



Alternate Work Location Arrangement Pilot Program Q&A

Denials

- 1. Is there an appeals process if a request is denied at any level or if a department elects not to participate in the Pilot Program? Do departments have to give an employee an explanation or reasoning for a denial?**

No, there is no appeals process, and departments are not required to give an employee reasoning for denial. HR is aware that some departments and divisions will not participate in the new AWLA pilot, and many positions on campus are not conducive to telework.

- 2. Will approval be needed from the supervisor, Director/Chair, and Dean? What happens if one does not approve?**

Yes, Partial Telework requests will need to be approved by the supervisor through the Dean/Director. If your request is not approved by the supervisor, department, and division, you are not authorized to telework. All levels of approval must occur before telework begins.

Eligibility

- 3. Please clarify "Adequate performance assessment and sustained high performance" as an eligibility criterion. Is this related to employee evaluations?**

Adequate performance, at a minimum, is an overall evaluation rating of Satisfactory and no disciplinary action within the last year. Additionally, the employee should work independently and produce at least the same amount of work while working on-site. If an employee is not producing or is difficult to reach while teleworking, they may not be a good candidate for Partial Telework.

- 4. We have OPS & FWS positions that have proven to be effective remote. Can a department make this determination, or does the six-month employment rule still apply?**

Unless excluded from the pilot program, OPS employees should perform a minimum of six months of service before Partial Telework is offered.

Faculty/GAs

- 5. Will faculty be included in the pilot program?**

Faculty assignments of responsibilities are more fluid and therefore are mostly excluded from the pilot program since many currently have the ability to work from a different location.

- 6. In light of the Partial Telework program, will faculty have to get formal approval from their department head and dean to work from home two days per week?**

No, but they would be expected to be on-campus to perform regular assigned duties that normally require face-to-face interactions.

- 7. How will Extended Telework be implemented with faculty, some of whom have worked from an alternate work location more than two days a week?**

This will be allowable provided the faculty member satisfies their assignment of responsibilities. A telework request that requires modification of the assignment of responsibilities due to a disability/medical-related concern should be referred to the ADA Coordinator.

- 8. Is it up to the department if a Graduate Assistant can perform their duties remotely? If so, can full remote work be approved at the department level?**



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Graduate Assistants whose primary duties are instruction or research are excluded from the pilot program. They will work with their supervisor and department head to determine which duties must be performed on campus.

Equipment

- 9. Will we be allowed to take equipment home that we already have for the days we work remotely? If I have two monitors already and want to keep one at home and only use one in the office, can I do that?**

University equipment such as stationary monitors should be kept at your campus office. Any exceptions would require approval and should comply with ITS and asset management policy and guidelines.

- 10. The policy states that in “most cases,” remote employees are responsible for their own equipment. Does a department need to get special approval to purchase equipment for remote employees? Can a department develop a remote work expectation for equipment?**

The pilot program prohibits a department from incurring any additional cost or expenses to allow employees to work from an Alternate Work Location.

- 11. Beyond an internet connection at the remote location, what does “appropriate equipment” mean?**

In addition to an internet connection, employees working from an Alternate Work Location are responsible for providing their own computers, monitors, desk, chairs, webcams, etc.

Pilot Program

- 12. Will this pilot program begin August 1?**

Yes, but your division may implement a later effective date or opt not to participate in the pilot program.

- 13. After the pilot program concludes, is there a possibility the AWLA program will be canceled?**

The future of the AWLA pilot program is unknown at this point. HR recognizes that work location flexibility is a benefit to job seekers and employees. However, FSU is a vibrant residential campus. We want to ensure no negative impact on the services provided to students, employees, research, and business operations.

The policy states, “some departments/divisions may choose not to offer [AWLA] as an option.” As a department head, do I need to know if the head of my division is allowing these arrangements? Does a division-level decision affect all departments within the division?

You should consult with your dean, director, and vice president. The vice president may select specific departments within their division that are eligible to participate.

- 14. Is there a plan for announcing these division/department policy positions throughout the University?**

HR will not be announcing eligibility of specific departments. We are providing the DDDH flexibility in making this determination.



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Other

- 15. If an employee workspace does not provide six feet of separation or other density requirements, is that an acknowledged exemption for an Extended Telework request?**

The University will be lifting all COVID restrictions by August 1, which includes the social distancing guidelines. However, employees have the option to continue wearing a face covering while indoors or on campus.

Partial Telework

- 16. Is there flexibility in work hours when working at an alternate location?**

The pilot program offers flexibility with work location and does not change or alter assigned work hours. Therefore, telework should not result in a change in scheduled hours.

- 17. If interested in participating in the new pilot program, what is the process of requesting this through our department?**

HR is working on an electronic assessment, request, and approval process, which will be released in the coming weeks. However, it is recommended that you discuss your request with your supervisor before submittal. Additionally, eligible employees within a participating department should be flexible with their telework days as supervisors will need to ensure campus coverage during the operational hours of the University.

- 18. Is Partial Telework permitted for up to 16 hours per week, or does it have to be on two specific days?**

Partial Telework is limited to only two days per week, not to exceed 16 hours (for 1.0 FTE) or 40% of an employee's FTE.

- 19. Would it be possible to do half-days, with part of the day on campus and the remainder remotely, that total two days? Or would this be something that is up to the college/department?**

No, you may do two half days or eight hours, but you could not do four half days. An employee who does two half days should understand that commute time from campus to home (or vice versa) should occur during their unpaid meal period.

