

## Telework Policy for Administrators (2021-2022 Pilot)

Following the temporary teleworking prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Vassar is piloting a Telework Policy for Administrators and Exempt Staff the 2021-2022 Academic Year. The pilot may or may not result in a long-term Telework Policy for Administrators. This policy may be revised or suspended at any time.

### Overview

Vassar College is a residential campus focused on in-person education. As such, it is customary for Vassar employees to work at an assigned location on campus. In some cases, Administrators may request a Telework arrangement, provided some or all of their existing job responsibilities can be conducted remotely, and provided they reside in New York, New Jersey, or Connecticut. Administrators can request to work remotely for one or more days per week on a recurring basis.

**Eligibility:** Senior Officers have discretion in deciding whether a department will participate in the Telework Policy. Within a participating department, supervisors have discretion in deciding whether a given Administrator role is eligible for a Telework arrangement. Administrators whose responsibilities include regular interaction with students and/or faculty are strongly urged to prioritize working on campus. Such Administrators may be approved to telework for a maximum of two days/week, and supervisors may approve additional telework days/week during Academic Calendar breaks. Other roles may not be eligible due to specific job requirements, which may include, but are not limited to: student services, in-person support of on-campus employees, oversight of on-campus events or facilities, operation of on-campus equipment, office reception, and daily supervision of employees who primarily work on campus.

**Other Restrictions:** A supervisor may also limit or prohibit a Telework arrangement due to its anticipated impact on a team's ability to maintain effectiveness. When evaluating each Telework Request, the supervisor must determine that some or all of the job duties of the position can be effectively performed remotely, and that approval of the request will not require reassignment of duties to another employee on campus.

**Impact on Job Duties:** Each Administrator with a Telework arrangement is responsible for ensuring they can continue to complete all of their job duties in a timely manner and without increased reliance on teammates or other colleagues who work on campus.

Supervisors should carefully consider complaints, consult as necessary with Human Resources, and determine whether it may be appropriate to change one or more employees' telework arrangements and/or take disciplinary action under the Correction Action Guideline.

**Accommodations:** Telework Requests are distinct from accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, for example. Refer to the Administrator Handbook for more information about seeking accommodations.

**Personal and Sick Time:** This policy does not govern ad-hoc adjustments to regular work schedules for reasons such as caring for an ill family member, or similar circumstances. Personal and sick time should continue to be used appropriately as outlined in the Administrator Handbook, whether the employee is working on campus or remotely. Telework may not be used when an employee needs to support a family member's illness or injury. Consult the Administrator Handbook for guidance when taking time to support a family member. Consult with Human Resources for leave options related to ongoing family needs.

**Occasional Telework:** A formal Telework Request does not need to be in place for occasional Telework. Occasional Telework requests are approved on a case-by-case basis, are infrequent, and are not regularly scheduled. Approval must be documented, which can be done via email.

Occasional Telework may occur when an employee: has a personal need at home, such as meeting a service technician that cannot be done outside business hours; has a temporary workplace disruption, such as office remodeling or inclement weather; has other temporary personal needs, and at the discretion of the supervisor.

In the case of occasional Telework, no prior Telework Request needs to be in place.

## Telework Arrangements

Telework arrangements will be initiated with a written Telework Request that specifies the requirements and details of the arrangement. Telework Requests must be reviewed and approved by the employee's supervisor and the Senior Officer of their area. Each Telework arrangement will be reviewed at least quarterly during the pilot year, in addition to regular annual performance reviews. A supervisor may amend or cancel a Telework Request after discussion with the employee. When possible, supervisors are encouraged to provide employees at least 10 working days of notice before making changes to a telework arrangement.

## Request Process

**Before Requesting:** When considering making a Telework Request, the Administrator should consider their department's or unit's needs together with their own. A Telework arrangement is intended to benefit the employee without placing any additional burden or expense on the supervisor, team, department, or any other Vassar employee. Before submitting a Telework Request, the employee and supervisor should each read and understand this policy. The

employee should then review the Telework Request Form, and the employee and supervisor should then meet to discuss the contents of the form and ensure they share a clear understanding of expectations and of what should be covered in the request.

**Telework Schedule:** Before identifying the recurring days on which the employee will telework, the employee and supervisor should discuss the department's need for in-person coverage. The employee and supervisor may agree in advance on occasional deviations from the recurring schedule, and these do not require revision of the Telework Request, unless the schedule changes are to be made permanent.

