



# Telework Policy

## Overview

Consistent with our institutional mission, Muhlenberg College is a residential campus, where our students expect connection, community, and in-person learning, support and service. Optimal operations and collaboration are best achieved on campus when we are all together. As announced recently by President Haring, we expect those who have not yet returned to campus to begin doing so, in order to prepare for the return of students in mid-August.

In response to the pandemic, we recognize that many adapted seamlessly to remote work. As a result, partial telework (aka telecommuting, remote work, working from home) may be possible moving forward for staff members whose departmental needs and position responsibilities may support such an arrangement.

## Telework Benefits

- Ability to ensure College operations even if the campus worksite is inaccessible;
- Recruitment and retention of qualified employees;
- Improved work/life balance;
- Greater flexibility for employees and departments;
- Improved employee morale and job satisfaction;
- Reduced absenteeism;
- Reduced commute time and costs; and
- Decreased energy consumption, air pollution, traffic, and parking congestion.

Telework arrangements are intended to have a net-positive effect on an employee's performance and team environment. Telework arrangements are not a benefit or entitlement, and in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with Muhlenberg College. Telework arrangements are job-appropriate and accountability-dependent and are not suitable for everyone. Many positions require faculty and staff to be on-campus on a daily basis due to personal interactions with students, campus colleagues, visitors, etc. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telework as a possible work arrangement. The final decision to allow telework is at the discretion of the College.

## Types of Telework Arrangements

**Occasional Telework:** This may occur in situations where an employee requests to work remotely, on rare occasions. Examples of occasional remote assignments are instances where an employee might not have transportation to work due to unusual circumstances or during times of inclement weather. The employee should notify their manager and secure approval to work remotely as soon as the employee anticipates the need for occasional telework.

**Part-time Telework:** Partial telework allows employees to work in a designated area other than the office (e.g., at home or other location) for part of their workweek. Muhlenberg College considers partial telework to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the position responsibilities are suited to such an arrangement. The employee will have an established, predictable schedule. For example: telework will occur 1 or 2 days per week, on set days. (e.g., every Tuesday). The telework days are identified and agreed to at the outset. Telework may not exceed two days per week, absent a limited exception, as noted below.

**Full-time Telework:** To ensure our staff are available and present to meet the needs of our students, full-time telework is not available unless an employee is in a position that requires residence and/or job responsibilities outside of Pennsylvania, in states that the College is registered to conduct business in. For example, Admissions staff assigned to represent the College on the west coast.

## **Eligibility for Telework**

- Full-time employees working in positions budgeted at least 1560 hours per year;
- Minimum six months of employment with the College;
- Telework is feasible considering the nature of position responsibilities;
- Demonstrated strong performance, dependability, and time-management skills;
- Quality of service within the department can be maintained for students, faculty, staff and other members of the campus community; and
- Specific work activities are portable and may be performed effectively outside the office.

Generally, telework requests will not be considered when position responsibilities require the employee's physical presence on campus; the efficiency of a multi-person office is compromised when the employee is not physically present to absorb a fair share of the on-demand workload; the employee requires close supervision as indicated, for example, by the need for frequent guidance on technical or other matters; the employee's assignments require frequent direction or input from others who are on-site; and/or the employee has demonstrated subpar performance, dependability, and time-management skills.

## **Duration**

Any telework arrangement will be on a trial basis for the first three months. All telework arrangements are granted on a temporary and revocable basis, and may be discontinued by the College at any time and for any reason. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days' notice of such change to accommodate commuting, child care and other issues that may arise from the conclusion of a telework arrangement. There may be instances, however, when such notice is not possible. Similarly, an employee may also request conclusion of a telework arrangement. The employee agrees to return company equipment and documents within five days of termination of the telework agreement.

