



BP 7261

Allan Hancock Joint Community College District
Board Policy
Chapter 7 – Human Resources

BP 7261 TELECOMMUTING

It is the policy of Allan Hancock College to consider the use of telecommuting where it is a viable management work option with clearly defined benefits. The district recognizes the benefits of such work options for employees when both district and employee needs can be addressed.

Adopted: 10/10/07

Revised:

(Replaces Board Policy 5980)

Allan Hancock Joint Community College District
Administrative Procedure
Chapter 7 – Human Resources

AP 7261 TELECOMMUTING

I. TELECOMMUTING PROCEDURES

Managers and employees must understand that adherence to the policy and procedures is an essential requirement of the telecommuting program.

A. Responsibilities

All vice presidents, directors, deans, managers, supervisors, and telecommuters are expected to become familiar with and comply with the district telecommuting policy and procedures. More detailed descriptions of responsibilities are provided in the 'Procedures and Considerations' section.

B. Eligibility

Full time classified employees are eligible for participation in the telecommuting program. Probationary employees and/or temporary employees are not eligible to participate. Employees serving in a training capacity or providing hands-on service will not normally be approved to participate in the telecommuting program on a regular, ongoing basis.

This policy does not apply to faculty or management.

C. Participation Approval

Participation in the telecommuting program is voluntary and subject to the prior written approval by both an employee's immediate supervisor and department dean/director. The final decision will rest with the appropriate cabinet-level administrator. Approval must be completed prior to the start of the employee's telecommuting schedule by execution of a Telecommuting Agreement. The supervisor and employee will each maintain a copy of the Telecommuting Agreement. The originals will be placed in the employee's personnel file maintained in Human Resources

D. Renewal of Telecommuting Understanding

The Telecommuting Agreement needs to be completed and approved at least annually.

A. Termination of Telecommuting Participation

The employee may discontinue participation in the telecommuting program at any time, for any reason, upon written or verbal notice to his/her supervisor. Management may terminate an individual employee's participation at any time, as follows:

1. For any reason, upon providing fourteen (14) calendar days prior written explanation to the affected employee.
2. For cause, upon provision of 24 hours prior explanation to the affected employee. All verbal explanations are to be followed with a written explanation, within fourteen (14) calendar days.
3. The employee should return to work if equipment fails and will lead to the loss of a specified period of work time (more than four hours). The employee will remain in the office until such time as the equipment is again functional. The Telecommuting Agreement will be temporarily suspended if the equipment is malfunctioning.

The requirement for prior written notification and explanation may be waived in the event of an emergency (such as equipment failure).

II. BACKGROUND

A. Definitions

“Telecommuting” is defined as periodic work away from the normal work location, one or more days per week, either at home or in a location that meets the work environment criteria specified in this procedure. More formally, it is the partial substitution of computers or telecommunications technologies, or both, for the commute to work. It is usually an off-site arrangement that permits employees to work in or near their homes, near clients' offices or at project sites for all or part of a work week.

B. Benefits

The use of a telecommuting arrangement can assist management and employees in economically and effectively accomplishing the mission of the district in the following ways:

1. Improve program effectiveness and employee productivity and morale;
2. Facilitate optimum utilization of the office space and parking facilities;
3. Reduce absenteeism;
4. Promote employee health and wellness;
5. Improve employee recruitment and retention;
6. Improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion;
7. Enhance the working life and opportunities of persons with disabilities; and
8. Effectively continue business as part of a disaster recovery or emergency plan.

III. PROCEDURES AND CONSIDERATIONS

A. Considerations for Telecommuting Participation

The work to be performed will be the determining factor for telecommuting. Participation in the district telecommuting program should be based on the ability of the employee to perform tasks that can be completed from remote locations, such as a home office and the manager's assessment of the employee's ability to complete those tasks satisfactorily. Consideration, on a case-by-case basis, should be given to the following:

1. Performance Evaluations

Is Overall Summary of the employee's evaluation rated as "MEETS STANDARDS" or "EXCEEDS STANDARDS"?

