

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA SYSTEM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ALTERNATIVE WORKSITE POLICY



Q: When does this policy take effect?

A: The University of Nebraska System's Alternative Worksite Policy takes effect on January 1, 2023.

Q: Who does the policy apply to?

A: The policy applies to all administrative, managerial/professional, office and service, and student employees holding regular, temporary or on-call appointments. The policy does not currently apply to faculty. A system-wide working group is being formed to evaluate issues related to out-of-state work for faculty, and more information will be communicated when it is available.

Q: Why is this policy being implemented?

A: Especially following the pandemic, many institutions, including the University of Nebraska, are having conversations about the nature of work, including whether and how to implement flexible work environments. We recognize that during Covid-19, many colleagues adopted a more flexible work schedule and that those schedules have remained even as the pandemic has ended. Flexibility is an important part of our post-pandemic world and the university embraces a flexible work environment as part of our goal to be an employer of choice and to recruit and retain top talent. However, it is important to have a clear, consistent policy that applies across the University of Nebraska System, versus practices that differ across departments or campuses. This policy gives us a common-sense set of processes that will apply for all university staff.

Q: Flexible work is already part of my schedule. Do I have to change anything?

A: No. If remote or hybrid work is currently part of your schedule, this policy doesn't take any flexibility away from you. We simply ask that you fill out an Alternative Worksite Form, which will be available in Firefly, and submit it to your supervisor. If you want to work remotely for more than 50% of your time, you'll also need approval from your campus vice chancellor for business and finance.

Q: I've had a flexible work schedule for a long time, with my supervisor's support, and I've been doing my job successfully. Why do I have to go through the process of filling out more paperwork?

A: We realize some will see this as a minor inconvenience. The Alternative Worksite Form is simple and shouldn't take long to fill out. Having this documentation will give us a clearer picture across the university system of our remote-and hybrid-work practices. It will also help us ensure that we are applying our policies equitably and consistently and following necessary laws and regulations.

Q: I occasionally work remotely for personal or professional reasons – for example, I'll spend a day at home to focus on deep work, or I'll work from home because I have a personal appointment. Do I

need to fill out the Alternative Worksite Form?

A: No. The form is only required for ongoing hybrid and remote work arrangements (e.g., working from home every Tuesday and Thursday). A reasonable amount of flexibility is part of all of our day-to-day lives, and no documentation is necessary for occasional remote work.

Q: If I want an alternative work arrangement for less than 50% of my work week, do I still need to fill out the Alternative Worksite Form?

A: Yes. The form is required for any request for ongoing remote or hybrid work.

Q: When do I need to submit the Alternative Worksite Form by?

A: If remote work is already part of your schedule and you want to keep it that way, we encourage you to fill out the form at your earliest convenience after the New Year, but no later than January 31, 2023. Feel free to keep your schedule in the meantime. We know employees will have questions as the policy goes into effect, and we do not expect colleagues to change their work schedules as we work through the documentation.

For those who do not currently work remotely and want to add remote work to their schedule, there is no deadline for submitting the Alternative Worksite Form. You should start the process by talking with your supervisor about your request. Then fill out the Alternative Worksite Form to secure the necessary approval(s).

Alternative worksite arrangements at off-campus locations that are outside the State of Nebraska also require advance approval from Human Resources and the campus vice chancellor for business and finance. Please see more details [here](#) on the university's policies for out-of-state workers.

Q: Once I enter into an alternate worksite arrangement, will it be permanent for the duration of my employment with the university?

A: An approved form is not a permanent work arrangement. You and your supervisor should review your worksite arrangement regularly to make sure it's working effectively for you, your supervisor and the university. Your supervisor has the right to make changes to, or end, an alternative work arrangement.

Q: Are all staff eligible for hybrid or remote work arrangements?

A: No. While some job duties can be performed from an alternative worksite, some university jobs must be performed on-campus. Your supervisor, college and/or department, and campus Human Resources office can determine whether your position is eligible for remote work.

For those who do have the option, flexible work is a privilege, not a right. A flexible work environment is an important tool – but not the only tool – for the university as we strive to be an employer of choice in a competitive market for talent.

Q: If I have an alternative work arrangement, can my alternative worksite be anywhere I choose?

A: Not in all cases. Alternative worksite arrangements outside the State of Nebraska must be approved in advance by Human Resources and the campus vice chancellor for business and finance to ensure compliance with all necessary employment, tax and workers compensation laws.

Q: If I'm working remotely and I need to come to campus on a remote workday, will the university pay for my travel time?

A: No. Ordinary travel from home to work, and vice versa, is not compensable time. The Alternative Worksite Policy provides more detail on travel situations.

Q: If I have an alternative worksite arrangement approved, but then I decide I want to work remotely for more or less of my time, what should I do?

A: If you want to change your schedule, you should submit a new Alternative Worksite Form and discuss it with your supervisor. If you currently work remotely for less than 50% of your time and you want to increase your remote work to more than 50% of your time, be aware that you will need to secure the approval of your campus vice chancellor for business and finance in addition to your supervisor's approval.

Q: If I'm performing my university duties at an alternative worksite, can I also do job duties for another employer during that time?

A: No. When you work remotely, you're held to the same performance standards as when you're working on campus. Any other outside employment must adhere to [Board of Regents Bylaw 3.4.5](#). You should review the bylaws and discuss any outside employment opportunities with your supervisor before accepting opportunities. Employees who are authorized for outside employment must complete the [NU Ramp conflict of interest forms](#).

Q: Will my pay or benefits be impacted if I work under an alternative worksite arrangement?

A: No. Alternative worksite arrangements are meant to provide flexible work schedules for our employees; they do not change an employee's basic terms and conditions of employment. Your budgeted salary, university benefits, and job responsibilities will not change as a result of a flexible work arrangement. As always, if you're an hourly employee, you should talk with your supervisor before working overtime hours.

Q: If my supervisor rejects my Alternative Worksite Form submission, is there an appeals process I can go through?

A: No. Your supervisor has authority to approve or reject your alternative worksite request, and that decision is final. If you're requesting to work more than 50% of your time remotely and your vice chancellor for business and finance denies your request, that decision is also final. We encourage you to meet with your supervisor to discuss their rationale and what flexible options might be available to you.

Q: Can I use an alternative worksite arrangement for child or family care purposes?

A: No, alternative worksite arrangements may not be used as a substitute for ongoing family care. As an employer, we prioritize work-life balance, and part of the reason we're implementing this new Alternative Worksite Policy is to provide flexibility for employees to achieve work-life balance. Employees may always request alterations to their schedules and/or work locations for child or family care reasons, but child or family care demands may not compete with your regular work duties. If an emergency child or family care situation arises, we advise you to use an applicable leave option (i.e. vacation leave, sick leave, comp-time, unpaid leave).

Q: I'm a supervisor with team members who are working remotely or requesting to work remotely, and I need help with a situation. Who can I contact?

A: If you need further guidance after consulting the Alternative Worksite Policy, please contact your campus Human Resources office.

TERMS & DEFINITIONS

Alternative Work Arrangement: An agreement that enables eligible employees to have a work location that is not on-campus. The off-campus work location may be in Nebraska or another state, but locations in other states need to be vetted, in advance, with Human Resources for compliance purposes.

Examples of Alternative Work Arrangements include the following options:

- a. Hybrid Work Arrangement: A work week that includes some work from an on-campus workplace and some work from an off-campus location.
- b. Remote Work Arrangement: All work hours are completed at a location other than the on-campus workplace.
- c. Occasional Remote Work: Unique circumstances where an employee needs to work from an off-campus location for a few hours, a day or a short-period of time (less than two-weeks).