



Office of People and Culture
JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY

Alternate Work Location (AWL) Policy

The practice of working at an approved remote location instead of physically traveling to a central workplace is a work alternative **Jacksonville University** supervisors may offer to employees or employees may request. All alternate work location arrangements must meet the eligibility criteria established by the Jacksonville University Alternative Work Location Policy and such working arrangements must benefit both the organization and employees, have necessary resources available to accommodate the request, and supervisory discretion would allow for the employees to work at remote locations.

Jacksonville University supervisors are not obligated to provide this arrangement, and the university has the right to refuse to make working at a remote location available to any employee and/or to terminate this arrangement at any time – regardless of whether the request meets the established criteria. An employee who requests to work at a remote alternate location has the right to return to their former in-office work patterns at any time upon providing 14 calendar days’ notice or to exercise their rights under applicable Family and Medical Leave Act or Jacksonville University leave policies. Assignment of a remote work location is not to be considered a benefit of employment. The university may establish remote work as a condition of employment, based on the university’s business needs. In such cases, this requirement should be included when the position is advertised and in correspondence offering employment.

Student and employee facing departments will be able to consider an alternative work location, one day a week. Other areas will be able to offer, as needed.

Student and employee facing areas include but are not limited to: Admissions, Academics, Academic Support Center, Advising, Athletics, Career Management, Division of Student Affairs, Financial Aid, IT Help Desk, Library, Office of People and Culture, Registrar, Strategic Events and Campus Experience and Student Success Center.



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Process

Employees interested in requesting an Alternate Work Location must

- A. Fill out the *Alternate Work Agreement Request Form*.
- B. If approved, the *Alternate Work Location Agreement Form* must be completed in its entirety, including all appropriate required approval signatures, prior to an employee beginning work at a remote location.

The provisions of this agreement are made in compliance with applicable law and JU policies and without regards to race, sex, age, disability, or any other protected status.

Eligibility & Supervisor Considerations

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time eligible employees of the university and to faculty for work outside of their in-person teaching assignment.

Supervisors, in consultation with the Office of People and Culture 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 working. Several factors should be considered in determining the feasibility of telecommuting, including the university's ability to supervise the employee adequately and whether any duties require use of certain equipment or tools that cannot be replicated at home. Other critical considerations include whether:

- there is a need for face-to-face interaction and coordination of work with other employees and students;
- in-person interaction with outside colleagues, clients, or customers is necessary;
- the position in question requires the employee to have immediate access to documents or other information located only in the workplace;
- the remote work arrangement will impact service quality or university operations, or increase workload for other employees;
- the position can be structured to be performed independently of others with minimal need for support and little face-to-face interaction; and
- performance can be measured by quantitative or qualitative results-oriented standards, not time spent doing the job.



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If an employee in an eligible position requests approval for an alternate work location, the supervisor, in consultation with the Office of People and Culture, will determine whether the employee is eligible. Generally, the following conditions must be met to approve an employee for telecommuting:

- The employee has no active formal disciplinary actions on file for the current or immediately preceding review period;
- The employee has a demonstrated ability to work productively on their own and is self-motivated and flexible; and
- The employee received at least a satisfactory evaluation in the previous evaluation cycle.

Additionally, when considering whether it is appropriate for an employee to work at a remote location, it is important to consider and answer “yes” to the following questions:

- From a supervisory perspective, is the employee a good choice for working at a remote location given their ability to work autonomously, need for face-to-face communication, ability to control and schedule workflow, reliability concerning work hours, self-discipline regarding work, etc.?
- Will the working arrangement mutually benefit both the college/unit and the employee?
 - Eligibility is contingent upon the employee’s current position description and classification or assigned job duties. Working at an approved remote location cannot be permitted if the employee cannot perform all essential functions of their assigned duties, including their contact with customers, coworkers, or students, as determined by the employee’s supervisor in conjunction with the appropriate Jacksonville University Director—with final approval by the appropriate Dean or Senior Vice President.
- Will the employee work remotely within the state of Florida?

If you answered “yes” to the applicable questions above and have decided to allow an employee to work at a remote location:

- Have you agreed upon a work schedule—either full- or part-time—and desired outcomes that will be followed by the employee?



