

Flexplace (sometimes called "telecommuting" or "working from home") is a mutual agreement between a supervisor and a staff member that some part(s) of the staff member's work is done at home, or at another location different from the employee's usual workplace. Typically, the staff member will continue to work on-site the majority of work hours. Flexplace can include "occasional flexplace" in which the employee works at a different location when a specific task requires uninterrupted time and privacy. Issues of appropriate supervision, the nature of the work, and compliance with all legal requirements must be carefully considered before such an arrangement is approved, and the arrangement must be carefully monitored on an ongoing basis.

The employee is responsible to inspect the designated workspace before work from home begins, and on a periodically-scheduled basis thereafter (yearly minimum recommended), and whenever work area changes introduce new potential workplace hazards. The department is to retain all documentation (for one year minimum) regarding inspections, including findings and corrective actions. See the [Stanford University Home Office Safety Checklist](#).

In addition to the General Considerations, specific factors for determining whether a Flexplace arrangement is appropriate include:

The work to be performed

- Clarity as to the specific tasks and duties that will be performed
- Whether the work is capable of being performed remotely
- Whether the responsibilities to be performed outside the usual workplace are appropriate to the individual's job classification assignment
- Whether the work to be performed off-site meets a business and critical operational need

- The degree of interaction (both in person and by phone) with other University offices required to get the work done
- Ability to provide customer service
- Whether the job includes supervising the work of others
- How the employee will be available to respond to work questions (e.g., work a set schedule; be accessible by phone, e-mail, fax)

Employee's current performance

- The employee's job performance level
- Whether the employee is still in a trial period
- Whether the employee is meeting expectations as reflected in his/her most recent performance evaluation
- Whether the employee is on a performance or disciplinary track

Supervision

- Clarity as to how performance will be evaluated
- The degree of supervision required to accomplish the work
- The supervisor's ability to judge whether work is being performed
- The supervisor's ability to trace and verify the time spent working; e.g., whether the work has measurable outputs (e.g., pages to be typed, a paper to be produced, a specific number of accounts to be reconciled, etc.)
- The degree of confidence the supervisor has in the employee's ability to accomplish the work off site

Work Environment

- Whether the environment where the employee proposes to work is appropriate to accomplish the work (e.g., whether the employee will have competing obligations that will preclude optimal productivity)
- Adequate protection of sensitive and confidential material
- Adequate back up for any tasks the employee would normally perform on site

The Specific Request

- The duration of the request (one time, brief, or ongoing)
- Whether funding sources restrict where the work is performed
- Clarity that the arrangement is not an entitlement, and that management may revoke the arrangement in its sole discretion at any time
- Impact on the morale of others in the work group


Compliance issues

- Clarity as to reporting processes for any for work-related injuries or illnesses
- Compliance with any rest and meal break requirements
- For non-exempt employees, clarity as to overtime considerations (whether overtime is or is not permitted and how it is monitored and approved)

Materials and equipment

- Ease of transporting materials and equipment necessary to perform the work
- Clarity as to who will provide the equipment required to do the job, and how the equipment will be returned to the University when the off-site assignment ends
- Clarity as to responsibility for the payment of associated expenses (e.g., installing computers, phone lines, recurring expenses, repair)
- Clarity as to responsibility for compliance with ergonomic requirements

Requests and Approval for Flexplace

- Requests for flexplace/work off site/telecommuting should be made in writing by the supervisor/manager to the local HRO (attaching a copy of the employee's request, if any), together with the business case for granting the request (e.g., description of operational need).
- The Flexplace arrangement should be documented, including specific work arrangements and applicable work rules. See [Sample Letter of Understanding re: \[Flexplace/Telecommuting/Working Off Site/Telecommuting\]](#)  and [Sample Letter of Understanding re: \[Flexplace/Telecommuting/Working Off Site/Telecommuting\] From Out of State.](#) 