## **General Expectations/Requirements**

- For part-time telework, a specific work schedule including work days and hours and the designated telework days per week must be agreed upon in advance. Partial telework may be approved for no more than two days per week.
- Should telework be approved, it is essential that the employee and manager maintain an easily accessible line of communication to ensure responsibilities are being met without disruption to team cohesiveness.
- Those working remotely must be available during business hours via email, video conferencing, and phone.
- Employee agrees to be on site as necessary to attend meetings, training sessions, or other occurrences that require in-person attendance, as directed by their manager.
- The needs of the College take precedence over telework arrangements: An employee must report to the primary work location on a scheduled work day when required. Advance reasonable notice will be provided, wherever possible.
- Employees in hourly/non-exempt positions who are approved for telework may not exceed their standard weekly hours; additional hours and overtime are not authorized.
- Non-exempt employees will record all hours worked and meal periods taken in accordance with regular timekeeping practices.
- Employees are expected to maintain accurate time records in accordance with College policy to support and substantiate their work hours and work deliverables.
- Employees who telework are expected to retrieve mail and deliveries, electronic or paper, on a regular basis in order to successfully perform to job expectations. The College will not be responsible for forwarding mail to a remote work location.
- Telework is not intended to serve as a replacement for dependent care or other obligations that may impact one's ability to work as scheduled while at a remote location.
- Employee must maintain their usual workload on telework days.
- Failure to fulfill normal work requirements, in qualitative and quantitative terms, will result in cancellation of telework.
- Employee will arrange for phone calls to their work number to be forwarded to a phone that is available to them while working remotely (e.g., cell phone).
- Employee must timely respond to email and voicemail while working remotely.

- Employees must be healthy and available to work at the remote work location as if they were working at the on-site location.
- Employees who are unable to work due to illness on a day they were otherwise scheduled to work remotely, will use sick time and report their absence to their manager and in Workday.
- Employees are not permitted to telework during periods of medical disability or medical related leave.
- Employees who wish to take time off for vacation on a day they were otherwise scheduled to work remotely must still use vacation time and record this in Workday.
- There is no additional pay for telework, nor will mileage be paid or transportation reimbursed between an employee's remote site and the College. Approved travel for business will be reimbursed from whichever work location (remote or on-campus) is closer to the destination.

### **Remote Workspace Materials and Equipment Requirements**

- Telework is intended to be cost neutral. The employee will establish an appropriate remote work environment. Muhlenberg College will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the remote workspace.
- The College is not required to provide teleworking employees with materials or supplies needed to establish an alternate worksite (desk, chair, cell phone, internet service, fax, printer, copier, etc.) or to reimburse the employee for set-up or operating costs of connectivity services (telephone or internet services, etc.).
- With the exception of a College-provided laptop (if available), College property such as printers, fax machines, desks, chairs, and other equipment may not be used to equip a "home office" and are the responsibility of the employee who is requesting telework.
- The College assumes no responsibility for trouble-shooting or providing technical support for non-College owned property at the employee's remote worksite.
- Employee agrees that College equipment will not be used by anyone other than the employee and only for business-related work. The employee will not make any changes to security or administrative settings on College equipment. The employee understands that all tools and resources provided by the company shall remain the property of the company at all times.
- Employees must return the equipment in the same condition in which it was originally received, minus normal wear and tear.
- Employee is personally liable for any missing equipment and for damaged equipment beyond normal wear and tear, if handled in a careless or reckless manner, and agrees to reimburse the College for the cost of such items, through the convenience of payroll deduction.

### **Safety Requirements**

- Employee will complete the Telework Safety Checklist (see below).
- Employee agrees to comply with all of the safety precautions that apply to an on-campus work environment, including ensuring a safe work station, free of clutter, tripping hazards, slippery surfaces, and other unsafe conditions.
- [Workers' compensation](#) coverage is not applicable to employees that are injured when they deviate from the course and scope of the employee's work responsibilities or for injuries that occur at the remote work site outside of the employee's standard schedule.
- Employees are expected to contact their homeowners or renters' insurance carrier to ensure appropriate and continuous liability insurance for securing College property and information at their remote work location. For more information, please contact [jasonfeiertag@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:jasonfeiertag@muhlenberg.edu) with any risk-management questions.
- Employee agrees to report any injuries occurring at the remote work site, directly to the employee's manager and to [Human Resources](#).
- The College assumes no liability for injuries of the employee's family members, friends, or other visitors, which occur in the employee's remote workspace.
- The College assumes no liability for damage to personal property, which occurs in the employee's remote workspace.
- The College does not authorize, and explicitly prohibits visitors including but not limited to students, faculty, staff, and other members of the campus community to an employee's remote workspace for the purposes of conducting College business of any kind, including dropping off College mail and other materials.

