Teleworking Policy

Gordon State College

Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to define the program for teleworking (also known as telecommuting) and the guidelines and rules under which it will operate. There are significant economic, personal, and production benefits of teleworking but there are also a number of potential downfalls. This policy is designed to help managers and employees understand this type of work environment and their associated rights and responsibilities. This policy provides a general framework for employees approved for teleworking at Gordon State College.

Policy
Gordon State College allows teleworking on a voluntary basis to employees who fill job classifications/positions that have been designated by the departments as eligible for teleworking. The Gordon State College telework program is an employer option, not an employee right, and is appropriate only when it results in a mutual benefit to both the employee and to the institution.

Definitions
Alternative Workplace – A work site other than the employee’s usual and customary work site (primary workplace). The alternative workplace may include the employee’s home.

Eligible Employees – An employee, in an eligible position, who has been identified by the employee’s supervisor as satisfactorily meeting performance standards, terms, and conditions of employment of their position. The employee shall have no active formal disciplinary actions on file for the current or immediately preceding review period.

Eligible Positions – A position having measurable quantitative or qualitative results-oriented standards of performance that is structured to be performed during a work period that may vary from the core work hours established for a department. For teleworking, the position must be structured to be performed independently of others and with minimal need for support and can be scheduled at least one day a pay period to participate in teleworking without impacting service quality or organizational operations. The eligibility of a position for teleworking may change depending on circumstances.

Occasional Teleworker – A teleworker, who with the approval of his/her supervisor, works at home on an infrequent basis. Approval is usually task or project specific and normally approved at least the day before the employee teleworks. Occasional teleworkers do not telework on a scheduled basis. For the purpose of this policy, occasional teleworks are considered teleworkers.

Primary Workplace – The teleworker’s usual and customary workplace.

Teleworker – A person who for at least one or more days in a particular pay period works at home, or a satellite office, to produce an agreed upon work product. All teleworkers should complete the telework agreement and training. A teleworker is not a mobile worker.

Teleworking – Working at a location other than the employee’s usual and customary workplace.
**Teleworking Agreement** – The signed document that outlines the understanding between Gordon State College and the employee regarding the teleworking arrangement. The teleworking agreement documents the mandatory policies in effect and the results of any other agreements between the supervisor and the teleworker. The agreement must be signed by both parties prior to the start of the telework period agreeing that both parties will abide by the times and conditions of teleworking. The agreement must be reviewed and renewed at least annually to ensure that the guidelines for participating in the program indicate continued eligibility and are well understood. A supervisor may elect to revise the agreement when a need arises. In addition, the teleworking agreement should be reviewed and revised if necessary when there is a change in supervisor, job responsibilities, or change in work circumstances or performance. Any employee who teleworks must sign a Teleworking Agreement Form.

**Procedure**

Teleworking may not be suitable for all employees and/or positions. Departments may implement teleworking as a work option for certain eligible employees based on specific criteria and procedures consistently applied throughout the department. Members of the President’s Cabinet will be responsible for designating the positions under their supervision which will be authorized to approve telework arrangements. Academic Deans, Directors, Academic Department Heads, or other management personnel authorized to approve telework shall hereinafter be referred to as the Gordon State College Telework Manager for the purposes of this policy.

Gordon State College Telework Managers who choose to consider telework for employees shall be responsible for the following:

- Establishing expectations for and monitoring of employee performance
- Identifying eligible positions suitable for telework
- Identifying eligible employees
- Determining if office-like space is required
- Determining if Gordon State College equipment will be provided to the employee to use at home
- Establishing how the teleworker will maintain regular contact with office co-workers and supervisors
- Determining how the department will handle restricted access materials, security issues, and taking electronic or paper records from the primary work place
- Ensuring that practices are consistent and compliant with state, Board of Regents and Gordon State College policy and state and federal law in the use of technology
- Delivering telework training to employees
- Ensuring that individual work schedules and reporting for non-exempt employees are in compliance with FLSA regulations and Board of Regents policy
- Ensuring that each employee’s request to telework is considered in relation to the department’s operating and customer needs
- Requiring a Teleworking Agreement

**Conditions of Employment**

The teleworker’s conditions of employment with Gordon State College remain the same as for non-teleworking Gordon State College employees. Employee salary, benefits, and employer-sponsored insurance coverage will not change as a result of teleworking. The employee shall adhere to all policies,
rules and regulations of Gordon State College, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and state while teleworking. Further, an employee must have the willingness of his/her supervisor to perform the necessary supervisory responsibilities required for teleworking. The employee agrees not to conduct personal business while in official duty status at the alternate workplace.

**Teleworking Self-Assessment**
A successful teleworker has particular traits, a job suitable for telework and a telework site that is conducive to the work assigned. A self-assessment helps an employee interested in teleworking decide whether telework is right for him or her. Gordon State College may elect to provide the employee a self-assessment as part of the application to telework.

**Work Site and Work Hours**
A defined workspace and defined core work hours are necessary (1) to reduce Gordon State College’s exposure to risk, (2) to facilitate proper management of teleworkers, and (3) to ensure work is conducted in a productive environment.

