

Remote Work Procedure

RVC Administrative Procedure (3:10.160)

Introduction

Rock Valley College will be entering Phase 4 of the Pilot for these expanded administrative procedures for Remote Work Policy 3:10.160 between May 22, 2023 through May 10, 2024. Unless otherwise amended after May 10, 2024, the original administrative procedures for Remote Work that went into effect July 28, 2020 will be restored and in effect, and these Phase 4 Pilot temporary administrative procedures will become null and void.

Eligible Positions

Supervisors, in consultation with their Vice President, will analyze the nature of a position and how the work is performed, and determine which positions are appropriate to designate or approve for remote work. Several factors will be considered in determining the appropriateness of remote work, including:

- A. the College's ability to supervise an employee adequately and whether any duties require use of certain equipment or tools that cannot be replicated remotely;
- B. if there is a need for face-to-face interaction and coordination of work with other employees;
- C. if in-person interaction with outside colleagues, clients, or customers is necessary; if the position in question requires the employee to have immediate access to documents or other information located only in the workplace;
- D. if the remote work arrangement will impact service quality or College operations, or increase workload for other employees;
- E. if the position can be structured to be performed independently of others with minimal need for support and little face-to-face interaction; and
- F. if performance can be measured by quantitative or qualitative results-oriented standards, not time spent doing the job.

Departmental Vice Presidents, in consultation with Human Resources (HR), may also identify broad categories of positions not eligible for remote work arrangements, including but not limited to direct service and place-specific positions.

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If you are not in an eligible position to work remotely, or you prefer to have an alternate work schedule in lieu of working remotely, you may request an alternative schedule. All other administrative procedures apply to any employee approved for an alternative schedule. To request an alternative schedule, follow the steps outlined in section F below.

For the purpose of this Pilot, the College will consider requests from full-time hourly and salaried staff for one day per week to work remotely, or an alternate schedule whereby an hourly employee works four ten-hour shifts in a given week. Salaried staff are not eligible for alternate work schedules (4/10) with the exception of certain leaders in the Police Department and Plant Operations & Maintenance. At this time the College is NOT considering allowing an individual employee to be approved for both a remote and alternative schedule arrangement.

Eligible Employees

If an employee in an eligible position requests approval for a remote work arrangement, the supervisor, in consultation with their Vice President, will determine whether the employee is eligible.

Generally, the following conditions must be met to approve an employee for a remote work arrangement:

- Full-time hourly or salaried employee.
- The employee has no active formal disciplinary actions on file for the current or immediately preceding review year.
- The employee has a demonstrated ability to work productively on his/her own and is self-motivated and flexible.
 - Generally speaking, in order to have demonstrated the ability to work productively on his/her own, an employee should not be within their probationary period for their role to be considered for remote work approval.
- The employee attests to having a work environment that is appropriate for conducting College business, including a secure and private space that is free from outside noise and distractions.

General Expectations and Conditions

1. **Compliance with Policies.** Employees must agree to comply with College rules, policies, practices and instructions and understand that violation of such may result in the termination of the remote work arrangement and/or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Employees who work remotely will be subject to the same policies as other employees, including policies relating to information security and data protection; see item 10

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below.

2. **Hours of Work.** The total number of hours that employees working remotely are expected to work will not change, regardless of work location. The College also expects the same level of productivity from employees working remotely that is expected from employees at the central workplace. Employees working remotely who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to record all hours worked in a manner designated by the College. Hours worked in excess of those specified in the remote work agreement will require the advance approval of the supervisor.
3. **Blackout Dates and other remote work schedule Exclusions:** Supervisors may require employees to report to a central workplace as needed for work-related meetings or other events or may meet with employees in the alternate work location as needed to discuss work progress or other work-related issues, even if the meeting or event falls on the approved remote work day. Anticipated black-out dates whereby an employee is expected to be on campus include one full week prior to the start of each semester, the first full week of each semester, and finals week.
4. **Use of Leave.** Remote work is not leave and is not a substitute for full-time sick leave or Workers' Compensation leave. However, the College may offer a remote work arrangement as a reasonable accommodation for qualifying employees. Human Resources will be consulted for any employee requesting a remote work or alternate work schedule arrangement in conjunction with a request for an accommodation under the American's with Disability Act (ADA). Furthermore, remote work is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child or elder care.
5. **Outlook Calendar.** Employees who are working remotely must show their availability in Outlook as "Working Elsewhere" so that others on campus understand that although they are not physically working on campus, they are available to be reached via electronic means (phone, email, etc.) for work-related purposes.
6. **Communication.** An appropriate level of communication is expected between the employee and the supervisor, and at a level and frequency consistent with employees working on campus. This includes communication through telecommunications (voice and video), email, instant messaging, or other communication means available to College employees otherwise working on campus.
7. **Safety.** Employees agree to practice the same safety habits they would use in their central workplace at the College and to maintain safe conditions in their alternate and remote work locations. Employees must follow normal procedures for reporting illness or work-related injury.

