

Engineering Hybrid Work Model

INTRODUCTION

The goal is to promote a structured hybrid work model (HWM) for participation by College of Engineering (CoE) and Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station (TEES) staff with appropriate controls for performance, accountability, safety, and information security. The HWM provides flexible work arrangements for positions

- when the work is conducive to it
- when it can mutually benefit the Engineering Enterprise and employee in achieving work deliverables
- when the work performance can be appropriately monitored
- when it does not result in a significant additional financial cost to the division/department

Remote hybrid work is described as a location-flexible arrangement, allowing employees to combine onsite and remote work. To ensure overall business needs are met and that full services remain uninterrupted, employees may request to work remote one day of the week on either Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

By comparison, an approved *Alternate Work Arrangement* is an arrangement that provides for the employee to work at a location other than designated headquarters based on a business necessity. Examples include access to specific equipment and/or customers at another location, space constraints at division headquarters or used to retain employees with specialized skills.

REFERENCES

- [System Regulation 33.06.01](#) Flexible Work Arrangements
- [TEES SAP 33.06.01.E0.01](#) Flexible Work Arrangement
- [TAMU SAP 33.06.01.M0.01](#) Alternate Work Location for Non-Faculty Employees

DEFINITIONS

- a. *Alternate Work Arrangement* – an arrangement that provides for the employee to work at a location other than designated headquarters based on a business necessity. Examples include access to specific equipment and/or customers at another location, space constraints at division headquarters or used to retain employees with specialized skills.
- b. *Full-Time AWA* – employee works at an approved location other than the one indicated on their position description.
- c. *Remote Hybrid Work* – a location-flexible arrangement, allowing employees to combine onsite and remote work. This arrangement may or may not be in response to a business need.
- d. *Designated Headquarters* – The official work location of record for the employee's position; i.e. on-site campus. Referred to as on-site work location.

- e. *Alternate/Remote Work Location* – the location of work other than primary headquarters of the division
- f. *HWM Agreement* - A written agreement that outlines the expectations, terms, and conditions.
- g. *Emergency Situation* — a situation when normal facilities are not available or when public health situation is required.
- h. *Flexible Schedule* — a work schedule documented by employee and supervisor that differs from the standard Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- i. *Hoteling* — shared office space used by more than one staff employee, as appropriate, and as needed. These non-dedicated, non-permanent workspaces are reserved in advance. The space is equipped with standard office technology.
- j. *Personally Identifiable Information (PII)* — information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, social security number or biometric records, alone or in combination with other personal or identifying information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual, such as date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, etc.
- k. *Tax Home* — the geographical region where an employee earns the majority of his or her income, regardless of his or her permanent residence. The tax home is the location used to determine where a taxpayer has deductible travel expenses.

GUIDELINES

CoE and TEES recognizes the value of implementing a hybrid work model to benefit the workforce and business needs. Establishing a program that is consistent with and supports the agency and college mission and performance goals, when properly administered, improves individual and organizational productivity, serves as a recruitment and retention tool, improves work-life quality, provides for cost saving and space saving measures.

- a. Based on assigned duties, supervisors will consider employees eligible for participation in an HWM. Supervisors shall be responsible for applying the criteria specified in this policy to determine if the job characteristics of a particular position make this unattainable.
- b. Employee participation in a HWM is voluntary. Supervisors may not require an employee to participate even if they are eligible.
- c. Eligible employees, including supervisors, will be provided the option based on the assessment tool outcome.
- d. Not all positions are eligible and not all employees are eligible to participate.
- e. Supervisors will be responsible for approving and monitoring employee performance and productivity and ensuring normal levels of support and service.
- f. A decision to terminate or modify an employee's HWM agreement shall not be arbitrary but instead based on performance issues or business requirements.
- g. Administration reserves the right, with reasonable advance notice, to require employees, to return to the designated headquarters on scheduled HWM days based on operational needs, workload and interaction with co-workers and customers.
- h. CoE and TEES will provide computing resources to employees who participate in a HWM generally consisting of a laptop or tablet.

- i. CoE and TEES is not responsible for any operating costs associated with an employee's HWM location.
- j. Appropriate information security measures and procedures will be maintained for all employees participating in an HWM. CoE and TEES entities shall ensure that confidential information, PII, proprietary information and/or other sensitive data are handled and protected in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
- k. Employees participating in a HWM are to use the required security protections, such as encryption, for all classified and sensitive information, and follow this and all agency and Texas A&M University System policies as they pertain to the protection of information and information system resources.
- l. The remote work location must ensure that confidentiality is maintained and secure.
- m. A HWM is not intended to serve as a mechanism to provide child or elder care services or to perform other activities unrelated to the employee's official duties.
- n. Employees shall use accrued leave as applicable to account for time not worked.
- o. The agreement does not modify the "at will" status of any A&M System nonfaculty employee.
- p. Employees with disabilities will be offered equal opportunity to participate in the HWM program.

ELIGIBILITY

All CoE and TEES employees will be considered eligible to apply for a HWM unless otherwise determined ineligible based on job description, work environment/location and job duties. Completion of the Assessment Tool will aid in determining eligibility. Employees engaged in a HWM will receive periodic assessment throughout the year to determine success of the work relationship.

Position Criteria

- a. Positions that do not require constant/ongoing access to equipment, materials or files that can only be accessed while at division headquarters.
- b. Positions that do not require extensive in person face-to-face contact with supervisors, co-workers, customers, and visitors.
- c. Review the position requirements to determine if the time spent on tasks that could support a HWM and compare to tasks that require on-site presence to be performed.

Before declining a HWM based on the above, determine if duties and tasks may be realigned to be performed on the on-site workdays and other non-essential duties performed on off-site days.