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- Any changes to the employee's work schedule must be reviewed and approved by their supervisor in advance. If nonexempt, the employee also must understand that they are not allowed to work overtime without prior management approval in writing.
- Does the employee have adequate dedicated space at the remote work location to allow and support privacy and confidentiality of work-related activities?
- Has the employee agreed to practice the same safety habits in the designated remote work location as they would in their office on Jacksonville University premises and to report any changes that would affect their general health and safety?
- From a supervisory perspective, are you able to describe key performance indicators or measurable deliverables by the employee?
- Does the employee attest that the remote workplace is located at the address included in this request and agrees to maintain a working environment consistent with the university's regulations and policies that are applicable to traditional campus workspaces?
- Has the employee agreed to eliminate or manage distractions?
- Have you discussed and decided whether the employee or the university will supply all necessary computer equipment, including software?
- Does the employee have adequate internet service/access to complete job duties including video conferencing connectivity for meetings?
- Has final approval been received from the appropriate Director / Dean or Senior Vice President?
- For faculty with an in-person teaching assignment, please note that the AWL policy would only apply to work outside of the in-person teaching assignment.



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General Expectations and Conditions

1. **Compliance with Policies.** Employees must agree to comply with university 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 remote work will be subject to the same policies as other employees, including policies relating to information security and data protection; see item seven (7) below.
2. **Hours of Work.** The total number of hours that AWL employees are expected to work will not change, regardless of work location. The university also expects the same level of productivity from AWL employees that is expected from employees working on-campus. AWL employees 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 university. Hours worked more than those specified in the AWL agreement will require the advance approval of the supervisor.

AWL is not intended to serve as a substitute for child or adult care. If children or adults in need of primary care are in the alternate work location during employees' work hours, the employee must make proper arrangements for dependent care.

Supervisors may require employees to report to campus as needed for work-related meetings or other events or may meet with employee in the alternate work location as needed to discuss work progress or other work-related issues.

The employee is required to turn on web camera for virtual meetings.

3. **Use of Leave.** Employees cannot use AWL in place of sick leave, Family and Medical Leave, Workers' Compensation leave, or other types of leave. However, the university may determine whether it is appropriate to offer AWL as an opportunity for partial or full return to work based on the university's return-to-work policies following an injury or illness and the



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criteria normally applied to decisions regarding the approval of AWL.

4. **Liability.** The university assumes no responsibility for injuries occurring in the employee's alternate work location outside the agreed upon work hours or for injuries that occur during working hours but do not arise out of and in the course of employment. The university also assumes no liability for damages to employee's real or personal property resulting from participation in the remote work program. Workers' compensation coverage is limited to designated work areas in employees' homes or alternate work locations. Employees agree to practice the same safety habits they would use in the university and to maintain safe conditions in their alternate work locations. Employees must follow normal procedures for reporting illness or injury.
5. **Equipment and Materials.** AWL employees may use university-owned equipment only for legitimate university purposes. Remote work employees are responsible for protecting university-owned equipment from theft, damage, and unauthorized use. The university will maintain, service and repair university-owned equipment used in the normal course of employment. The employee is responsible for transporting and installing equipment, and for returning it to campus for repairs or service. The remote work agreement may also permit employees to use their own equipment, provided the use of such equipment has been approved by the Chief Information Officer or designee. When employees are authorized to use their own equipment, the university is not responsible for the cost, repair, or service of the employee's personal equipment, unless otherwise expressly agreed to in advance in the remote work agreement.
6. **Costs of Alternate Work Locations.** The university is not obligated to assume responsibility for operating costs, home maintenance, or other costs incurred by employees in the use of their homes as an alternate work location.
7. **University Information.** Employees must safeguard university information used or accessed while telecommuting, in accordance with Jacksonville University's Information Technology policy, guidelines and procedures ([Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures | Jacksonville University in Jacksonville](#)).



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Fla. (ju.edu)). Telecommuters shall keep JU confidential matters private. Materials that include Personal Identifiable Information should be protected as confidential work product.

The university must grant permission according to university procedures for employees to work on restricted-access information or material, as defined by the university, at alternate work locations. Remote work employees must agree to follow university-approved security procedures to ensure confidentiality and security of data.

8. **Guidance for Managers and Supervisors.** The university encourages the successful and appropriate use of alternate work locations within the university by providing guidance to supervisors and managers in effectively managing remote work employees. See the Resources Section of the AWL policy for the *Managing Employee Performance Expectations* document.



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Complaints, Grievances, or Appeals

Jacksonville University's Office of People and Culture (HR) is responsible for overseeing implementation of and assuring compliance with this policy.

