Overview

The mission of the School of Human Ecology is to understand the complex and interdependent relationships that form naturally among individuals, groups and families, and to focus on improving human quality-of-life through research, creative innovation, education, and outreach. Interdisciplinary studies and building community are core to our mission, and these qualities often develop best through face-to-face interactions.

We have also found over the past year that workplace flexibility does not detract from fulfilling our mission. Workplace flexibilities can help enhance productivity, employee satisfaction, employee retention, and improve space utilization. Our goal is to find the optimal mix of face-to-face interactions and workplace flexibilities to restore our vibrant, interactive campus presence and remain a high-performing organization.

As such, supervisors should work with their staff to plan for the return to campus operations starting August 2, 2021. SoHE will conduct a pilot of workplace flexibilities and remote work during the fall 2021 semester and evaluate its effectiveness in January 2022.

In developing and implementing workplace flexibilities, supervisors may consider remote work arrangements as one tool in a larger framework of workplace flexibility. The following document lays out the principles and guidelines to use when considering workplace flexibilities and remote work. The SoHE guidelines correspond to the campus Remote Work Policy (released May 19, 2021) and are subject to change if needed to comply with overarching campus policies.

If workplace flexibility plans include remote work as part of a regular, repeated schedule, a remote work agreement is required. Requirements of such agreements are noted in this policy with more detail provided in the campus Remote Work Policy. Remote work performed on a sporadic basis does not require a Remote Work Agreement.

SoHE Guiding Principles

SoHE will be operating primarily as an in-person unit with flexible workplace and work schedules to accomplish the following goals:

- A vibrant SoHE community
- A high performing organization
- An inclusive, welcoming environment to all
- Service-oriented and committed employees in a satisfying workplace
SoHE Workplace Flexibility Factors

In developing and implementing workplace flexibilities, supervisors and employees may consider the following factors:

- Job responsibilities (e.g., some work may require a physical presence on campus or working during specific hours while some work can be performed more efficiently off-campus or during non-standard work hours)
- Employee performance
- Team dynamics and productivity
- Employee satisfaction and well-being
- Office space and scheduling considerations
- Equipment needs and workspace design considerations
- Potential budgetary impacts

Remote Work Agreements

Remote work agreements are required if remote work is part of a regular, repeated schedule and must comply with the campus Remote Work Policy, including: (the following is not a complete list of requirements)

- Remote work agreements are term-limited but can be renewed; and are subject to modification or cancellation provided 30-days’ notice.
- Supervisors will review remote work agreements as part of the performance management process.
- Remote work performance will be evaluated using the same criteria as on-campus performance.
- Employees who work remotely will be expected to be equipped with internet connectivity that allows for reliable work performance and communications.
- Employees who work remotely will be expected to attend certain meetings and functions on campus, including on days they would normally work remotely.

Out-of-State or International Remote Work

If remote work is being considered for out-of-state or international locations, that will require separate review and approval as these arrangements involve increased costs and risks to SoHE and campus.

Health and Safety

All campus health and safety guidelines will be followed. Units with shared spaces should discuss how the guidelines will be implemented in their units and what additional procedures, if any, will need to be followed. Units should work with John Hilgers, SoHE IT and Facilities Manager, to address health and safety needs.

Procedure

Using the prompts provided by the Associate Dean for Administration, Natalie Feggestad, in her email dated May 20, 2021, submit your unit plans to her by June 16, 2021. You are encouraged to discuss your plans with Natalie Feggestad prior to final submission. Plans will be reviewed and approved by the Dean’s Office by June 25, 2021.