Employee Criteria

Supervisors are to assess individual performance characteristics and criteria when considering an employee for an HWM. Employee eligibility criteria, at a minimum, shall include the following:

- a. A current performance evaluation with a rating of at least meets expectations.
- b. No current documented disciplinary actions.
- c. Proven track record of job knowledge and producing quality work.
- d. Demonstrated dependability and the ability to work independently.
- e. The ability to prioritize work effectively and use good time management skills.
- f. Compliance with A&M System and agency standards of conduct.

- g. Current on all A&M System and agency mandatory training.

EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS

- a. An employee's remote location is an extension of the on-site work location and as such, employees are to present themselves in a professional manner as it relates to attire and surroundings.
- b. The employee's work time is not altered due to participation in a HWM arrangement and time spent on personal tasks should be minimal just as if they were working on-site.
- c. Employees are accountable for achieving the results expected by supervisors as it relates to establishing regular communication.
- d. Employee and supervisor should discuss and come to agreement on what defines the employee being readily available while working at the remote location.
- e. HWM employees are to be treated consistently with non-HWM employees concerning achieving results.
- f. HWM employees are required to satisfactorily complete all assigned work, consistent with the documented position description, other duties as assigned and general expectations as it relates to current productivity.
- g. The performance elements and standards for HWM employees shall remain the same as those for non-HWM employees performing the same or similar duties.
- h. The non-exempt employees will request supervisor approval in advance of working any overtime hours.
- i. The employee will request supervisor approval for, and document use of vacation, sick, or other leave as relevant for the intended type.

AGREEMENT

- a. Participation in a HWM is an option and not an employee right.
- b. An approved HWM agreement (renewed each year) is required. The agreement must be reviewed by employee, and approved by the employee's supervisor, department head/division director and Engineering Human Resources.
- c. The employee and their supervisor must review and update the HWM at a minimum of six months after initiation and annually during the performance evaluation period.
- d. A permanent change in the HWM requires a modified HWM agreement.
- e. The agreement should state the location, days and expected work hours to be performed at an alternate location and days and hours work to be performed on-site.
- f. Requests by an employee to change or adjust the schedule during a given work week must be submitted in advance and approved by the supervisor.
- g. If an HWM has an adverse impact on employee or employer performance, or an employee no longer meets the eligibility criteria, a supervisor may terminate and/or modify the HWM agreement, as appropriate, by providing notice to the employee with communication with Engineering Human Resources.

- h. All pay, leave and travel entitlements will be based on the employee's official location.
- i. An HWM may be temporarily adjusted to meet critical deadlines or for attendance at important meetings and events as required.
- j. The employee must immediately notify his or her supervisor in case of an on-the-job injury.

MANDATORY TRAINING

To support an effective HWM program CoE and TEES supervisors and HWM employees must complete an interactive training program. The training will include the following:

- a. An overview of the program, including eligibility criteria, standards, and how the program is expected to function.
- b. Strategies for managing an effective HWM, such as how to:
 - Manage for results.
 - Ensure compatible work projects.
 - Perform performance management responsibilities under an HWM.
 - Schedule and track work assignments.
 - Ensure effective communication.
- c. The security requirements for COE/TEES systems and the protection of sensitive security information, PII, proprietary information and confidentiality.
- d. Training will be assigned and completed via TrainTraq.

EQUIPMENT AND DATA

HWM employees are to use the required security protections and follow CoE and TEES and A&M System policies as they pertain to the protection of CoE and TEES equipment and data.

- a. Employees shall not authorize any other person to use any CoE and TEES-furnished equipment.
- b. Employees are responsible for installation, service, and maintenance of all personal equipment, including network connections, from their off-site work location. CoE and TEES shall be responsible for the maintenance of all furnished equipment. The employee may be required to bring equipment into the office for maintenance. The employee must return all furnished equipment and material to the employer at the conclusion of the HWM or upon request.
- c. Employees will ensure that all A&M System equipment is listed on the offsite inventory sheet.
- d. Employees shall minimize transfer of hardcopy records containing PII from the permanent worksite to an alternate worksite.
- e. Employees must immediately notify their supervisor of any lost or stolen equipment, media, or data.
- f. The off-site work location must be safe as outlined in the safety checklist.
- g. Adequate technology, computer connectivity, bandwidth, and phone service/coverage.
- h. Capability to maintain appropriate interaction with co-workers, subordinates, superiors, and customers electronically or by telephone in a manner that does not adversely affect customer service or unit productivity.

- i. Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure equipment issued by employer is used in compliance with System Policy 33.04, Use of System Resources.
- j. Work done at the remote work location is subject to records retention policy.

Procedure

The following procedure will be utilized to request, assess, approve, and evaluate a HWM request.

1. Employee and supervisor hold initial discussion on feasibility.
2. Employee initiates request using the HWM assessment tool.
 - The assessment includes a review of position tasks, business needs, remote workplace safety and performance.
3. Assessment routes to the supervisor for review. Follow up discussion with employee held as needed to clarify request.
4. Assessment routes to division/department head for review and approval/disapproval.
 - Consider how the request will affect staffing needs and determine if it is a good business decision.
 - Decisions to approve should include a review of other HWM requests to assure consistency among staff.
5. Engineering Human Resources will review.
 - Follow up with supervisor and employee as needed for clarification.
 - Employee, supervisor, and division/department head will be notified of requests not approved.
 - Approved requests will initiate the agreement to be signed by employee and supervisor.
 - Signed agreements will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.
6. Employee and supervisor will be assigned mandatory training.
7. As assessment will be conducted after 3 months and during the annual performance evaluation process.
8. At the discontinuation of an approved HWM, documentation will be placed in the employee's personnel file and on record with Engineering Human Resources.