2. Job Knowledge

Does the employee have the necessary knowledge to perform the required job tasks at home or does the employee need close supervision or input from others that is only available at the office?

3. Job Characteristics

Does the job lend itself to self-directed activities? Can priorities be easily established? Can the time of the activities be managed effectively by the employee?

4. Task Scheduling

Does the individual already work alone handling information tasks such as thinking, planning, coordinating, writing, reading, analysis, teleconferencing, computer programming, word processing or data entry? Can tasks, which can be completed away from the office, be grouped and scheduled for telecommuting days? Can staff meetings and conferences be grouped and scheduled for non-telecommuting days or accommodated through other means (e.g., teleconferencing)?

5. Public/District Contacts

What portion of the job is devoted to face-to-face contact with other departments, students, the public or internal staff? Can this contact be structured to allow for communication via phone or computer, or grouped into non-telecommuting days, or can alternatives be established to provide this contact on telecommuting days?

6. Reference Materials

What portion of the job requires the use of reference materials or resources located in the designated work site? Can these resources be easily taken home for a day or two without interfering with co-workers' job performance? Are these resources available through other means such as a computer accessible library service?

7. Use of Computers

Will response time on computer equipment used at home be fast enough to allow for required productivity?

8. Network Access

If network access is needed, is a high speed internet access available? In many of the job assignments, access to the district's computer network is essential for obtaining work-related information, processing work and communicating. The effectiveness of performing work at a remote location, such as a home office, may be greatly diminished if an employee does not have a secure access to the computer network. If connection to a Local Area Network (LAN) or computer desktop at the work place is required, are the necessary remote access agreements in place? Has the employee completed training for and demonstrated an adequate level of skill in use of the computer and software that will be used for telecommuting?

9. Special Equipment

What portion of the job relies upon access to specialized equipment? Can access be managed to allow telecommuters needs to be met on non-telecommuting days or can these needs be satisfied at a facility near the employee's telecommuting office?

10. Information Security

What portion of the job uses secured or otherwise confidential information and can the integrity of that information be secured in accordance with information security policies?

11. Travel

Does the job involve field work? Can trips begin or end at the employee's off site office rather than at the district location without affecting the work schedule or mileage arrangements?

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Cabinet-Level Administrator

Administer the telecommuting program in their respective departments, including ensuring compliance with all applicable policies and procedures; identifying positions suitable for the telecommuting option, and determining whether the department should provide equipment and software on a case-by-case basis. Unless there are extreme mitigating circumstances, the district will not provide equipment and software when a similarly equipped workstation is maintained at the office for the employee seeking a telecommuting option. Provision of equipment for a telecommuter will normally be an exceptional situation in which the cabinet-level administrator determines a clear benefit to the program and the employee has special needs. In such cases, an

Equipment Use Agreement form must be completed and signed by the telecommuter, supervisor, and cabinet-level administrator.

B. Directors, Deans, Managers, and Supervisors

1. Determine if proposals for their employees to telecommuting are likely to contribute to the district's objectives, while maintaining or improving program efficiency, productivity, service, benefits, and safety conditions.
2. Ensure that employees who remain in the office are not burdened by being required to handle the telecommuter's regular assignments (i.e., answering telephone calls, dispensing information, etc.).
3. As for all other employees, provide specific, measurable, and attainable performance expectations for the telecommuter; define in detail, assignments, corresponding deadlines, and the quality of work expected.
4. Provide for employee training in use of equipment and software as required for the employee to function effectively and independently.
5. Inform employees that failure to comply with policy and procedures may be cause for terminating participation in the telecommuting program and/or possible disciplinary action.
6. Obtain cabinet-level administrator approval by submitting the completed and signed Telecommute Agreement to the appropriate administrator for their consideration and signature.
7. If approved, provide employee with copies and maintain copies of the employee's Telecommuting Agreement, and, if applicable, Equipment Loan Agreement.
8. Send original forms to Human Resources for placement in the employee's personnel file.

