

SUPERVISOR TOOLKIT

Remote Work

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This guide was developed to assist supervisors in determining whether remote work is an option for their employees and how to properly set up a remote work arrangement with its corresponding expectations.

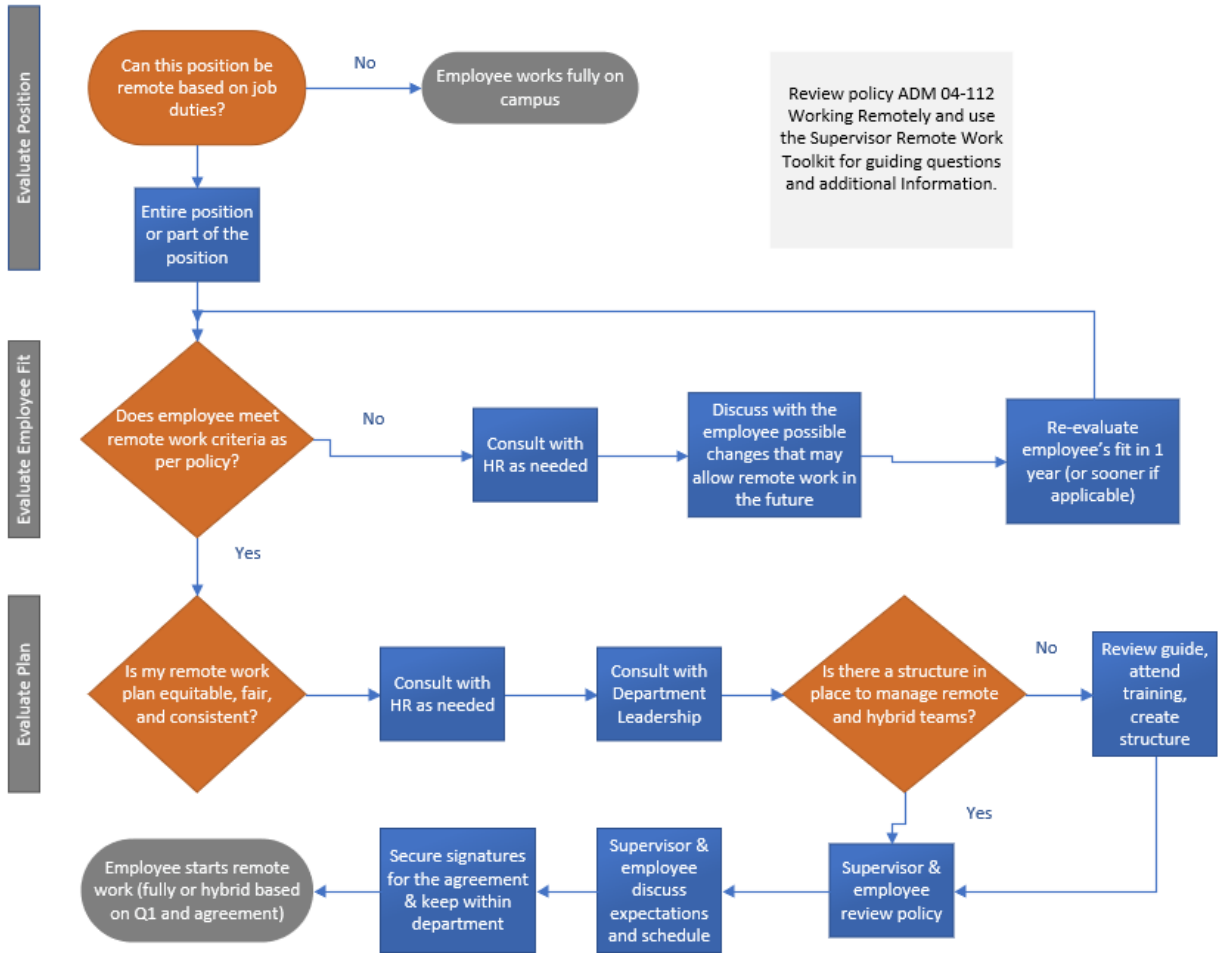
In this guide we will address the following three work models:

- Fully On- Site
- Fully Remote
- Hybrid

Overview of the Steps

- 1) Determine if a position can be remote
 - a. Review job description and job duties
- 2) Decide if the employee fits the selected model
 - a. Review minimum requirements
- 3) Check for Equity and Consistency
- 4) Policy & Expectations & Agreement





Determine Remote Work Arrangements

If you have any questions or need help in the decision-making process, please contact the Office of Human Resources, HR Business Partners at hpartners@utrgv.edu.

