

Section: Employee/Labor Relations

Section Number: 4.9.16

Subject: Other Working Conditions: Telecommuting Policy

Date of Present Issue: 05/23/08

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POLICY:

Lake Superior State University may at times choose to make available to certain University employees the option of telecommuting, a mutually agreed-upon work alternative whereby the telecommuter performs University-related assignments from somewhere other than on-site University premises. This type of work arrangement may be made when a mutually beneficial situation arises.

Telecommuting, properly administered, may serve to reduce absenteeism, improve staff recruitment and retention, and provide employees with greater flexibility in meeting job and family demands.

ELIGIBILITY

Telecommuting is a cooperative arrangement between Lake Superior State University and the employee, not an entitlement, and is based on:

1. the needs of the job, work assignments, and University mission, and
2. the employee's past and present levels of performance.

All University employees who perform tasks amenable to telecommuting are eligible for telecommuting consideration. Specific tasks include writing, reading, telephoning, data analysis, computer programming, word processing and data entry. The need for, and nature of, interaction with other staff and customers will be examined.

Employees are not required to telecommute. Employees have the right to refuse to telecommute if the option is made available to them.

Telecommuters should possess the following characteristics:

1. proven ability to perform effectively with minimal supervision and high job knowledge,
2. self-motivation, self-discipline, self-direction,
3. above average skills in planning, organizing, managing time, and meeting standards and objectives,
4. conscientious self-starter requiring minimal supervision, and
5. proven telecommunication skills.
6. hold positions in which job duties lend themselves to telecommuting

Supervisors should possess the following traits to ensure the success of the telecommuting arrangement:

an open, positive attitude towards telecommuting,
a mutual trust and respect in relations with the telecommuter,
above-average organizational and planning skills,
ability to establish clear objectives and measurements,
provide feedback regularly,
facilitate open communication, and
an innovative and flexible approach to supervising employees.

APPROVAL:

Certain conditions must be agreed to in a telecommuting work arrangement. A telecommuting agreement, [attached as page 4](#), must be completed and signed by the telecommuter, supervisor, and appropriate vice president prior to the start of the telecommuting assignment. The agreement will become part of the telecommuter's personnel file.

SCHEDULE

A regular telecommuting schedule, including specific days and hours, must be established and approved by the supervisor. The amount of time the employee is expected to work per day or per pay period will not change due to participation in the telecommuting program. The employee will be required to establish a work schedule when at the off-site work location. Telecommuters may be required to be on campus certain hours/days and they may also be required to perform job duties at specific hours.

Telecommuters are required to have a telephone answering machine to ensure unimpeded availability.

If a telecommuting employee is sick while working at home, the employee is required to report sick leave for time not worked. Vacation hours are similarly required to be reported and vacation time used.

Telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent care. Telecommuters shall make arrangements for dependent care during scheduled offsite work hours, if necessary.

The supervisor must approve any changes to the telecommuter's work schedule. The supervisor retains the right to require a telecommuter to return to the University work site should the work situation warrant such an action.

EQUIPMENT

As a general rule, telecommuters may provide their own personal computer and other needed equipment and supplies, or the University may approve the use of University-owned equipment. University equipment shall not be used for personal purposes. Unless otherwise agreed to in writing, and prior to any loss, damage or wear, LSSU is not liable for loss, damage, or wear of employee-owned equipment.

Personal computers must be evaluated, configured, and loaded with appropriate software by Information Technology staff.

Under most circumstances, telecommuters will be permitted to run LSSU standard software on their home PC based on University licensing agreements. Information Technology staff must be contacted to ensure software conformance.

Telecommuters will take all precautions necessary to secure privileged information and prevent unauthorized access to any University system from the established work site.

WORK SITE CONDITIONS

The employee's compensation, benefits (including workman's compensation), work status and work responsibilities will not change due to participation in a telecommuting arrangement. Telecommuters are responsible to ensure that the off-site work location is safe and ergonomically correct. Since the telecommuter's workspace is an extension of the University's work space, LSSU's liability for job-related accidents continues to exist during the approved work schedule and in the employee's designated work location. To minimize the risk of work-related injuries, LSSU reserves the right to evaluate the employee's off-site work location for ergonomic considerations (e.g., placement of desk, chair, keyboard height and lighting) at a mutually agreed upon time. At least 24 hours notice is required for such evaluations, which shall be limited to the designated workspace only. LSSU will not be liable for injury to others in the employee's off-site work location during established working hours.

Homeowner's insurance and any changes in rates or coverage, and utility costs are the responsibility of the employee and not LSSU.

TELEPHONE EXPENSES

As with equipment and supplies, telecommuters are responsible for all telephone charges, including a separate phone line for accessing the LSSU network unless the University in writing specifically approves reimbursement. If authorized for reimbursement, telecommuters must present an itemized copy of the telephone bill on a monthly basis to their supervisor for reimbursement.

LENGTH OF ASSIGNMENT

Telecommuting requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Length of assignment for each telecommuting request will be individually assessed. The telecommuting agreement is subject to cancellation by the telecommuter or the University at any time without cause.