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8. **Equipment and Materials.** Normally, the College will provide equipment and materials needed by employees to effectively perform their duties; however, the College will avoid duplicating resources between the central workplace and the alternate or remote work location. Employees working remotely may use College-owned equipment only for legitimate College purposes. Employees working remotely are responsible for protecting College-owned equipment from theft, damage and unauthorized use. The College will maintain, service and repair College-owned equipment used in the normal course of employment. The College will stipulate who is responsible for transporting and installing equipment, and for returning it to the central workplace for repairs or service. Employees may also use their own equipment, provided the use of such equipment has been approved. When employees are authorized to use their own equipment, the College is not responsible for the cost, repair or service of the employee's personal equipment. The College assumes no liability for damages to employee's real or personal property resulting from participation in the remote work arrangement.
9. **Costs of Remote Work.** The College will not assume responsibility for equipment costs, utility costs, home maintenance expenses, or other costs incurred by employees that do not primarily benefit the College. The College will only reimburse reasonable expenses incurred by an employee to perform remote work that the College authorized or required and in accordance with the terms of this administrative procedure.
10. **College Information.** Employees must safeguard College information used or accessed while working remotely, in accordance with the College's information technology policies. The College must grant permission according to College procedures for employees to work on restricted-access information or material, as defined by the College, at remote work locations. Employees working remotely must agree to follow College-approved security procedures in order to ensure confidentiality and security of data. This may include the employee's ability to perform Multi-Factor Authentication when accessing College systems.
11. **Meal Periods:** Employees who have been approved to work remotely for a typical eight hour paid shift will adhere to their normal meal period arrangement as if working on campus, typically 30 minutes or one hour in duration, and that time is unpaid. Employees who remain on campus but are approved to work four ten-hour shifts will be entitled to a paid half-hour meal period.
12. **Duration:** The College, at its sole discretion, will decide the appropriate length of time to allow an employee to work remotely. To accommodate changing business needs, this may include reducing or lengthening the timeframe originally provided when the remote work arrangement was initially approved.

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Reimbursement of Remote Work Expenses

1. **Eligible Expenses.** When the College requires an employee to work remotely and does not provide the necessary equipment, the employee may be eligible for a recurring allowance or other reimbursement to cover some portion of authorized or required cell phone plan and/or internet expenses. Expenses incurred as a result of voluntary remote work arrangements are not eligible for reimbursement. Equipment charges, add-ons, roaming charges, overages, expenses related to the purchase of a cell phone or computer, and other expenses that do not primarily benefit the College will not be reimbursed. If an employee is issued a cell phone paid directly by the college, they are not eligible to also receive a monthly standard allowance.
2. **Standard Allowances.** Upon an employee's request, supervisors and the HR Department will determine which standard recurring allowance is appropriate based on relevant factors, including an employee's business need for a cell phone and/or internet access. The standard allowances correspond to two general categories of employees as follows:
 - a. The employee must be available and responsive during normal work hours: Standard allowance is \$25 per month.
 - b. The employee's job requirements include critical College-wide decision making which require regular communications both during and outside of normal business hours: Standard allowance is \$50 per month.
3. **Process for Reimbursement Requests.** Employees are not eligible for a standard allowance or other reimbursement unless the College authorized or required the expenses and the employee submits a reimbursement request to the HR Department. An employee's request for a standard allowance must include a cell phone and/or internet service bill for expenses they actually incurred within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the request. If the HR Department approves the request, the College, in conjunction with the Accounts Payable department, will provide a recurring allowance on a monthly basis for the duration of the remote work arrangement, beginning with an allowance for the month immediately preceding the request.

Employees may apply separately for reimbursement of a portion of authorized or required cell phone plan or internet service expenses that exceed the standard allowance only if those excess expenses primarily benefit the College and are directly attributable to the employees' performance of required remote work. To be eligible to receive reimbursement, employees must submit a request to the HR department with a justification and attached receipts for actual incurred expenses within thirty (30) calendar days of incurring the expense. If the HR Department approves the request, the College, in conjunction with the Accounts Payable Department, will reimburse the approved expenses.

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Employees who misrepresent information about their eligibility for an allowance or expense reimbursement or who submit or sign any related forms which contain false statements or information may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as well as possible criminal prosecution.

Enforcement; Complaints, Grievances, or Appeals

An employee who disagrees with a denial of a request to work remotely or any other action relating to this procedure is encouraged to discuss the concern with his or her supervisor. If the discussion with the supervisor does not resolve the issue, an employee may request an informal review of a remote work decision by the Director of HR. If the Director of HR does not overturn the denial, employees may reapply for Remote Work after three months from the last communicated denial date. Remote work decisions are not grievable.

Process to voluntarily request Remote Work or an Alternative Schedule:

1. Complete the Remote Work / Alternative Schedule Request Form.
2. Sign the Remote Work / Alternative Request Form to acknowledge your understanding and acceptance of:
 - a. The Board Policy Manual, and expectations to adhere to all Board Policies.
 - b. The Remote Work Administrative Procedures, including the voluntary nature of your request, and the authority the College maintains to discontinue these Administrative Procedures at any time.
 - c. Your approved schedule, including hours of operation, and days of the week working remotely or on an alternative schedule.
 - i. During certain weeks of the year, Supervisors may need to adjust your requested day of the week to meet the needs of the College.
 - ii. During certain weeks of the year, Employees may request an alternate day, however depending on the needs of the College, those requests may not be granted.
 - d. Remote Work Etiquette expectations.

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- e. Depending on the needs of your department, certain black-out dates may apply.
 - f. In order to continue to remain eligible to work remotely, you must maintain adequate work performance and able to fulfill your work assignments.
3. Submit to your immediate Supervisor.
 4. Your Supervisor, in consultation with their leadership will review your request to ensure your eligibility.
 5. Your Supervisor will communicate with you the approval or denial of your request.
 6. Supervisors will send the completed approvals or denials to Human Resources.

Procedure Language Conflicts with Collective Bargaining Agreements

Should a conflict in the language exist between a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and the Administrative Procedures for this policy, language from the CBA shall prevail.

Reference: Board Report #7735

Implemented: July 28, 2020

Revised: 2023