Step #1: Evaluate Position

Review the job description and job duties to determine if tasks can be performed remotely. Job descriptions for classified staff can be found on the HR website via the [Institutional Pay Plan](#). Job descriptions for A&P positions can be requested through the Office of Human Resources - Compensation.

Fully On-Site

Not every position is amenable to remote work. Certain job duties and roles must be performed fully on campus. Here are a few question examples that can help you determine if a position will most likely be fully on-site (not a comprehensive list):

- Does the job deliver a service that requires on-site presence and regular face-to-face contact with others 100% of the time?
- Does the position require access to information, documents, specialized equipment, or materials that are only available at the employee's regular campus work location?
- Would job duties/tasks/projects need to be significantly tailored (beyond reason) in order to allow employee to work remotely?
- Would remote work negatively impact service quality or University operations, or increase the workload for others?
- Does working remotely diminish the quality of work or disrupt the productivity of the work unit?

Fully Remote

Some positions may not require any campus presence. Below are a few question examples that can help you determine if a position can be fully remote (not a comprehensive list):

- Can all job duties be completed remotely?
- Can services be provided with excellence from a remote location?
- Can the employee complete the same amount of work while remote?
- Can the employee interact with other team members and customers, without a regular need for in-person meetings?
- How will it affect interaction with colleagues and customers?
- Can job duties be performed independently?



- Can data and files be securely maintained from a remote location?
- What is the additional equipment expense? Do we have the budget to cover it?
- What extra training is needed for employees & managers?
- Will efficiency of operations be compromised if the position works fully remote?

Hybrid

Even if some job duties fall under the on-site category, there is a chance that some tasks can be performed remotely. When an on-site presence is not required 100% of the time, and certain job duties can be performed from a remote location without impacting the quality of service, a blended work schedule may be an option. Below are a few questions that can help determine if a hybrid model can work for a certain position:

- Can some job duties be completed remotely?
- Can certain services be provided with excellence from a remote location?
- Can the employee complete the same amount of work while remote?
- Can the employee interact with other team members and customers, without last minute needs for in-person meetings or attending to walk-ins?
- How will it affect interaction with colleagues and customers?
- Can job duties be performed independently?
- Can data and files be securely maintained from a remote location?
- What is the additional equipment expense? Do we have the budget to cover it?
- What extra training is needed for employees & managers?
- Will efficiency of operations be compromised if the position works partly remotely?
- Does it increase the workload for others?

Hybrid models vary greatly regarding the remote/on-campus ratio. Find a model that works for the specific job and employee. Examples:

- Based on % (e.g.: Employee will need to be on campus 50% of his/her time, 50% remote). Pick whichever % works for the job.
- Based on certain days (e.g.: Employee can work from home on Fridays, or Employee will come to campus M-W-F, T-TH remote)
- Variable schedule (Employee comes to campus as needed, varies by time of the year or projects assigned)



Step #2: Evaluate Employee Fit

As per our policy, remote work is considered not a right, but a privilege and managers should also keep in mind an employee's performance history (e.g., if previous remote work experience exists – how did they do then) when determining whether they are suited for any remote work model.

Employee minimum requirements as per policy:

- Ability to successfully organize, manage time, work independently and productively with minimal supervision, and have at least a satisfactory work performance history;
- The employee is in good standing; and
- A thorough knowledge and understanding of their job functions and the equipment required for the alternative work arrangement.

