions or employees. In general, positions requiring face-to-face interaction, such as providing certain employee or student services, or work related to physical space on campus, will not be suitable for remote work arrangements. There are other cases in which remote work is not suitable for a variety of reasons.

Consideration of remote work schedules will be reviewed by the supervisor on a case-by-case basis considering the departmental needs, support of the College mission, and the employee’s ability to maintain a high level of service. HFC will only approve remote work arrangements that maintain the quality, quantity, and productivity of the employee’s level of service and support the College’s ability to serve the community.

Participating employees must be readily available by email, phone, and video for the entirety of their scheduled shift. Attendance at department, cross-departmental, and team meetings is required, either in-person or remotely as determined by the supervisor. Approval to work remotely may be issued for specific periods of time and may be revoked at any time, in the sole discretion of the College. All College policies governing equipment use, network security, work conditions, and performance expectations apply to remote work arrangements.

The employment terms set out in this policy work in conjunction with, and do not replace, amend, or supersede any terms or conditions of employment stated in any collective bargaining agreement at the College. Where there is a conflict between this policy and any collective bargaining agreement, the terms of the collective bargaining agreement shall prevail.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Vice presidents and supervisors have the discretion to work with their teams to create appropriate employee scheduling flexibility and remote work opportunities, focused on departmental needs, each teammate's work and abilities, and best service models within the College operational hours. Employees who are interested in working remotely should discuss with their immediate supervisor.

Supervisors will evaluate requests by reviewing the following areas:

1. Impact on service to students, coworkers, and the College community.
2. **Current job responsibilities.** The supervisor may elect to discuss the job responsibilities with the requesting employee to determine if the job is appropriate for a remote work arrangement. This may include discussing:
  - a. Requirement for face-to-face interaction with students, other college employees, and community members.
  - b. Frequency of in-person interactions with internal teams, external partners, and constituents.
  - c. Necessity for access to on-campus space and/or resources to effectively perform work.
3. **Employee suitability.** The supervisor will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful remote work employees. This may include:
  - a. Circumstances/rationale provided for consideration.
  - b. Suitability of dedicated remote work environment free of distractions.
  - c. Demonstrated ability to work productively.
  - d. Demonstrated ability to maintain professionalism while working remotely.
  - e. Performance evaluation and attendance in the previous evaluation cycle.
  - f. Length of time in position.
  - g. Disciplinary action(s) on file.

4. **Equipment and remote workspace.** The supervisor and employee will discuss any physical workspace needs to ensure compliance with all technical and legal requirements for remote work.
5. Similar policies for coworkers in similar positions or functions.
6. Employee willingness and ability to work remotely based on a specific schedule.
7. Employee willingness and ability to physically report to campus when deemed necessary.
8. Employee's proposed remote work location (geographic) and condition.
9. Ability for the supervisor to provide supervision and oversight of the employee's work.
10. Impact on the overall College or overall department of permitting the remote work request.

If the supervisor agrees to a work schedule that includes any amount of remote work, with approval of the department vice president, a Remote Work Agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties.

Evaluation of performance will include ongoing interaction by phone, email, video, or other designated means between the employee and the supervisor, and regular meetings to discuss work progress.

An appropriate level of communication between the employee and supervisor will be agreed upon as part of the remote work arrangement. The supervisor and employee will continue to communicate at a level consistent with employees working in the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

## **SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY**

Supervisors who approve remote work arrangements for employees are responsible for the following tasks:

1. Establish written and objective expectations for remote employees, which will also be used to monitor employee performance. This includes tracking employee time reporting requirements.
2. Identify eligible positions suitable for remote work (see "Eligibility").
3. Identify eligible employees (see "Eligibility").
4. Determine if equipment will be provided to the employee for the remote work arrangement (see "Equipment").

5. Establish how the employee will maintain regular contact with office, coworkers, and management.
6. Determine how the department will handle restricted access materials, security issues, and taking electronic or paper records from the primary workplace to remote work location (see “Security”).
7. Ensure practices are consistent and compliant with all College policies and laws in the use of technology.
8. Communicate remote work expectations to employees.
9. Ensure that individual work schedules and reporting for hourly employees follow Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA) regulations.
10. Ensure that each employee’s request to work remotely is fairly considered in relation to the department and College’s overall needs.

## **CHILD AND DEPENDENT CARE**

Working remotely is not a substitute for childcare or dependent care. The employee shall continue to arrange for child or dependent care to the same extent as if the employee were working at the primary workplace.

## **CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT AND COMPENSATION**

The employee’s conditions and benefits of employment remain the same as for employees working on site. Employee salary, benefits, and employer-sponsored insurance coverage will not change because of working remotely. Employees working remotely will adhere to all College policies, rules, and regulations while working remotely. Employees working remotely shall devote the full attention to College business while working remotely and shall not conduct personal business during the time the employee is expected to be working.

All HFC pay policies will continue to apply, including processes for time off requests, as well as obtaining supervisor approval prior to working unscheduled overtime hours. All remote staff will be paid at their regular pay rate.