C. Telecommuters

1. When telecommuting is determined to be a viable work option, work with supervisor to develop an acceptable telecommuting agreement.
2. Abide by the provisions set forth in this Telecommuting Policy and Procedures.
3. Adhere to all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures regarding information security as outlined below in "Information Security."
4. Acquire the skills necessary to meet district requirements and operate independently from a telecommuting site.
5. Establish and maintain an acceptable work environment as outlined in "Work Environment Criteria" and "Setting Up an Office".
6. Establish, operate and maintain the office area, equipment, telephones, devices, and services associated with the telecommuting arrangement.
7. For district-owned equipment follow the guidelines in the Employee Equipment Loan agreement.
8. Adhere to all district policies, with special attention to the Computer and Network Use policy 3720.

9. Do not hold any district business related meetings at the physical telecommuting site. Participation in district meetings will be in person at a district location or using technology such as Skype per the supervisor direction.
10. Comply with Tax laws. The district is not responsible for substantiating a telecommuter's claim of tax deductions for operation of a home office used to perform district work. Employees should seek advice from a tax advisor concerning home office deductions. However, if required by the IRS and if a copy of the employee/telecommuter's executed telecommuting agreement is not sufficient evidence, under limited circumstances this district will certify, if requested, as to the dates during which a Telecommuting Agreement between the college and the employee/telecommuter was in effect.

D. Human Resources Office

1. Assist employees and management in understanding the Telecommuting Policy and Procedures.
2. In coordination with the Technology Council and the Human Resources Council, maintain and update the Telecommuting Policy and Procedures as needed.
3. File appropriate paperwork (contract) in the employee's personnel file.

E. Information Technology Services (ITS)

1. Approve any district-purchased software or hardware installed for the telecommuting option to ensure that it is in accordance with software copyright laws and compatible with district hardware and software standards.
2. Provide general oversight regarding equipment and other information and computer needs associated with telecommuting. No direct support of employee-owned equipment or software is provided.
3. Provide guidelines defining the appropriate data communications equipment, computers, software and services for home-based telecommuting. In-house operations will take first priority.

V. TELECOMMUTING SCHEDULING

A. Regular Schedule

"Regular telecommuting" means an established schedule of days per week or month. A regular telecommuting schedule must be established prior to the start of the work arrangement and must be mutually agreed to by the employee and the supervisor. Any change in the agreed upon schedule must be approved by the supervisor, and when established, documented and appended to the Telecommuting Agreement. The supervisor and the telecommuter must take actions to prevent the telecommuter from becoming isolated from office staff.

Schedule changes are to be approved by the appropriate cabinet-level administrator.

An employee must forego telecommuting if needed in the office on a regularly scheduled telecommuting day in order to meet the work goals of his or her unit or department, or the needs of the district. The employee may also be called in to the office when necessary to meet operational needs. The manager or supervisor should provide reasonable notice whenever possible. However, due to unforeseen circumstances or an immediate need, the employee may be required to report to the office without advance notice, as needed.

While working away from the office, employees must be accessible for communication (e.g., telephone, text messages, Skype, e-mail, etc.). Supervisors are encouraged to allow for flexibility in the means for accessing a telecommuter. Full-time telecommuting is permissible only when necessary and justified (e.g., to accommodate medical restrictions or disabilities) and depends on the needs of the job and demonstration of a clear benefit to program objectives and operations.

B. Temporary Schedule

Employees may be allowed to telecommuting on a temporary basis as their duty assignment permits. Circumstances that may be appropriate for “temporary” telecommuting included, but are not limited to:

1. Special project work which requires a period of uninterrupted time.
2. While all reasonable commute routes are blocked (i.e., major construction, storm, or disaster).
3. Primary work site is inaccessible or uninhabitable.

A short-term, temporary telecommuting agreement between a supervisor and an employee does not require the completion of the Telecommuting Annual Agreement. The supervisor must send written notification specifying dates, times, and reasons to the cabinet-level administrator at the start of a temporary telecommuting schedule.