The following questions may help you in making this decision:

- Was this employee productive working remotely in the past?
- How much on-site supervision and direction is needed?
- Can the employee work independently and is self-directed?
- Does the employee need to demonstrate a competency in a critical area before such an arrangement can be approved?
- Can my employee complete the same amount of work remotely?
- Is the employee an effective communicator and do they take initiative?
- Is the employee adaptable to changing routines and environments?
- Did the employee receive a satisfactory performance evaluation?
- Did the employee receive any formal corrective action recently?
- How can I help my employee succeed in a remote work model?
- Does the remote work location present itself suitable for the job that needs to be completed (stable internet connection, noise level, safe, etc.)?
- Would working remotely improve the employee's satisfaction, engagement, and morale?

In some cases, an employee's position may qualify for remote work, however, the employee may prefer to be on-site for various reasons.



If you determine that it is best for a certain employee to work fully on-site (but job duties would allow for remote work), you may still grant remote work occasionally (at your discretion) for certain circumstances.

Step #3: Check for Equity and Consistency

When you determine remote work arrangements for your direct reports, make sure you are equitable and consistent when applying steps 1 and 2. Consistency does not necessarily infer that employees with the same job title will have the exact same work arrangement.

Please share your remote work plans with your department leadership for their review and approval before moving forward. Division leads may require all remote work plans to be submitted and reviewed by them prior to granting approval.

Step #4: Expectations & Agreement

Once previous steps have been completed and the remote work arrangements have been approved, discuss, and review the arrangements with your employees.

- Review HOP ADM 04-112 Working Remotely
- Review and complete the Remote Work Agreement (supervisor and employee signatures, as well as Department Head signature needed)
- Keep the agreement at the department level and provide to your division lead, if requested. You are not required to submit it to HR.

Managing Hybrid and Remote Employees

Identify productivity standards that can be verified and reflected in the performance evaluation for each employee. Performance for remote or hybrid employees should be measured by result-oriented standards. Try to manage performance by measurable accomplishment of tasks, milestones, or deadlines.

Keep in mind that if only one person on your team is remote, you are considered a hybrid team and may need to adjust how you lead your team. If you need assistance with remote leadership, please reach out to the Office of Human Resources. Trainings on how to lead hybrid teams are available.



Be aware of potential unconscious bias¹ (also known as implicit bias):

- Distance bias - tendency to favor people who are closer to us in time and space
- Similarity bias - favor those who are like us
- Communication imbalance - less communication with those not in the building
- Connection imbalance - relating to those we work closer with

It is up to you, as a leader, to balance the power between on-site and remote employees. Make sure you offer opportunities in an equitable way and avoid biases mentioned above. Try to make more one-on-one connections as a leader (in-person or virtual). It would be helpful to create structured opportunities to get feedback from all team members to see how the new structure works for everyone.

Difficult Conversations Around Remote Work

At times, you or the department may be unable to approve remote work. If this is the case, the employee may express disappointment or frustration when their request is denied. Below are some examples how to frame difficult conversations around not granting an employee the ability to work remotely.

Deliver the Core Message:

“I have finished reviewing positions on our team to work remotely. Based on this evaluation, your position will not be working remotely.”

Provide Context:

“This decision is based on XYZ.”

Expand on the steps and criteria used in the evaluation process.

¹ Unconscious Bias: Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold and that that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions; also known as implicit or hidden bias.



Listen to Understand:

“I want to make sure I understand you. You said _____.”

“Could you explain this further?” “Can you elaborate?”

Listen to your employee and make sure you understand their concern (if any).

Acknowledge and Validate:

Ensure that you are understanding of the employee’s perspective and validate their feelings. Do not assume a feeling.

If an employee expresses disappointment or frustration: “I can understand that you are disappointed/frustrated. However, at this time, our departmental goal/your position fits better with you working “remote/hybrid/fully-on site”

Next Steps:

“This will be effective _____.”

“Please let me know how I can make this a smooth transition.”

“I appreciate you understanding of this situation. Let’s continue to work through this.”

If remote work is an option in the future, discuss changes that may allow remote work in the future.

Additional Resources

[Handbook of Operating Procedures](#)

[HR Website](#)