**Submitting a Request:** After discussion with the supervisor and two weeks before the telework arrangement is planned to start, the employee initiates the request in Workday and completes all of the fields. The request is then routed to the supervisor for review. The supervisor may approve, deny or send back for correction. Once the supervisor approves, the request will be routed to any other managers in the employee's reporting line, including to the Senior Officer for final approval.

**Ongoing Review:** Employees and supervisors should review and reaffirm the Telework Request annually, submitting a new request if changes will be made for any reason. Effectiveness of the Telework arrangements should be discussed both quarterly and at the time of each annual review.

**Pilot Review:** During this pilot year, HR and Vassar's Senior Team will evaluate the impacts of telework on employee engagement, effectiveness, sustainability, accessibility, and other factors. Together with employee feedback, this will inform a post-pilot review in the Summer of 2022 to determine if there are long term benefits for our community, and whether the policy will be extended and/or revised.

## Employee Responsibilities

Teleworking employees should familiarize themselves with the policies and expectations set forth in Vassar's Administrator Handbook and College Regulations.

**Availability:** Employees will maintain regular working hours consistent with those they would be expected to maintain when working on campus. Refer to the Administrator Handbook for more information about the College's normal days and hours of operation.

Teleworking Administrators are expected to maintain work practices that make their interactions as seamless as possible with other members of the community. These expectations include reasonable response times, availability by phone, chat, email and/or virtual meetings.

**Time on Campus:** Employees must make proactive and responsible determinations about when it is necessary to come to campus. Whenever possible and not precluded by a formal accommodation, teleworking employees should attend some on-campus meetings in person, including the administrator forums and other meetings for which the content or format benefits from in-person attendance. Supervisors may specify additional meetings for in-person attendance. For some meetings, including departmental staff meetings, interviews, committee meetings, and training, meeting chairs may opt to prioritize in-person attendance and schedule those meetings based on attendees' availability to attend in person.

**Work Habits:** Each employee will maintain an off-campus workspace that is reasonably quiet and free from distractions. Employees should enable meeting video in meetings when others are on camera or when some of the participants are gathered in person, whenever it is reasonably possible to do so, and that maintain a video background and personal appearance that is reasonably free of distractions, professional and appropriate for the workplace.

## Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors will evaluate each Telework Request for appropriateness and feasibility based upon the role and responsibilities, not the individual employee. Supervisors will not require employees to cite or document a reason for the Telework Request.

**Review:** Employees and supervisors should consider whether a given Telework Request has the potential to create disparity between individuals in similar roles across campus, and the supervisor should consult with their immediate supervisor, Senior Officer and/or Human Resources as necessary to prevent or address conflict. The supervisor should set clear expectations for all team members, both on-campus and off-campus, and ensure that there are reasonable ground rules for availability, communication, and meeting participation.

**Approval:** Once approved, supervisors should continue to maintain regularly scheduled, face-to-face interactions with teleworking employees, including 1-on-1 meetings and team meetings, just as they would with on-campus employees.

Supervisors should maintain awareness of any potential impact that employee(s) telework request(s) may have on team dynamics and effectiveness. The telework arrangement of a given employee should not place an additional burden on any Vassar employee or team.

**Trial Period:** If the employee or supervisor is unsure about the potential effectiveness of the arrangement, a supervisor may consider initially approving the Telework Request on a temporary basis. The supervisor should establish a review period after which a decision can be made about continuing the Telework Request.

**Denial:** When a Telework Request cannot be approved, the supervisor will provide the employee with a reason for the denial as it relates to this policy, the individual's request, the specific responsibilities of the role, and/or impact on unit operations. A request may also be denied if the employee's performance history indicates they would be unable to successfully complete their job responsibilities while teleworking. If an employee feels their request was not fairly evaluated and cannot resolve the concern with their supervisor, they may contact Human Resources to facilitate further discussion.

**Job Changes:** If an employee transitions to a new role, a new Telework Request must be developed based upon the responsibilities of the new role.