C. Hours of Work and Overtime

Terms and conditions of collective bargaining unit agreements would apply.

VI. CONSIDERATIONS

A. Equipment, Software, Services, Maintenance, Repair, and Replacement

The district will not, as a standard, purchase computers, software, software licenses, telephones, Internet or phone services or office equipment such as printers, fax machines, calculators, or furniture for in-home telecommuting. In addition, the selection, installation, maintenance, repair or replacement of employee-owned equipment and software is the responsibility of the employee.

Computer equipment should have a configuration that is compatible with the district's information technology infrastructure. In the event of equipment malfunction, the telecommuter must notify his/her supervisor immediately. If repairs will take some time, the telecommuter may be asked to report to their district office until the equipment is usable. District-owned equipment and services are to be used only for district business. The telecommuter must repair and/or replace at own expense any district-owned equipment that is damaged, lost, or stolen due to inattention.

B. Work Environment Criteria

The opportunity to participate in a telecommuting program is offered with the understanding that it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that a proper work environment is maintained as follows:

1. Designate an area that allows for working in an office setting. Ensure that the equipment necessary to perform the work is in the designated area.
2. Make advance arrangements for dependent care to ensure a productive work environment. (Telecommuting is not intended to be a substitute for day care or other personal obligations.)
3. Keep personal disruptions such as non-business telephone calls and visitors to a minimum.
4. Obtain pre-approval from the supervisor for use of vacation time or sick leave to attend to family or home matters during home office hours.
5. Ensure that the office is a safe place to work. See "Setting up An Office" below.

C. Information Security

Security of confidential information is of primary concern and importance to the district. Telecommuters, like all district employees, are expected to adhere to all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures regarding information security. The following are basic information security guidelines:

1. Use district information assets only for authorized purposes, and ensure that confidential information is not disclosed to any unauthorized person.
2. Back up critical information on a regular basis to assure the information can be recovered if the primary source is damaged or destroyed.
3. Use "logon" passwords on all systems containing confidential information and keep those passwords secure.
4. Use the latest virus protection software on telecommuting systems used to prepare information for subsequent use on district systems.
5. Return material (paper documents, digital media, etc.) containing all confidential information to the district for proper handling or disposal, if necessary.
6. Adhere to copyright laws by not copying or sharing any district owned software utilized by telecommuters, and when no longer employed by the

district, remove all such software from the home computer and return any software media to the college.

D. Health and Safety

Failure to maintain a proper and safe work environment, in accordance with this policy, may be cause for terminating the telecommuting program for the employee. If an employee incurs a work-related injury in the approved “home office” portion of the house during telecommuting hours while telecommuting, workers’ compensation laws and rules apply just as they would if such an injury occurred at the main office. However, if the injury occurs in another portion of the home, even if it occurs during telecommuting hours, it will not be covered under workers’ compensation laws. Employees must notify their supervisors immediately and complete all necessary documents regarding a work-related injury, or regarding an injury that occurred during working hours.

E. Setting up an Office

It is important for all employees to maintain a healthy, safe and ergonomically sound work environment while working in the office or at a remote location. The major difference between the employer's office and the remote office is ownership and control over the workplace.

VII. TELECOMMUTING PROCEDURES

These procedures are to be followed prior to the start of a telecommuting schedule. The employee submits a verbal or written request to his/her immediate supervisor, who should discuss the proposal with his/her manager. If the proposal is viewed as having potential for approval, the supervisor or the employee completes a Telecommuting Agreement. The agreement is signed and dated by the telecommuter and the supervisor, who forwards the agreement for approval to the director/manager/dean and then to the cabinet-level administrator, who has final decision-making responsibility for approval of the Telecommuting Agreement. The cabinet-level administrator retains a copy of the Telecommuting Agreement and returns the packet to the supervisor.

If approved, the supervisor retains a copy of the signed telecommuting agreement, gives a copy to the employee, and forwards the original agreement to Human Resources for placement in the employee’s personnel file.

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