



## Telecommuting Policy and Procedure

### Objective

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home, on the road, or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. Georgian Court University considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not a companywide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with Georgian Court University.

### Procedures

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months and may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the organization. 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 termination of a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

**Any telecommuting arrangements through August 24, 2020, that are agreed upon due to COVID-19 do not require a telecommuting agreement. Any telecommuting arrangement that will extend beyond August 24, 2020, will require a telecommuting agreement.**

### Eligibility

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and manager, with the assistance of the Office of Human Resources, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

- **Employee suitability.** The employee and manager will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
- **Job responsibilities.** The employee and manager will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
- **Equipment needs, workspace design considerations, and scheduling issues.** The employee and manager will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.

- **Tax and other legal implications.** The employee must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, state and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.

If the employee and manager agree, and the Office of Human Resources concurs, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a three-month trial period will commence.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone and e-mail between the employee and the manager, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the end of the trial period, the employee and manager will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications. Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by employees working at the office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than on time-based performance.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After conclusion of the trial period, the manager and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

### **Equipment and Supplies**

On a case-by-case basis, Georgian Court University will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, modems, phone and data lines, and other office equipment) for each telecommuting arrangement. The Office of Human Resources (HR) and Office of Information Technology (OIT) will serve as resources in this matter.

- All IT purchases, whether software or hardware, go through the OIT.
- OIT must tag all equipment and maintain a log that will be sent to the Office of Finance in report form annually for fixed assets.
- OIT must notify HR of any equipment issued to an employee for input into the HRIS system. In the event of separation from the university, the employee will be expected to return any equipment issued by the university prior to receiving final pay.

Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the organization, will be maintained by the employee. Georgian Court University accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. Georgian Court University reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all Georgian Court University property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft.

Upon termination of employment, all company property will be returned to the company, unless other arrangements have been made.

Georgian Court University will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary. Georgian Court University telecommuting employees must abide by university purchasing and accounting policies for all purchases and expenditures incurred for telecommuting equipment or services. The Telecommuting Agreement will be required as documentation for purchases and expenditures and must be attached to all transactions.

- An employee will describe and present to the supervisor a request for office equipment, hardware, software, communication needs, and/or office supplies needed to participate in telecommuting from a remote worksite. The supervisor will review the request for approval for purchase reimbursement. The university will not reimburse the employee for any costs not pre-approved by the supervisor. Purchases or reimbursement shall be provided in accordance with applicable university policies.
- The university will not reimburse employees for out-of-pocket expenses for materials and supplies that are reasonably available at the regularly assigned place of employment.

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. Georgian Court University 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 home office space.

### **Security**

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary company and customer information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

### **Safety**

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. Georgian Court University will provide each telecommuter with a safety checklist that must be completed at least twice per year. Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties are normally covered by the company's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her home worksite.

Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business

demands. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering a trial period.

### **Time Worked**

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to accurately record all hours worked using Georgian Court University's time-keeping system. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the telecommuter's supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement.

### **Ad Hoc Arrangements**

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects, or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the organization and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate.

All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization.