

## **70.3 Policy on Alternative Work Arrangements for Administrative Staff**

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**Policy Name: Alternative Work Arrangements for Administrative Staff**

**Approval Authority: Administrative Council**

**Responsible Executive: Vice President of Human Resources**

**Responsible Office: The Office of Human Resources**

**Effective Date: April 1, 2014**

### **I. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT**

Stevens Institute of Technology (“Stevens” or the “University”) will consider alternative work arrangements that allow employees to balance work and personal commitments while ensuring that the operational/business needs of departments and the University are met at all times. These arrangements will only be considered for high-performing employees who have spent considerable time at Stevens and whose productivity would be enhanced by an alternative work arrangement. For certain employees, alternate work arrangements can offer a unique opportunity to cultivate a rewarding career and professional relationships while balancing modern work-related challenges such as daily commutes and family demands.

The opportunity to structure an alternative work arrangement will be handled on a case-by-case basis and will remain subject to modification based upon the demands of the employee’s workload, the need to attend in-person meetings, and other circumstances. There is no entitlement under this Policy or otherwise to have or continue such an arrangement, and all decision-making will be within the discretion of the employee’s supervisor, the Vice President overseeing the department and the Vice President for Human Resources. Alternative work arrangements may be reassessed, modified and ended at any time and for any reason.

Either the University or an employee may initiate an alternative work arrangement. Alternative work arrangements must be approved, in writing, by the employee’s supervisor, the Vice President overseeing the department and by the Vice President of Human Resources prior to implementation. Alternative work arrangements will be memorialized with a written Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement. Employees working under alternative work arrangements will be expected to maintain an appropriate level of connectivity and certain technological capabilities, which may vary from time to time and employee to employee, and may include video conferencing, screen sharing and other devices. The technological capabilities required of any particular employee and arrangement will be set forth in the Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement.

Employees with a medical need for an alternative work arrangement should contact the Office of Human Resources to discuss their needs.

Alternative work arrangement options are not intended to permit employees to have time to work at other jobs, to run their own businesses, or to attend to other personal matters.

The Administrative Council will, from time to time, review data and metrics to address the effectiveness of alternative work arrangements, and may amend this Policy at any time.

## II. DEFINITIONS

**“Alternative Work Arrangements”** refers to work arrangements that are variations from the standard workday, workweek and/or work location.

**“Telecommuting”** refers to allowing an employee to work at home and/or another remote location in addition to his/her assigned work location within Stevens’ facilities on a regular or periodic basis.

**“Flexible Work Schedule” (“Flextime”)** refers to fluctuating starting and ending times during the workday and/or workweek.

## III. ELIGIBILITY FOR ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Employees interested in being considered for an alternative work arrangement should discuss the options with their supervisor. Each area or department will designate the appropriate approval route for the recommendations of supervisors to reach the Vice President overseeing the department. Alternative work arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on job-related factors such as the nature of the employee’s job, departmental work flow, and student or faculty service needs.

In addition, because working an alternative work arrangement is considered a privilege, to be eligible for consideration for an alternative work arrangement option, the employee must meet the following criteria before being granted authorization to work an alternative work arrangement:

- A. Employed in the current position for a minimum of twelve (12) months, unless an exception is approved by the supervisor, the Vice President overseeing the department and the Vice President for Human Resources.
- B. Consistently meets deadlines, produces high quality work, and has maintained acceptable levels of work performance, conduct, behavior and/or attendance throughout employment.
- C. Not currently on a performance improvement plan or other form of disciplinary or performance sanction or review.

- D. Meets the additional criteria described below specific to the type of alternative work arrangement requested.
- E. Agrees to adhere to all conditions outlined in the Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement.

Employees who commence an alternative work arrangement without receiving approval from the employee's supervisor, the Vice President overseeing the department and the Vice President of Human Resources or without completing the Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

This Policy is inapplicable to faculty members based on the nature of their role, which includes flexibility to manage their own schedules based on their teaching, service, and research responsibilities.

In general, only staff members who are not part of a collective bargaining unit are eligible for the alternative work arrangements described in this Policy. Collective bargaining unit employees have a negotiated agreement with the University that governs their terms and conditions of employment.

#### **IV. DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENTS**

##### **A. Telecommuting**

Telecommuting is an alternative work arrangement that provides flexibility in an employee's work environment. Staff employees may request participation in and receive approval to work at home and/or at an approved remote location for part or all of their scheduled work week.

In addition to the criteria described above, requests for telecommuting will be based on the following further criteria, which include but are not limited to:

1. The employee's position does not require daily face-to-face interaction with students, faculty, or co-workers.
2. The employee's position does not involve the use of equipment, facilities, or records that are not accessible from the work-at-home or remote location.
3. Job tasks and functions can be effectively performed and/or enhanced by telecommuting.
4. The employee is able to work independently with little or no supervision and is able to manage his/her time effectively.
5. The employee is knowledgeable of job expectations and requirements.

6. The employee is able to timely and appropriately receive and deliver work product.
7. The employee agrees to attend pre-scheduled work meetings, training sessions, and/or required work-related events, as determined to be necessary by the supervisor.

A telecommuting arrangement under this Policy does not include temporary (i.e., ad hoc) work at home due to special conditions such as short-term/minor employee illness or injury, caring for a family member with a short-term or minor illness or injury, providing dependent care, or the management of emergency home maintenance.

Employees who are telecommuting are required to work during their defined scheduled hours during the day. Deviations from the employee's standard scheduled hours must be discussed with the employee's supervisor and recorded.

