FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENT

POLICY

This policy applies to flexible work arrangements for certain exempt and non-exempt staff expected to remain in place for a minimum of three months. These special arrangements must be reviewed annually. This policy is not intended to apply to short-term, ad hoc arrangements to meet unexpected needs. Supervisors are free to use their best discretion, consistent with applicable law and college policies, to address such short-term or unexpected needs. Beyond a college issued laptop to provide secure access to data, new funds will not be added to accommodate a flexible work option, whether through additional hours or through the purchase of equipment by the college.

All college departments must be appropriately staffed at all times in order to effectively pursue our educational mission. In recognition of the wide range of professional responsibilities and duties required of college staff members, there may be circumstances in which a flexible work arrangement can be implemented to optimally balance the needs of the college and an individual staff member and/or work team. This policy outlines the types of flexible work arrangements that may be available to certain staff members and the process by which such an arrangement is developed and implemented.

Minimum Requirements

In order to be considered for a flexible work arrangement, the employee must have a positive work history and a demonstrated ability to perform at a high level without direct supervision.

A flexible work arrangement is not to be used as a substitute for child or dependent care.

Core Hours and Peak Periods

Core Hours refers to the period of hours each workday or peak workload periods during which a department must be staffed at an appropriate or specified level. Core Hours may also include the requirement for employees to be present during a particular day of the week.

Peak Periods refers to cyclical times of the year when business activity or work volume is high, during which a department must be staffed on site at a specified level. During Peak Periods, employees may be required to work on campus for their regular schedule.

The department head is responsible for determining the Core Hours and Peak Periods for his or her department ensuring that the college commitment to a high level of service is maintained. The department head may alter Core Hours and Peak Periods from time to time.

Flexible Work Arrangement

The term “Flexible Work Arrangement” as used in this policy refers to “Flextime” and “Flexplace,” as defined below.

Flextime
Flextime allows for flexible scheduling arrangements that permit variations in starting and departure times, but does not alter the total number of hours worked in a work week. Examples of Flextime arrangements include the following:

- Fixed starting and departure times that are different from normal business hours of the department. Agreed-upon starting and departure times continue for a specified period with the same number of hours worked each day.
- Pre-approved starting and departure times that may vary daily. With such a personalized work schedule, an employee may arrive at work and leave at a different time each day, provided the number of hours worked each day remains the same.

All flextime arrangements must meet the operational needs of the department and college and must conform to the overtime, record keeping and meal break provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Flexplace
The term Flexplace refers to situations when arrangements are made to allow an employee to work at home or another off-site location, for a specified number of hours per week, and/or for a pre-determined duration. A separate work area must be designated in the off-site setting for the Flexplace arrangement. This area must be conducive to working productively.

Requests for Flexible Work Arrangements
Any employee seeking a flexible work arrangement must make a written request to his or her supervisor using the Flexible Work Arrangement Approval Form that can be found on the Sherman College website under Employee Reference Manual. The written request will include:

- The type of flexible work arrangement being requested;
- The reasons for the request;
- The employee's plan for meeting the responsibilities of his or her position;
- Work schedule (hours, days, commitment) requested; and
- The proposed start and end date of the flexible work arrangement.

Considerations for Evaluating Flexible Work Arrangements
Every proposal for a flexible work arrangement will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. That evaluation will include a discussion between the supervisor and the employee seeking the flexible work arrangement regarding the reasons for the request and the needs of the department in which the employee works. The evaluation will take into account the following factors:

- Operational needs of the specific department and the college along with the impact of the request on students, faculty, and staff;
- Ability for a department to maintain appropriate staffing levels during Core Hours and Peak Periods;
- Impact on other staff members both within the department and those who may work regularly with the department; and
- Past performance levels of the employee.

In addition to the factors outlined above, the following factors will be considered with respect to a proposed Flexplace arrangement:

- Whether the position has clearly defined work that can be accomplished off-site;
- If there are position requirements that cannot be met from an off-site location;
- Whether the employee's results/productivity can be measured effectively through offsite supervision;
- Whether the department can continue to meet its standards for service and staff availability;
- Whether the employee proposing the Flexplace arrangement has a demonstrated record of excellent time-management skills and satisfactory, independent work performance;
- Whether there are effective methods for communicating between the employee and supervisor;
- The frequency and schedule for the employee being on-site to meet with the supervisor, co-workers, and customers;
- How the proposed Flexplace arrangement may affect cross-training initiatives, team-based approaches, and other similar strategies; and
- Expectations for availability during the workday.
- Feasibility, as it relates to compliance with relevant state/territory payroll and insurance laws and regulations.

Approval of Flexible Work Arrangements

Upon receipt of a flexible work arrangement proposal, the supervisor receiving the request will discuss the request with the employee. The college provides the *Is My Team Member Ready* rubric as a tool to help supervisors evaluate employee readiness for a flexible work arrangement. Additionally, the appropriate executive team member must approve any flexible work arrangement, in consultation with the employee's supervisor. If approved, the employee will receive a copy of the Flexible Work Arrangement Approval Form specifying the terms and conditions for the flexible work arrangement. If a request for a flexible work arrangement is not approved, the supervisor will inform the employee of the reasons for such decision.

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If a request for a flexible work arrangement is approved, the approval will be for a designated probationary period only. The probationary period will be specified in the written approval of the flexible work arrangement. The probationary period will normally be at least 30 days.

At the end of the probationary period, the supervisor will re-evaluate the arrangement considering the factors set forth in this policy as well as the performance and productivity of the employee during the pilot period and the impact that the arrangement had on the department and other employees.

Based on the results of that re-evaluation, the flexible work arrangement may be extended for a longer term. The flexible work arrangement may be re-evaluated at the supervisor's discretion.

Modifying or Terminating Flexible Work Arrangements
Once approved, the employee may not modify the flexible work arrangement without the written consent of his or her supervisor.

A supervisor may modify an approved flexible work arrangement if the supervisor determines that such modification will better meet the current needs of the department and/or the college. Any modification will be specified in writing.

A supervisor, after consulting with the director of human resources, may terminate a flexible work arrangement if the supervisor determines that the arrangement is no longer consistent with the department’s obligations or if the performance of the employee is not meeting performance expectations.

If a flexible work arrangement is terminated, the supervisor shall make every effort to provide the employee with at least 30 days prior written notice.

If the flexible work arrangement is terminated for poor performance the arrangement may be terminated immediately.

Benefits and Applicable Employment Laws
An employee working under a flexible work arrangement will, for the most part, be entitled to the same college benefits as a similarly situated college employees working on campus. Leave time must be submitted based on the hours that the employee is scheduled to work on the day(s) they are sick or taking vacation.

In addition, all flexible work arrangements are subject to applicable employment laws, including the Fair Labor Standards Act and South Carolina state employment law.

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The college has insurance coverage to protect its property. This insurance will not cover any personal property that is used at home and will only cover college equipment brought to a defined Flexplace work site if it has been listed with the Office of Information Technology.