

## COVID-19 Short-Term Telecommuting Guidance

### *Telecommuting Considerations*

#### Overview

UCI is encouraging **social distancing**, meaning that all persons are encouraged to stay at least six feet from one another whenever possible. We encourage managers to think creatively about how to support all employees, including student employees, in reducing risk of exposure to COVID-19, while enabling them to continue to perform valued work and earn income. There will not be one solution that works for everyone. In situations when work can be temporarily performed from home or an alternate location, we encourage managers to allow employees to work remotely and document such arrangements in the COVID-19 Short-Term Telecommuting Agreement.

#### Considerations

Managers are encouraged to think innovatively about alternate work arrangements during this unprecedented time. Some options and other considerations include:

- **Rotate staff in the office.** To implement social distancing, it may be helpful to reduce the number of staff in the office at any one time. Departments can have some staff work part of the week in the office and the other part of the week in office, while the other staff do vice versa. Ensure that there are always at least two staff in the office to ensure safety, if the office is open to the public.
- **Reduce number of staff in the office.** Some positions lend themselves easily to telecommuting. Departments may prioritize telecommuting for these positions to increase social distancing in the office.
- **Stagger schedules.** Consider staggering employee starting and departing times, along with lunch and break periods, to minimize overcrowding in common areas such as elevators, break rooms, etc.
- **Hold larger meetings virtually.** To the extent possible, hold larger meetings via video conferencing technology, like Zoom.
- **Rearrange workspaces or space assignments.** Arrange the workspace to optimize distance between employees, ideally at least six feet apart.
- **Cross-train employees.** For key functions, cross-train employees so that daily schedules can continue relatively uninterrupted by potential employee absences.

The manager will determine if telecommuting is a viable option for the employee and their position by considering such factors as, but not limited to:

- **Job responsibilities and nature of the work.** Determination of whether the job responsibilities and nature of the work lend itself to telecommuting. Jobs that entail working alone or working with equipment that can be kept at the alternate work site may be suitable for telecommuting. However, jobs that require physical presence to perform effectively are normally not suitable for telecommuting.
- **Alternative assignments.** If the employee's normal work has been reduced or eliminated, review other assignments, appropriate to their classification, that they could be temporarily assigned.

- **Priority to special situations.** Some staff may come forward that a member of their household has a comprised immune system or that they have specific concerns about being more vulnerable if exposed. Departments may prioritize having these staff telecommute first. Departments will also want to support a process for deciding who telecommutes in a fair and equitable way.
- **Employee suitability.** Assessment of the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to those customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters, such as ability to work independently and meet deadlines. For COVID-19 response, managers may allow employees they would not normally allow to telecommute, but will need to monitor performance more closely.
- **Alternative worksite.** Consideration of whether the proposed alternative worksite would be a safe, ergonomically sound, and secure work environment. Review of the physical workspace needs and proposed alternative worksite.
- **Equipment.** Evaluation of equipment needs and how they can be addressed if the employee is telecommuting. Review of any specialty equipment needed to perform work. As UCI faces an unprecedented and unexpected time, departments are unlikely to have enough computer and other equipment to loan to employees. Departments should identify which staff have personal equipment at home that could allow them to effectively telecommute by continuing to safeguard and secure UCI data.
- **Security.** Ability to ensure the protection of proprietary, private, and sensitive information accessible from the alternative worksite.
- **Scheduling.** Determination of whether the employee would be available during normal business hours and/or when the department is in need of contact. Employees who are required to provide dependent-care due to closure of a daycare/eldercare/school, may have approved restrictions to hours they work.