



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

GUIDE TO *WORKING* REMOTELY

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Overview

This guide will provide direction and suggestions for employees and supervisors regarding working from home during the University of Alberta's response to COVID-19. Where not required to attend campus to perform work, supervisors and employees will be required to reasonably and appropriately conduct their work remotely (e.g. from home).

For Supervisors

Working remotely is necessary to minimize the risks of community transmission of COVID-19. Unless a faculty/unit leader determines that an employee must attend campus, all employees should continue to support the University's operations by working remotely or from home.

Exception: If an employee is ill and unable to work, they should not be expected to work from home until they are medically fit to resume working.

A. Determine What Work Needs to be Completed at Campus

Review the work assigned to your employees to determine which critical and vital functions, duties and activities cannot be completed remotely. Unit leaders will determine which activities must be performed on site and direct the necessary employees to attend work. All others will be expected to work remotely and perform the work as assigned to them.

Depending on the nature of the duties, you may be able to temporarily modify duties and limit remote work to critical and essential functions that can be performed online, via telephone or video conference, or other methods. If regular duties are not able to be performed, but alternative duties can be (e.g. develop a training manual), you may assign alternative work and reassess during the remote work situation.

B. Arrange Necessary Equipment, Supplies and Systems

Determine what equipment, access and supplies your employees will need to work remotely. If your employees do not have the appropriate technology (e.g. computer/laptop/tablet, video camera, telephone, etc.), explore loaning, renting, or purchasing equipment to loan, if necessary, or assign other duties that don't require that equipment. **All mobile devices that could retain University records must be encrypted in accordance with the [University's Encryption Procedure](#).**

NOTE: No sensitive or personal information is to be saved to your personal devices hard drive or storage.

Ensure that your employees know how to access the University's G Suite applications remotely and how to use video conferencing tools like Google Hangouts [Chat](#) and [Meet](#). Ensure that employees know how to access the University's enterprise applications from remote sites if their work requires them to work

within PeopleSoft Finance, HCM or Campus Solutions, Supply Net or other systems. Ensure employees understand how to access [the University's virtual private network \(VPN\)](#) if necessary to use those enterprise systems or access network drives. Discuss with your IT support team remote desktop/remote terminal functions if necessary.

C. Share Procedure Manuals, Documents and Information

If your employees who are working remotely will require procedure manuals, templates, documents or other information that isn't readily available from a remote location, consider moving the required information to a Google Shared Drive for sharing or ensure that employees can access secured network drives through VPN. Consider scanning paper documents to electronic format for easy sharing if necessary.

D. Establish Communication Channels

Ensure that your employees know how to reach you via email, phone, cell, text or other method. Develop a contact list to share among your employees if required. Ensure that employees know how to use the virtual meeting tools (e.g. Google Hangouts) to enable team communication when necessary.

When employees are working remotely, you will need to check in with them on a regular basis to assign work, review progress, monitor outcomes and ensure their health and well-being. Establish a protocol early as to who will contact who at what frequency to ensure ongoing communication as necessary.

SUGGESTION: Set up regular and consistent online meetings with your team as necessary to maintain regular contact, assign work, discuss issues and manage operations.

Ensure your employees continually monitor the University's website for important communication and announcements.

E. Access and Keys

When your employees are working remotely, ensure that you have the required access to locked cabinets, rooms, etc., while those employees are away. Access may be difficult to arrange if key personnel are not at the University when you need them and a filing cabinet key is at home with the employee. In accordance with our Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Policy, employees should not take physical records offsite and must ensure the security of all records.

F. Working Alone Hazard Assessment

If employees who are working remotely are working alone or if the absence of several employees creates a working alone situation at the office, ensure that you follow all the appropriate [Occupational Health and Safety Act guidelines and procedures for working alone](#). Establish regular contacts with your

employees in both situations to monitor their health and safety while working. Perform the necessary hazard assessments to ensure workers are working safely.

While employees work remotely, approved work will be covered by WCB insurance. If they get injured while working at home, they must follow the [injury/incident reporting instructions](#) and notify you.

G. Maintain a List of Your Staff

Keep an up-to-date list of all your employees and whether they are working remotely or need to come into campus so that you can ensure you maintain continuous contact.

H. Payroll and Time Tracking

If you have hourly paid employees working from home, ensure that they are continuing to submit their timesheets in Employee Self-Service for all hours worked in accordance with the payroll calendar. Hourly paid workers who are ill or who are required to self-isolate should submit their timesheets in PeopleSoft Time and Labour for their regularly scheduled shifts. Supervisors must ensure that they approve the time before the payroll deadline. Employees who need to work overtime must seek their supervisor's authorization before the overtime is worked.

For Employees

Working remotely is necessary to minimize the risks of community transmission of COVID-19. Unless a faculty/unit leader determines that an employee must attend campus, all employees should continue to support the University's operations by working remotely or from home.

Exception: If you are ill and unable to work, you will not be expected to work from home until you are medically fit to resume working. Ensure that you communicate with your supervisor that you are ill and do not attend work. Follow the directions on the [Alberta.ca COVID-19 website](#).