**Work Space**
As a condition of permission to telework, the employee must verify that home facilities used for telework purposes are safe and suitable for purposes of the employee’s work. The department may deny an employee the opportunity to telework if the alternate worksite is not conducive to productive work. The department should provide the employee a Work Space Self-Certification and Safety Guidelines checklist, as part of the application to telework. The checklist is necessary to reduce Gordon State College’s exposure to risk and liability and helps the employee understand if his/her alternate workplace is conducive to productive work.

An employee approved to telework shall be responsible for setting up an appropriate work environment within his/her home. Gordon State College will not be responsible for any cost associated with the setup of a home office. Upon request, Gordon State College will consult with an employee on any modifications or requirements to operate Gordon State College-owned equipment at the home office. An employee will be required to provide Gordon State College with a statement within 10 working days of the request to telework confirming that he/she has met the reasonable standards to include health and safety requirements (including an ergonomically sound workstation) and promise to maintain it in the condition for the duration of the teleworking period.

**Equipment and Supplies**
Office supplies (e.g. pens and paper) shall be provided by the department and should be obtained during the teleworker’s in-office work period.

The employee is expected to use his or her own furniture, telephone lines, and other equipment. Any use of private facilities of the employee will be at the employee’s discretion and not at the expense of Gordon State College. This applies to all physical improvements and conveniences as well as services.

In no situation should Gordon State College owned equipment be installed in an employee’s home. Gordon State College, however, may give written permission for certain equipment (e.g. computer, cell phone) to be checked out and used at the alternate worksite. As Gordon State College equipment is the property of the state, Gordon State College must retain the responsibility for the inventory and maintenance of state-owned property following state laws and procedures.
Work Hours
Each employee who teleworks shall develop a work schedule with their supervisor and the supervisor must agree in advance to any changes to the employee’s work schedule (Teleworking Agreement Form). Employees subject to overtime must obtain approval from the supervisor before performing overtime. A non-exempt employee working overtime without such approval may cause the department to terminate the teleworking option and/or take other appropriate action. The employee must obtain approval in advance from his or her supervisor before taking leave during a designated telework day. The employee must maintain contact with the office as specified in the work schedule, department policy, and the Teleworking Agreement Form. An employee’s activities outside the time of work or outside the place designated for work will be deemed to be in the employee’s own personal time and place, unconnected with work activities.

Expenses and Compensable Time
Work related long distance phone calls should be planned for in-office days. At the discretion of the supervisor, expenses for business related long distance calls and cell phone calls, which must be made from a teleworker’s home, may be reimbursed if the reasons and costs for the calls are documented. The teleworker is responsible for the cost of maintenance, repair, and operation of personal equipment.

Liability
The employee’s home workspace when used for telework is an extension of the department workspace. Gordon State College’s liability for job-related accidents will continue to exist during the approved work schedule and in the employee’s designated work location. The teleworker is covered under the State’s Workers Compensation Law for injuries occurring in the course of the actual performance of official duties at the alternate workplace.

If an injury occurs during teleworking work hours, the employee shall immediately report the injury to the supervisor. The employee, supervisor, and department should follow Gordon State College’s policies regarding the reporting of injuries for employees injured while at work.

The State of Georgia and Gordon State College are not responsible for any injuries to family members, visitors, and others in the employee’s home. The teleworker may not have business guests at the alternate workplace.

To the extent permitted by law, the employee will not attempt to hold Gordon State College or the state responsible or liable for any loss or liability in any way connected to the employee’s non-work related use of his or her own home.

The teleworker is responsible for contacting the teleworker’s insurance agent and a tax consultant and consulting local ordinances for information regarding home workplaces.

Security and Access to Information
The teleworker is responsible for maintaining confidentiality and security at the alternate workplace, as the teleworker should at the primary work place. The employee must protect the security and integrity of data, information, paper files, and access to agency computer systems. All Gordon State College policies on Information Technology and Internet and technology use apply to teleworking, as they would in the primary work place.
Child and Dependent Care
Teleworking is not a substitute for childcare or dependent care. The teleworker shall continue to make arrangements for child or dependent care to the same extent as if the teleworker was working at the primary workplace.

Program Reporting and Evaluation
The employee agrees to participate in studies, inquiries, reports or analyses relating to teleworking at Gordon State College’s direction.

Process
The teleworker agreement should be discussed and renewed at least annually, whenever there is a major job change (such as a promotion), or whenever the teleworker or supervisor changes positions. Because teleworking was selected as a feasible work option based on a combination of job characteristics, employee characteristics, and supervisor characteristics, a change in any one of these elements may require a review of the teleworking arrangement.

Responsibilities
The responsibilities each party has in connection with the Teleworking Policy are:

- Vice President of Business Affairs – Oversee the business operations of the institution and all policies associated with such operations.
- President’s Cabinet – Each V.P. shall designate the management positions under their supervision that will be authorized to work with Human Resources to identify positions eligible for the program and to review, approve, and/or deny employee requests to participate.
- Director and staff of Human Resources – In coordination with departmental managers, identify positions and employees eligible for participation; maintain records on positions deemed eligible and employees deemed ineligible.
- Gordon State College Telework Managers – Ensure employees approved for the program adhere to the policy, including completion of all related agreements. Monitor employee’s performance to ensure participation is not adversely impacting performance or accomplishment of tasks.
- All Gordon State College faculty, employees and students – Responsible for adhering to the administrative policies of Gordon State College.