

Temporary Work from Home Arrangements

COVID-19



March 18, 2020

Temporary Work from Home Arrangements – COVID-19

Introduction and General Principles

A temporary work from home arrangement is the ability to work off-site for a temporary time period while social distancing measures are in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide the fundamental elements required for this kind of temporary work arrangement to be successful, and the processes to follow during this arrangement.

Due to the number of employee employed by the University, their various roles and work arrangements, it is impossible to develop a singular temporary work from home protocol. Therefore, the details of any such arrangement must be determined at the Dean/Executive Director level. Human Resources (HR), in its stewardship role for workplace practices, is providing a framework that enables consistency of approach and practice across the University.

The fundamental elements of these guidelines:

- These guidelines apply to all employees in temporary work from home arrangement.
- While some jobs and positions will be suitable for temporary work from home arrangement, not every job or position will be.
- It is the University's objective to have as many employees work from home as possible. As every department is unique, temporary work from home arrangements will be approved on a case-by-case basis, as outlined below.
- Except as expressly agreed between the Dean/Executive Director and the employee, this arrangement does not change the terms and conditions of employment for the employee. For purposes of certainty, all existing terms and conditions of employment as set out in the appropriate Collective Agreements and Terms of Employment will continue to apply.

Approval of Temporary Work from Home Arrangements

Each Dean/Executive Director will make every attempt to make arrangements for their employees to work from home on a case by case basis. If this is not feasible, the Dean/Executive Director will provide the rationale to their appropriate Vice-President.

Workspace, Equipment, and Protection of Proprietary and Other Information

Employees approved for temporary work from home arrangements are responsible for maintaining a suitable and secure off-site workspace.

Employees are expected to treat their off-site workspace as an extension of the University's workplace.

Employees will be responsible for the safe and secure handling of all proprietary and other information taken off-site or accessed from the off-site location, including but not limited to electronic files saved on home computers.

The use of Acadia University supplied and owned computers/laptops are preferred for temporary work from home arrangements. Equipment may take the form of laptops or desktops permanently assigned to an employee as their work computer. It is also possible to use your home personal computer for temporary work from home arrangement. Your Dean/Executive Director will assess your computer needs from the options above and approve.

For those who wish to use their personal computer, the Dean/Executive Director will provide a checklist from Technology Services of the minimum-security requirements which will include: anti-virus and anti-malware software installed, regular full-computer virus scans, cabled or hard-wired connection to a router or wireless that is password-protected, and restricted use by non-Acadia individuals. Other considerations include:

- Data should be stored in Microsoft OneDrive
- Refrain from using email to transfer data to yourself
- A VPN will be required to access specific Acadia resources. Information on installing and configuring a VPN, when required, is located on hub.acadiau.ca
- Do not use USB storage devices, CDs and DVDs as they can be lost or copied
- Ensure computers are password-protected so data can't be easily accessed if the laptop is lost or stolen
- Remove information from the computer once it is no longer in use
- University-owned computers may not be used for personal use or shared with any other person

Employees will continue to be bound by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of Nova Scotia and any other applicable legislation.

CHECKLIST – Temporary Work from Home Arrangements

Review and complete the following information with your employees who will be working from home.

1. Work Duties and Responsibilities and Scheduled Hours

Ensure you and your employee are clear as to the employee's work duties and responsibilities while working from home. Make a note of the hours you expect the employee to work during this working from home arrangement.

2. Remote Work Location Address:

City, Postal Code: _____

Phone contact info: _____

3. Employee Status, Benefits and Entitlements

Employee status, benefits and leave entitlements, eligibility for authorized overtime and employee salary are not altered by this agreement and will be arranged/dealt with through existing practices/directives.

4. Conditions and Terms of Employment

The provisions of all relevant workplace policies and guidelines, legislation, Terms and Conditions of Employment and/or relevant Collective Agreement provisions will continue to apply.

5. Technology, Equipment, Materials and Supports

Create a list of the equipment the employee will be using during this period of working from home/telecommuting. Details are located at hub.acadiau.ca

FAQs – Temporary Work from Home Arrangements

The following FAQs were developed for managers who may have questions about the temporary work from home arrangement guidelines. Don't see an answer to your question below? Please contact Kerry Deveau, HR Director, for further details kerry.deveau@acadiau.ca.

Q: What should I consider when determining whether to allow temporary work from home arrangement?

Factors to consider include but are not limited to, whether

there is enough productive work that can be performed remotely, the impact to the customer, student, and client services; and the impact on co-workers and direct reports.

Q: How do we ensure the confidentiality of Acadia University's work is preserved in off-site offices of employees temporarily working from home?

Before approving a temporary work from home arrangement for an employee, review the Acadia University Technology Services policy located on the HR website: https://hr.acadiau.ca/tl_files/sites/hr/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Technology%20Services.pdf, Employee Confidentiality Agreement (below) and department policies on privacy and confidentiality. Also, ensure your department creates a checklist of all computer security requirements necessary. Review all policies and checklists with the employee before the employee commencing the temporary work from home arrangement.

Q: What if my employee has children at home?

While telecommuting is not intended to be a substitute for dependent care, we understand that because this is occurring over the spring break, it may be that employees will have children in their remote workspace. Employees working from home are requested to arrange for dependent care where possible and to ensure personal responsibilities are managed in a way that allows them to successfully meet their job responsibilities.

Q: What should happen with employees who can't work remotely/ from home?

Anyone unable to work remotely should come to work as usual. At this time, the Public Health Agency of Canada has assessed the public health risk associated with the virus as "low for Canada."

Q: Due to the number of employees working from home, I may be in a situation where I am working alone, what will the University be doing to ensure my safety?

The Working Alone or in Isolation policy is in effect. It is located on the HR website: https://hr.acadiau.ca/tl_files/sites/hr/Policies%20and%20Procedures/working_alone_or_in_isolation.pdf

Employee Confidentiality Agreement

Acadia University places a high level of responsibility and trust in its employees concerning the handling of information. In the course of executing your duties, you have access to confidential information, including, but not limited to, student, alumni, employee and research data, located on servers, cloud services, desktop and laptop computers, and other storage devices.

With respect to this information, and all other confidential and proprietary Acadia University information and data, I agree to the following:

1. I acknowledge the confidentiality of all information and data I come into contact with while executing my duties. I agree that this information will not be revealed or distributed or discussed with anyone, other than as required to execute my duties, unless required by law.
2. I will not attempt to alter, change, modify, add, or delete any information or documents unless doing so is part of my assigned job duties.
3. I will access only the information necessary to execute my duties, and only at the times required to execute my duties. If I am unclear about the need to access information, I will seek the approval of an appropriate, designated supervisor.
4. I understand that failure to abide fully by the above agreement is grounds for immediate discipline, up to and including termination of employment. Acadia University reserves the right to perform access audits of all systems periodically and without prior notification.

Employee

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Supervisor

Printed Name

Signature

Date