Non-exempt employees must work at least the standard eight (8) hour day and forty (40) hour week, unless they are in a position that has a seven (7) hour day and thirty-five (35) hour week. Breaks must be included in the scheduling of hours for non-exempt employees.

Exempt employees must work at least an eight (8) hour day and forty (40) hour week. Additionally, it is assumed that all exempt employees who request an alternative work arrangement option will willingly include as a part of their regular work week additional work time outside of normal work schedules to handle short-term projects and to satisfy weekly work requirements.

Telecommuting schedules must be fixed for the term of the arrangement – usually a minimum of three (3) months – and cannot be varied by the employee day-to-day or week-to-week, recognizing that the supervisor may require a modification to the telecommuting schedule at any time.

Employees who telecommute and are unable to work because of illness must use sick leave and must report the absence to their supervisor. Employees who telecommute and otherwise wish to be relieved of responsibility for work on a particular day or days must use vacation or personal leave and report the absence to their supervisor. While working for the University in an alternative workplace, Employees may not conduct personal business except as permitted for work conducted on campus under the University's applicable policies, procedures, rules and standards of conduct.

Employees working under telecommuting arrangements will not be reimbursed for expenses associated with travel from the alternative workplace to the University's campus in Hoboken, New Jersey. Such travel will not be considered "official travel" under Stevens' Business and Travel Expense Policy. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved in writing by the Vice President overseeing the department in which the employee works and the Vice President for Human Resources.

## **B. Flexible Work Schedule (Flextime)**

A flextime alternative work schedule allows staff employees to adjust their arrival and departure times subject to the operational/business needs of the department and University.

The supervisor is responsible for establishing hours of operations. Flextime schedules typically allow the employees to choose their daily starting and ending hours within certain limits. Examples of flextime hours include variable arrivals e.g., 7:00 a.m. through 9:00a.m. or according to the department's operational needs. Flextime might not be feasible within some departments based on their operational needs.

Employees are required to be at work during their defined scheduled hours during the day.

Non-exempt employees must work at least the standard eight (8) hour day and forty (40) hour week, unless they are in a position that has a seven (7) hour day and thirty-five (35) hour week. Breaks must be included in the scheduling of hours for non-exempt employees.

Exempt employees must work at least an eight (8) hour day and forty (40) hour week. Additionally, it is assumed that all exempt employees who request an alternative work arrangement option will willingly include as a part of their regular work week additional work time outside of normal work schedules to handle short-term projects and to satisfy weekly work requirements.

Flextime arrangements will remain subject to change based upon operational needs that require work past designated hours (whether as overtime work for non-exempt employees or otherwise).

Flextime schedules must be fixed for the term of the arrangement – usually a minimum of three (3) months – and cannot varied by the employee day-to-day or week-to-week, recognizing that the supervisor may require a modification to the flextime schedule at any time.

## **V. TERMINATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENT**

In consultation with the Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President overseeing the department, the employee's supervisor reserves the right to modify, suspend or terminate the employee's alternative work arrangement option at any time for any reason. In addition, an employee may be required to have his/her alternative work arrangement terminated if it is determined that the employee has committed a violation of the University's policies and

procedures. Employees may request termination of the alternative work arrangement by providing reasonable notice to their supervisor and obtaining supervisory approval.

## **VI. UNIVERSITY PROPERTY**

The University may pay for telecommuting equipment and services at its sole discretion. In most cases, employees will be expected to provide their own equipment, such as computers, wireless or other connectivity and telephone lines, if they wish to telecommute.

If University equipment is provided, each piece of equipment must be listed in the Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement with its serial number when the staff member takes possession. Equipment such as computers, printers, software, and services such as fax lines provided on loan by the University, remain the property of the University while on loan, and the employee must return such items upon termination of the telecommuting arrangement.

University property such as computers, printers, fax machines and other equipment loaned to an employee is the employee's responsibility while it is not on University premises. Employees must take reasonable steps to secure any University-owned or University-provided equipment and to use the equipment only for work purposes. Employees must return the equipment in the same condition in which it was originally received, minus normal wear and tear. Employees are personally liable for missing or damaged equipment.

If the University provides computer equipment for, or an employee is accessing or handling the University's documents, information, data, or files, including sensitive, confidential or proprietary documents, information, data or files in an alternative workspace, the employee must maintain the confidentiality of such documents, information, data or files and adhere to all applicable University policies, procedures, rules, and standards of conduct concerning the confidentiality of University information, data, or property. Employees must protect all University records and information from unauthorized disclosure or damage.

The University reserves the right to monitor or inspect University property, including but not limited to University equipment, supplies, or data at any time.

## **VII. EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND PROPERTY IN AN ALTERNATIVE WORKPLACE**

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that any alternative workplace over which the employee has control is free of any safety hazards, such as electrical, chemical or physical hazards.

Employees are subject to worker's compensation laws and regulations if they are injured or become ill in the course of performing official duties at the regular workplace or an alternative workplace. Employees are required to notify the Office of Human Resources within one (1) working day of any accident, injury and/or illness that occurs in the course of performing official duties at an alternative workplace. The University assumes no liability for injuries/illness occurring in an employee's alternate workplace outside of work hours.

Stevens will not be liable for damages to an employee's personal or real property while an employee is working at an alternative workplace.

Stevens will not be responsible for any operating costs that are associated with an employee using an alternative workplace.

An alternative workplace may be subject to inspection by the University and/or by federal or state governmental agencies related to workplace injuries or other incidents, or to ensure compliance with applicable laws.