- 20. What about someone who only works two days a week? Would they be eligible to work both those days remotely?**

No, Partial Telework still requires your primary location to be at a campus location. Telework should be limited to 40% of an employee's FTE.

- 21. Could everyone in the office work remotely for the same two days?**

No. Everyone working remotely for the same two days would not be permitted as departments should have campus coverage for all services during the operational hours of the University.

- 22. Will there be flexibility from week to week on which days someone works remotely, or will it have to be the same two days each week?**

Week-to-week changes become difficult for supervisors to manage. However, we understand that a particular day, such as Friday, may be a day that all employees want to telework. In this circumstance, a supervisor could evaluate approving a telework schedule for a block of time (for example, quarterly) and then rotating.

- 23. Has there been any consideration for departments to approve up to 2.5 days weekly of telework?**



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Partial Telework ensures an employee's primary work location is their FSU or on-campus office. Requests for 50% or 2.5 days per week should only be for exceptional circumstances and need to go through the Extended Telework Request process.

24. For employees who participate in Partial Telework, would DDDH be able to request on-campus presence five days a week during peak seasons? What if employees in the pilot program do not comply?

Yes, divisions can impose a five-day, on-campus presence during peak seasons. In addition, the pilot program allows termination of telework at any time by the department or HR. Please contact HR immediately if an employee does not comply with your expectation to return to on-campus duties.

Extended Telework

25. What are considered exceptional circumstances that justify Extended Telework?

The most common is an employee relocating, and the department requests the employee continue with their job duties until they have completed the recruitment and hiring process. Therefore, Extended Telework should generally be time-limited. Any medically driven Extended Telework request would go through the reasonable accommodation process managed by the University's ADA Coordinator in HR, Amber Wagner.

26. Does the Extended Telework Agreement form (telework agreements greater than two days) replace the current telecommuting agreement form for remote positions?

The Extended Telework Agreement is very similar to the current Telecommuting agreements. Positions designated as remote will be marked on the PD and will no longer require annual review.

27. I want to check "Other," but what sort of situations would qualify under "Other?" Is documentation required for Other?

Extended Telework is for exceptional circumstances only. The most common "other" will be to provide services during the recruitment of an on-campus vacancy. Long commute times or reduced distractions would generally not be appropriate for Extended Telework but are factors of why it may be beneficial to have an employee partially telework up to two days per week.

28. For the dates of the proposed telework period, can the end date be "TBD?"

For Partial Telework, there can be a predetermined end date or TBD date. Please note that telework is not guaranteed and may be terminated at any time, regardless of the agreed to end date.

Extended Telework is only approved up to a year at a time.

29. Can the number of telework days be increased if you have a small child/infant at home, perhaps?

No. The new pilot program does not allow employees to care for individuals while teleworking.

Remote Positions

30. Can existing positions be converted to remote positions?

It depends. If the remote work is based on the person, the request falls under the telework guidelines of the AWLA. If the remote work is position-based due to location or skill, it may be eligible to be designated as a remote position. The department should work with their assigned Compensation Analyst to assess eligibility.



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31. Should all similar positions to a remote position also be remote? Could this be considered an equity issue?

We evaluate remote eligibility based on the geographic location of the assigned responsibilities or in cases where the department has had difficulty recruiting in the Tallahassee area for a highly skilled role. The position must not require a campus presence.

32. If a position is remote, will supervisors of that position be able to request physical attendance at meetings/etc. as needed? What does the phrase “100% remote” mean?

“100% remote” is a fully remote position. A position designated as remote may require physical attendance periodically throughout the year. This is allowed, but the department may need to cover travel expenses. For Extended Telework (person-based), this is also allowable, but the University will not be required to cover travel expenses to the campus location.

33. Would changing a position to fully remote be done when it is vacant as a general rule? Can we do that if it is a currently filled position that meets the criteria?

Occupied and vacant positions can be designated as remote. The department should contact the assigned Compensation Analyst to discuss if the position meets remote eligibility criteria. If so, they will instruct you to complete an ePAF and solicit location information of the incumbent.

Accommodation/Equity

34. Will employees need to provide a reason for their Partial Telework request (like with the Extended Telework request – i.e., medical, pregnancy, etc.)?

Generally, no. However, if an exception to the way the department is implementing the program is being requested on the basis of a disability, pregnancy, or religious reasons – then the reason would need to be given, and the request needs to go through the Reasonable Accommodation process. A justification is required for Extended Telework.

35. Previously, anyone needing to continue working remotely after July 31 could only do so via an ADA request. Is this new pilot program - with an Extended Telework Agreement form – now replacing the previous requirement, or would BOTH need to be submitted?

Technically both. An Extended Telework request based on disability, pregnancy, and/or religious reasons should be initiated as a Reasonable Accommodation request; this is the primary request form that should be used. If an Extended Telework request form is received indicating such justification, it will be forwarded to the University’s ADA Coordinator to be treated as a reasonable accommodation request.

36. When the box is checked for the reason for Extended Telework (Medical, Disability, Other), is any documentation required? If so, what kind of documentation?

The need for documentation will be determined on a case-by-case basis. For pregnancy and some medical, any FMLA paperwork on file may be sufficient. Most disability-related requests will require a medical certification to be completed by a treating physician.

37. If an individual were applying for a medical reason of a child, what box should be checked on the application? Medical, parental, both?

This would generally not fall under the AWLA pilot program since you cannot care for others while teleworking. If you need to take leave to address the medical needs of a child, FMLA may be applicable.