## Facilities and Support

### Equipment and Technology Access

Each employee must ensure they have a workspace that is safe and ergonomically suitable. The employee is responsible for ensuring they have all resources needed and sufficient understanding of how to use those resources to satisfy all their job duties. Unless indicated by an accommodation request from the Office of Accessibility, Vassar will not provide or be financially responsible for furniture, equipment, and services specific to the home office, including but not limited to:

- Office furniture
- Office supplies
- Home modifications
- Internet Service
- Cell Phone Service or Minutes
- Printer(s)
- Scanner(s)
- Landline(s)
- Other specialized equipment
- Community expenses (e.g., HOA fees)
- Additional Computer(s)

Use of specific equipment, including but not limited to those listed above, may require occasional visits to campus. In the event of off-campus equipment failure or service interruption, the teleworking employee must notify the supervisor immediately to discuss alternate assignments or other options, which may include temporary suspension of the Telework Request. If the employee has a sustained power or internet service interruption and can not satisfy their job responsibilities remotely, they should visit campus or move to

another appropriate location, and provided it is safe to do so, that will enable them to continue working.

An employee may choose to use their personal cell phone, and while a supervisor may require availability by phone, they may not require an employee to use their personal cell phone. Vassar will not reimburse employees for cell phone use.

## College Property and Systems

If the employee will be working remotely full-time, they may move their Vassar-provided computing equipment to the off-campus workspace. It is recommended that teleworking employees have a Vassar-provided laptop that can be used from any location. In accordance with Vassar's [Data Governance](#) and [Responsible Use](#) policies, Vassar-owned computers are not to be shared with other people in the employee's household.

College computing equipment is not insured for accidental damage or theft. College computing equipment is only covered under the manufacturer warranty, which does not cover accidental damage or theft. Departments are responsible for the cost of repair or replacement of computing equipment not covered under warranty.

Employees are required to immediately report any damage, loss or theft of College equipment. Any incident regarding college-owned equipment should be reported by the employee to their supervisor, Security, and CIS, for all computing equipment.

## Support Services

Support services offered by the college of any kind (facilities, computing, health, etc.) do not extend to at-home visits. Vassar support functions will provide phone or email support to the best of their ability, but it is the responsibility of the employee to make an appointment to come to campus as needed to resolve requests.

## On-Campus Office Space

If the employee is teleworking for 4 or more days each week, Vassar reserves the right to reassign the employee's on-campus workspace. Any employee without a permanent workspace on campus will be provided with a temporary and/or shared workspace to use when working on campus. If the employee is teleworking 3 or more days each week, the supervisor may decide to have the employee share a workspace with another employee. If the employee would like to change their telework arrangement and return to campus for 3 or more days per week, the department will make reasonable effort to establish a permanent workspace within 2 weeks or discuss options with the employee if it will take longer.

If pervasive telework leads to the possibility of changing a department's use of office space, the College and the department head(s) will together review and consider the potential long-term impacts of any changes as they relate to the department's foreseeable needs.

## Other Conditions of Telework

Both supervisors and employees must understand and adhere to the following:

### Conditions of Employment

Telework is neither a required condition of employment nor a guaranteed benefit. Telework arrangements are solely at the discretion of the supervisor and the College, and they may change at any time. Telework arrangements do not preclude an employee being required to come to campus for any reason deemed necessary by the supervisor or the College. Telework arrangements are created based upon a role, not the individual and, if the employee has a job/role change, the Telework arrangement will be reevaluated based upon the responsibilities of the new role.

### Data Security and Software Use

Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that College property and access to systems are used in accordance with Vassar's [Responsible Use Policy](#), [Information Security Policy](#), and other applicable policies for appropriate use and conduct, including the Administrator Handbook, [Password Policy](#), and others.

Telework arrangements must not compromise the security and confidentiality of College records. Restricted or Confidential data **may not** be stored on a personal computer. If a Vassar-owned computer is not available to access restricted or confidential data, this data **must only be** accessed via secure remote access technology, such as VPN, and stored only on college systems. For more information, contact the Vassar Service Desk (<http://servicedesk.vassar.edu>).

Employees must continue to adhere to all software licensing agreements, which limit the use of software licensed by Vassar College to members of the Vassar community.

## **Additional Considerations**

### **Hourly Administrators**

For hourly Administrators, certain activities, such as travel to and from required meetings that occur during scheduled work time, will be counted as hours worked when required by supervisors on same-day notice.

### **Workers' Compensation**

Teleworking employees are covered by workers' compensation in covered states for job-related injuries that occur in the course and scope of employment. When the Telework site is in the home, workers' compensation does not cover injuries that are not job related. Contact Human Resources for information regarding coverage.