## **EQUIPMENT**

Employees are expected to use their own furniture, telephone and telephone lines, internet connection, and other equipment (computers, monitors, modems, routers, printers, etc.) when working remotely. The College will not reimburse for these items. However, there may be certain circumstances where an employee requires the use of specific College equipment to facilitate remote work. The College will determine, with information supplied by the employee, any appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, and other office equipment) for each remote work arrangement. Determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Equipment supplied by HFC will be maintained by the Information Technology Services (ITS) department, either at the College or by remote access. HFC accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. HFC also reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time.

Each employee will be responsible for handling College equipment with care, including reporting any damage or defects and returning all equipment promptly upon request. If College equipment needs servicing, the employee must bring the equipment onto campus or provide remote access if repairs can be made remotely. If for any reason a remote employee cannot complete or maintain their work because of equipment failure, they must immediately contact their supervisor.

The ITS department will maintain an inventory of all equipment supplied to HFC employees. Equipment supplied by HFC is to be used for business purposes only. By accepting HFC equipment for home use, the employee agrees to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage and/or theft. Employees shall keep HFC equipment and information private, secure, and confidential. HFC equipment shall be used only for College business and such equipment shall not be used by anyone other than the employee. Upon resignation or termination of employment, all HFC property will be returned within three business days, unless other arrangements have been made. If items are not returned within three days, the College reserves the right to withhold the fair market value of the items from the employee's final pay, and further legal action may follow. The College reserves the right to request return of College equipment at any time and for any reason.

HFC will supply the employee with appropriate ordinary office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary by the supervisor and based on the department budget. These supplies should be obtained during an employee's in-office work period.

If technical limitations prevent an employee from successfully working remotely, the remote work arrangement will cease. A high-speed internet connection at the employee's cost is required to participate in the remote work arrangement.

## **HOME WORKSPACE AND WORK HOURS**

An employee approved to work remotely shall be responsible for setting up an appropriate work environment within their home to permit them to work as if they were on site. The College will not be responsible for any cost associated with the setup of a home office such as internet providers, remodeling, furniture, or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the workspace. The workspace should be free of background noise and audible distractions.

All work is to be performed in a confidential FERPA and HIPAA compliant area. All confidential files and information must be secure and not accessible by any unauthorized person(s). The employee is responsible for maintaining protection of any College confidential and proprietary information. To accomplish this objective, the employee is required to conduct **ALL** College business exclusively utilizing the College's system and networks (Office 365, including Microsoft Teams and OneDrive, network drives accessible via Filr, etc.). No College

related business is to be stored locally on an employee's personal computer, laptop, iPad, smart phone, cloud storage, thumb drive, or any other non-HFC device capable of storage.

Remote employees must remain logged in and actively working during their entire shift except during authorized break and lunch periods. It is not appropriate to participate in non-work activities, such as completing household chores, tasks, routines, conversations, dependent care, pet care, or other non-work activities.

The employee is responsible for determining any tax or legal implications under IRS, state, and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.

## **SECURITY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

The employee is responsible for maintaining confidentiality and security at the alternate workplace, as the employee would at the primary workplace. The employee must protect the security and integrity of data, information, paper files, and access to computer systems. All College policies on information technology and internet and technology use apply to working remotely as they would in the primary workplace. The employee is obligated to sign an acknowledgment of their responsibility to maintain confidentiality and the integrity of the College email and computer systems (see Computer Systems Acceptable Use Policy and HFC Confidentiality Agreement). College business must be conducted only using the College email network system. The employee is not permitted to use College-provided equipment for any purpose other than College approved work.

## **SAFETY**

Employees are expected to maintain their remote workspace in a safe manner, free from hazards. Injuries sustained by the employee in a properly designated and safely constructed remote work location, in the performance of their approved work during their approved work hours, and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties possibly may be covered by the College's Workers' Compensation policy. Situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Remote employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as possible. The employee is solely liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to their remote worksite. Workers' Compensation does not apply to injuries to third parties or members of the employee's family on the employee's premises.

## **LIABILITY**

The employee's remote workspace when used for remote work is considered an extension of the physical workspace. HFC is not responsible for injuries to family members, visitors, and others in the employee's home. The employee may not host business guests in the alternate workplace.

The employee will not attempt to hold the College responsible or liable for any loss or liability in any way connected to the employee's approved non-work-related use of their own home. The

employee is responsible for contacting their insurance agent and a tax consultant as well as consulting local ordinances for information regarding home workspaces.

## **REVOCATION AND MODIFICATIONS**

Henry Ford College retains the right to modify or terminate this Policy at any time.

The College, applicable vice president, or direct supervisor may terminate an individual's remote work arrangement for any reason, at any time, that would not otherwise violate state or federal employment law or college policy.

Disciplinary action, in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement and college policy, will be issued if the remote employee fails to work as scheduled or is otherwise unreachable during their scheduled workday. In cases where performance-related issues have been realigned with expectations, a new remote work arrangement may be reinstated.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Remote Work Agreement

Computer Systems Acceptable Use Policy

Henry Ford College Confidentiality Agreement