A. Determine what work needs to be done on campus

Talk to your supervisor

Your unit leader will determine what work employees will need to perform in person on campus and what work can be done remotely. Contact your direct supervisor to discuss how to complete your work remotely if directed to. Decisions on what work cannot be performed remotely will be based on what critical and vital services need to be maintained in person. All work must be completed in a safe and healthy manner. Ensure that you know what tools and resources are required to perform your work remotely and contact your supervisor if you should need to come to campus when not directed to.

Alternative Work

Based on operational needs, your supervisor may consider assigning other duties as necessary if your regular duties are not conducive to working remotely.

Self-Isolation

If you have been directed to self-isolate for 14 days and are not sick, you will be directed to work from home. If you are able to fulfill all or most of your normal duties remotely, continue to do that work. If your regular duties are not conducive to working remotely, your supervisor may assign other duties as necessary.

B. How to Work Remotely

Understand relevant policies

As a member of the U of A community, you are entrusted with using and managing the information technology resources responsibly, respectfully and in a manner that reflects high ethical standards, mutual respect, and civility, in accordance with the [University's Information Management & Information Technology Policies](#).

Determine what files and applications you may need

The files and applications you'll need to access remotely can vary depending on the nature of your work. Identify where your needed files are located (e.g. on a network shared drive or on Google Drive) and ensure that you will be able to access them remotely.

Identify and confirm the applications that you will require to work from home. Make a list of the applications and identify how to access them. Many common applications such as [U of A G Suite](#) which includes Gmail, Calendar and Drive can be accessed using only a web browser on any computer, tablet or phone. There are some work applications that will require a secure connection to the campus network. For these applications, you can use the [Campus VPN](#) to connect to them.

NOTE: No sensitive or personal information is to be saved to your personal devices hard drive or storage.

Ensure that your personal computer or device is updated and secure

If you don't have a University of Alberta-provided laptop, you'll want to take extra steps to make sure your work stays secure. If you are downloading and storing university information, you will need to ensure your home computer is up to date with Windows 10 or later, or macOS 10.13 or later, password-protected, and on a secure network connection. It is also best practice to protect your computer with encryption. For more information, visit the Office of the Chief Information Security Officer website on [How To Stay Secure](#) and [Privacy and Security Best Practices for Sharing Information](#).

All mobile devices that could retain University records must be encrypted in accordance with the [University's Encryption Procedure](#).

Gather everything else you'll need to be productive

When using video conferencing tools like Google Hangouts [Chat](#) and [Meet](#), think about any additional hardware you may require. Does your computer have a built-in microphone and speaker? Do you need a headset for your phone? Are there additional things like power adapters that you'll need to bring home from the office? Can you access your voicemail through your email? Do you need to forward your office phone to an off-campus phone?

Determine if equipment and/or supplies are needed

Determine if there are special supplies or equipment that might be needed when working remotely. Speak to your supervisor about those needs.

Ensure privacy and security

When working remotely, ensure you follow the University's policies and procedures for ensuring the privacy and security of information. If you have a dedicated work space (e.g. home office), use that to conduct your business, answer phone calls, video conference, etc.

NOTE: Read, understand and comply with the University's [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Policy](#) and [Records Management Policy](#) and related procedures.

Test your equipment now

Don't forget to do a test-run to make sure your equipment and applications work as expected. If you have additional questions or concerns, contact your IT Support team

C. Working Hours and Expectations

Unless otherwise directed by your supervisor, when working remotely, you will be expected to work your regularly scheduled hours. Confirm with your supervisor if you need to adjust your start and end time. If you need to work longer than your regular shift, your supervisor must pre-authorize overtime. All shift and overtime premiums continue to apply in accordance with your respective collective agreement. Your direct supervisor will set expectations, assign work and track measurable outcomes.

Depending on your role and work performed while working remotely, your supervisor may, at times, require you to physically report to work to meet operational needs.

D. Communicating with your Team and/or Supervisor

The ability to communicate and be responsive during the work day while working remotely is expected. Direct supervisors will set expectations around response times and preferred mode of communication. Ensure that you know the contact information for your supervisor and other key members of your team so that you can stay connected to one another. Establish your necessary contact lists so that you will

have them when needed. You must ensure the privacy of all personal contact information collected and comply with the [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Policy](#).

Recording virtual meetings and discussions

Privacy laws apply. If you are only recording a meeting for convenience, it is likely not necessary to create this record, and therefore not compliant with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. See [Recording Virtual Meetings and Discussions](#) and the [GetHIP!7: Videoconferencing and Recording Meetings](#) for more information.

If you wish to forward calls to your personal phone

You can retrieve your office voicemail using your email.

If your work phone is a Cisco phone (VoIP), you have the option to forward your work phone calls to your cell or home phone. [Learn how to set up call forwarding](#).

If you are using a Nortel phone (PBX) at work, you will not be able to remotely set up call forwarding at this time.

E. Working Safely and Healthy

When working remotely, employees should factor their well-being into their home work environment. If you are not used to working remotely, you may experience challenges adjusting to a different environment. Loneliness or isolation can occur if you are working alone, or it may be hard to focus if there are other stimuli around you in your home environment. Follow these tips when appropriate:

- Connect virtually with your colleagues and others
- Build physical movement into your work day. Take regular breaks (five minutes of every hour) to look away from your computer and move about.
- Choose a location in your home that has limited distractions and ample lighting
- Maintain good posture where you sit
- Stay consistent with your eating, sleeping and exercise routine as appropriate
- If you have peripheral devices such as an external keyboard, mouse, headphones and/or monitor(s), connect them to increase your comfort
- Maintain boundaries to prevent overwork – unplug at the end of the day

If you are feeling in distress or need health assistance, please contact the University's [Employee and Family Assistance Programs](#) available anytime by calling 780-428-7587 or 1-800-636-1142.

To ensure a safe working environment, conduct a [hazard assessment](#) within your home and implement appropriate controls. In the event you will be working alone, you will be required to implement a working alone check-in procedure with your supervisor.

While directed to work at home, approved work will be covered by WCB insurance. If you get injured while working at home, follow the [injury/incident reporting instructions](#) and notify your supervisor.

F. Childcare / Dependent Obligations

Due to the province's COVID-19 restrictions, arranging alternative child care while K-12 schools, daycare centres and other child care centres are closed may be difficult. Staff should explore all options for alternative childcare if possible and determine how best to balance your obligations as a parent while working from home. Talk to your supervisor about potential modification to work time or other arrangements while you are working from home and parenting. Depending on the need, you may discuss alternative duties, modified work, alternative schedules, leave with pay or other arrangements to balance the needs of childcare/dependent care and work.

Working Remotely Checklist

- Use a University of Alberta laptop if you have one. Alternatively, use your own Windows or Mac personal computer (or tablet). **All mobile devices that could retain University records must be encrypted in accordance with the [University's Encryption Procedure](#).**
- Verify that your computer is up-to-date with Windows 10 or later, or macOS 10.13 or later. If using a tablet, ensure it has the latest updates.
- Apply all available updates and security patches to ensure that your computer is protected.
- Confirm that the Google Chrome web browser is installed.
- Verify that you have a secure internet connection (wired or wireless).
- Identify the applications you need to access from your home.
- Install any additional applications that you need on your computer.
- If you need MS Office or other software at home, visit [OnTheHub](#) to purchase and download.
- Use the [apps.ualberta.ca](#) website to access common applications.
- Test all of your applications to verify that they work.
- If you need a secure network connection to access your applications or shared network drive, install the University of Alberta provided [VPN](#) software. In order for the university to effectively manage our VPN resources, only use VPN when required.
- If you need specialized software or applications, contact your IT support team for instructions.
- If approved to work with paper records offsite, ensure appropriate safeguards in place (locked cabinets, security alarms, shredder, access by third parties is limited). Manage any copies created, dispose of any duplicate or transitory records/information appropriately and in accordance with [Records Management Policy](#).

Contact your IT Support team if you have any questions.

Working Remotely Timeline

Working remotely is expected to continue while the University manages the community health risks with the COVID-19 pandemic. The University is working closely with Alberta Health Services and the Chief Medical Officer to implement measures as necessary. Working remotely may be rescinded or concluded if there are no longer reasonable grounds for this arrangement or if the health isolation time limit set by AHS has changed or expired.

[For additional questions or guidance regarding this document, please contact your HR Partner](#)

Borrowing University Equipment for at Home Use

Arrangements can be made to bring equipment such as laptops, desktops, computer screens, office chairs, etc. home under the following circumstances:

- Speak to your supervisor first, confirm your needs and get supervisor approval.
- Any equipment that is borrowed must be suitable for the environment it is being used. Under no circumstances should any lab equipment be borrowed that is not appropriate for a residential location.
- Once approved by your supervisor, record the borrowed item(s) in your unit's inventory tracking tool. If your unit does not have its own tracking tool in place, please use the [Equipment Asset Loan Form](#).
- Ensure that health and safety practices are followed in moving the equipment, such as [proper lifting protocols](#), assessing and controlling hazards such as tripping, etc. You can always visit the [Environment, Health & Safety website](#) for advice and procedures.
- Speak with your IT support team to find out how your borrowed equipment will work in your remote work space. For example, they'll be able to let you know if you will need items such as an ethernet cable.
- Keep your computer equipment secure by following IST's recommended and required [best practices and policies](#) for remote work.

Purchasing and Obtaining Supplies

If supplies are required to facilitate working from home, the following process should be followed:

- If the supplies are readily available at your place of work, arrange with your supervisor for an appropriate time to pick them up.
- Vendor agreements remain in place. All orders placed through Supply Net and P-Card require delivery to central receiving at the university.
- Distribution Services is providing regular delivery to campus locations.
- If you require supplies that aren't currently available, place the order through your office contact and follow your normal procedure.

- The individual who purchased the supplies can advise you when the supplies will be available and delivered to the office.
- Pickup of the supplies from campus should be organized with your supervisor.
- Any unused supplies or equipment must be returned to campus once the university returns to normal operations.