## Security of College Information and Resources

- Employee agrees to use secure connections (not public access wi-fi) when conducting College business remotely and to notify the [Office of Information Technology](#) immediately in the event there is a system failure and/or lost or stolen equipment.
- Employee agrees to maintain any confidential materials, College documents, or proprietary information securely and dispose of information appropriately, following OIT procedures regarding the security of confidential information.
- Employee agrees to use malware/virus-protection on any non-College-owned devices used to conduct College business.

## If you are interested in Telework:

- Step 1: Review the Telework policy in its entirety.
- Step 2: Talk with your manager to discuss your request.
- Step 3: If your manager supports the request, complete the Telework Safety Checklist and Telework Request form (available below).
- Step 4: Obtain your manager's signature on the Telework Agreement.
- Step 5: Email the completed forms to Human Resources: [hr@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:hr@muhlenberg.edu).
- Step 6: Human Resources will evaluate the telework request. If approved, Human Resources will sign the agreement, keep a copy for the personnel file, and return a copy to the employee and manager.
- Step 7: If approved, the manager and employee must ensure that all department team members are aware of the arrangement and know how to contact the employee on telework days.
- Step 8: Begin telework!

## Telework Safety Checklist

Employee Name (please print):

Remote Work Address:

### General

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Workspace is away from distractions and accommodates your work needs?      | Yes | No |
| 2. File drawers, if any, are not top-heavy and do not open into walkways?     | Yes | No |
| 3. Cords/wires are safely secured and not a tripping or fire hazard?          | Yes | No |
| 4. Temperature, ventilation, and lighting are adequate?                       | Yes | No |
| 5. All stairs with four or more steps are equipped with handrails?            | Yes | No |
| 6. Workspace is free of tripping hazards and hazardous materials?             | Yes | No |
| 7. Radiators/portable heaters, if any, are located away from flammable items? | Yes | No |
| 8. There is a working smoke detector in the workspace area?                   | Yes | No |
| 9. A multi-use fire extinguisher, which you know how to use, is available?    | Yes | No |
| 10. Hallways and doorways are unobstructed?                                   | Yes | No |

### Electrical Safety

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Sufficient electrical outlets are accessible and adequate?              | Yes | No |
| 2. Computer equipment is connected to a surge protector?                   | Yes | No |
| 3. All electrical plugs, cords, outlets, and panels are in good condition? | Yes | No |
| 4. Equipment is turned off when not in use?                                | Yes | No |

### Workstation

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Your back is adequately supported by a backrest?                  | Yes | No |
| 2. Your feet are on the floor or adequately supported by a footrest? | Yes | No |
| 3. You have enough leg room?   | Yes | No |
| 4. There is sufficient light for reading?                            | Yes | No |
| 5. Your screen is at eye level and free from glare?                  | Yes | No |

### Security Measures

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Files and data are protected from damage and unauthorized access?      | Yes | No |
| 2. Materials/equipment are protected from damage and unauthorized access? | Yes | No |
| 3. Personal computers use up-to-date anti-virus software?                 | Yes | No |

Employee Signature:

Date:

# Muhlenberg College Telework Agreement

Employee Name (please print):

## Part-time Telework Request:

Effective Date:

Remote work day(s):

Remote work daily schedule (specific hours):

To occur (choose one):      weekly      biweekly      other (please describe below)

## Occasional Telework Request:

Remote work daily schedule (specific hours):

All requirements and expectations for remote work as outlined in the remote work policy, apply to occasional telework as well.

## Full-time Telework Request\*

\*To ensure our staff are available and present to meet the needs of our students, full-time telework is not available unless an employee is in a position that requires residence and/or job responsibilities outside of Pennsylvania, in states that the College is registered to conduct business in.

Effective Date:

Remote work daily schedule (specific hours):

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I have fully reviewed the College's telework policy (4 pages) and telework safety checklist (1 page), understand the contents of each document, and agree to their terms and conditions. I have also had an opportunity to ask any questions regarding the College's telework policy and telework safety checklist. I understand that employees permitted to work remotely, from home or offsite, remain subject to the terms and conditions of employment set forth in the [College's Handbooks](#) for Staff employees.

Employee Signature:

Date:

Manager Approval:

Date:

Human Resources Approval:

Date: