

Telecommuting Expectations for Managers:

This is an unprecedented time for NMU. Try to be creative in how and what work is being done. Leaders need to take time to communicate expectations, set up processes and tools for documenting and sharing information, and make sure no remote or campus-based worker feels isolated or siloed. If telecommuting is possible, here are a few telecommuting considerations:

If there is a change in on-campus department hours or office accessibility, update your department webpage. Indicate if face-to-face hours are limited or if you have implemented a call-first protocol. If your office is closed, implement energy saving protocols as you would during the winter break by unplugging extra devices, turning off lights, etc.

1. Communication is Critical

- Keep telecommuters involved in day-to-day updates.
- Let your staff know how and when they can reach you throughout the workday.
- Indicate how often your employee(s) must communicate with you. Set times for when everyone will meet virtually, and when you will check in with team members individually.
- Consider videoconferencing, such as Google+ Hangouts, Zoom, etc. Seeing your employees — even if it's virtually — helps you, and them, feel less disconnected. It also helps to avoid miscommunication when giving feedback, because your workers can read your facial expressions and body language.
- Never let a telecommuter feel like they're on an island. Aside from the department and individual meetings you schedule, try to connect with every team member at least once a day and ask for feedback.
- Contextual information should be documented in a central location, like a Google Drive, that all team members can access.
- Project timelines and team members' work schedules should also be current and available through shared documents or shared calendars.
- Let your staff know if anyone is unable to complete something remotely they should be accountable and transparent about it. Discuss any problems they are encounter immediately and look for resources or assistance.

2. Workspace Considerations

- Workspace
 - Encourage employees to have a proper workspace and established work rules for family members or others who inhabit the same space. Ideally, the space should have the capability to shut out noise and distractions.
 - The space should allow confidentiality of computer screens, papers, and voice as well. Remember that [FERPA](#) and [Data Classification](#) policies governing confidential and private data apply whether working from campus or telecommuting.
- Technology Resources and System Access. Plan how to address technology issues for telecommuters.
 - Computer equipment: Laptop, docking station, mouse and keyboard. If an employee does not have a laptop, contact the Technology Asset and Business Management Office at thinkpad@nmu.edu.
 - Internet connection
 - Secure remote access to NMU's internal network through the use of the VPN. See <http://nmu.edu/workfromanywhere> for more information. Employees are expected to use VPN for university work. Home networks are not as secure. While employees often use Gmail using personal devices or home networks, use VPN for all University work.

- Access to NMU Gmail
- Access to shared drives and Google drives
- Establish protocols for updating hardware, software, virus protection, firewalls, passwords, etc., for telecommuters
- Consider backup solutions if one type of technology is temporarily unavailable
- Phone. To redirect your phone see <http://nmu.edu/workfromanywhere> for more information.

3. Set Goals and Expectations

- Work Hours/Routine
 - Require work hour transparency. Establish working hours, give consideration to flexible schedules.
 - Encourage employees to start each work-from-home day the way you would a work-from-the-office day: Get out of bed at a set time, change clothes and "commute" to a designated workspace.
 - Encourage employees to practice good time management. Discuss best working routine with your employees. Encourage meal breaks and wellness breaks just as they did in the office.
 - Establish compatible hours when your schedules will overlap.
- Goals and Expectations
 - Set clear expectations for the work to be done and monitor how things are going.
 - Trust your employees. You need to trust that your staff will complete the tasks they have been assigned to the best of their ability within the time needed. Clear lines of communication will ensure this can be accomplished.

4. Comply with Employment and Other Applicable Laws

- Union contracts and employment laws still apply.
- All employees:
 - Work hours should be consistent or compatible with the employee's current FTE and position. You may discuss alternate work schedules with your employees; i.e. adjusted work hours, working partial days with annual leave substitution, etc. Contact HR if you have alternate work schedule questions.
 - Employees are entitled to meal breaks and wellness breaks.
 - Employees must make notification and obtain approval for taking sick or annual time.
- Non-exempt employees:
 - Non-exempt employee work hours need to be recorded and approved.
 - Discuss overtime with your employees. All overtime work must be approved in advance and must be worked as directed by the supervisor.
- Exempt A/P employees:
 - Discuss overtime with your employees. Exempt A/P employee work hours over forty (40) hours in a regular workweek must have prior approval. Those hours are eligible for an equal amount of compensatory time.

Telecommuting Checklist for Managers

This document should help you assess the technology requirements of your employees and help prepare them to work remotely.

Technology / Access

Ensure employee has appropriate hardware

Laptop Current Issued

Notebook computer, related accessories and internet connection needs should be sent to thinkpad@nmu.edu. Pick up of materials will be at the Micro Repair Desk in Harden Hall.

Mouse

Keyboard

Monitor (in rare circumstances if two screens are required to complete work)

If possible, assign a colleague to assist others in department with technology-related questions.

Ensure employee has appropriate software/accessibility. For detailed instructions visit <http://nmu.edu/workfromanywhere>.

Employee has tested their personal internet connection to ensure it works

If issued a new laptop, employee should ensure access to Google suite, bookmarks and frequently used sites and systems, i.e. Banner, Extender, etc.

Employee should download the Cisco VPN app and test it to ensure it works

Show employee how to access to department's shared drive

Show employee how to use Google Drive for information/document sharing

Ensure Zoom account is set up

Redirect work phone to appropriate phone number

Work Documentation

Discuss department files that should be copied/scanned to department share drive.

Discuss additional hard copy files and/or documentation that will be needed. Employee is not to remove paper documents that are not copied elsewhere. If employees MUST remove paper documents that are not available anywhere else, consider logging them out and checking them back in upon return.

When telecommuting, ensure employees understand that privacy and confidentiality rules still apply. Employees agree that any resources and/or documentation removed from campus will be returned to campus in a timely manner when the telecommuting period is over.

Communication / Setting Expectations

Create a communication plan for your employee/team regarding when and how you will communicate.

Set expectations regarding how employee should be communicating with other stakeholders (students, etc.)

Discuss the policies and processes for handling confidential information. Confidentiality rules vary by department, but at a minimum, all employees must comply with the University's [FERPA](#) and [Data Classification](#) policies.

Establish work hours. Comply with FLSA and union contracts, i.e. meal breaks, overtime, comp time).

Create a list of expectations of work to be done and discuss how progress will be assessed.

Continue to track and approve work hours/time off. Approve time per payroll schedule via MyNMU.