An employee who disagrees with a denial of a request for an Alternate Work Location or any other action relating to this policy is encouraged to discuss the concern with their supervisor. If the discussion with the supervisor does not resolve the issue, an employee may request an informal review of an AWL decision by the Office of People and Culture (HR). Remote work decisions also may be objected under existing grievance/complaint processes.

Contact hr@ju.edu with questions about the policy or to report suspected violations.

Enforcement

Failure to comply with this policy could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Alternate Work Location Policy Resources

- Supervising Guide on Employee Performance Expectations (Pages 9-10)
- AWL Employee Guide (Pages 11-12)
- Alternate Work Location Agreement (Page 13)
- [Request for an Alternate Work Location Form](#)



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Supervisor's Guide to Managing AWL Employee Performance

Managing employee performance requires supervisors to answer three main questions:

1. What expectations do I have for the employee working offsite?
2. How will I determine if the employee is meeting expectations?
3. How will I provide feedback to the employee?

Expectations

In setting expectations for employees who are telecommuting, follow the same approach you would in any other supervisory situation. Ensure that the standards are specific, measurable, accepted by you and the employee, and are realistic. Review the employee's current performance plan and goals, and determine if they are relevant for the telecommuting environment. If not, modify them so they are relevant to the situation.

Following is an example of a modified performance goal for an employee who has a AWL.

Current standard: *Oversees the production of the divisional newsletter. Ensures timely and efficient production schedules.*

Revised standard: *Oversees the production of the divisional newsletter. Schedules a virtual conference with appropriate parties to ensure tasks are clarified and on schedule. Ensures timely and efficient production schedules.*

The above performance goal was changed to ensure that communication would occur between the employee and coworkers. Such communication may happen naturally in the office environment, however, by indicating the expectation for a verbal conversation ensures the communication occurs.

Assessment

Performance should be assessed against the expectations that are set forth in the Alternate Work Agreement and related work plans. Because an alternate work location does not lend itself to in-person observation, supervisors should focus on results-based assessment. One way to accomplish this is to have the employee **turn in a work log** documenting the work completed. Another method is to set up regular



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one-on-one discussions during which the supervisor and employee can review completed items as well as the status of items in progress. In doing so, the supervisor should ask specific questions of the employee regarding a particular assignment or task. For example, if the employee is expected to consider a new model for implementing a program based upon current literature, do not ask the employee “*What do you think?*” Such a question is vague and may not allow the supervisor to determine the employee’s understanding of what was read, or if it was read at all. Instead ask, “*What did you think about the suggested model on assessment in the Varuca article?*”, or “*What specific concepts have you come across that you think we can use in our planning?*” Such pointed questions will require the employee to elaborate, thus giving you adequate information to assess their performance.

Feedback

Regardless of how work is documented, regular feedback is vital to the success of the AWL arrangement. This is especially true when problems arise. Problems should be addressed and resolved quickly before they escalate to the detriment of the arrangement. Give feedback just as you would with any employee. It should be direct and offer examples of where the employee is meeting, or failing to meet, expectations. Feedback should give the employee an opportunity to seek clarification.

In addition to feedback at regular intervals, departments should continue to carry out applicable annual performance appraisals. Such performance reviews must be conducted in person. All employees who are telecommuting are required to have an Alternate Work Location Agreement on file in the Office of People and Culture (HR). This agreement only lasts for 12 months, and must be renewed each year, unless it is a condition of employment.

In addition, it is highly recommended that the supervisor and employee sign off on an Employee Expectations Agreement. This form allows you to set the parameters for the work to be done during telecommuting. If you have questions about modifying the expectations, please contact the Office of People and Culture.



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AWL Employee Guide

To be a successful telecommuter it is necessary to work with less structure and more freedom in completing your responsibilities. Telecommuting is not as simple as staying at home and working. It requires careful planning and discipline. Described below are basic tools for working at home to maintain or increase your level of productivity.

Get organized – Having good work habits from the moment commuting begins makes it easy to complete work away from the office.

The location – Identify a safe location in the home as a place to work. There is no need to devote an entire room for the office at home. Some telecommuters have successfully developed a part of an existing room, a basement room, or an attic for their workstation. Locate the workstation away from distractions. Working on the couch in front of the TV does not work!

Set a routine – Set a work schedule with your supervisor for telecommuting and stick to it. Begin and finish work at the same time you would when working on-campus. This helps set a routine.

Replace the ritual of getting ready for work – Telecommuters will no longer have the traditional office rituals of morning conversations, or coffee. Even the drive to work that symbolizes the beginning of the workday is missing. Set up new rituals for telecommuting days. Some telecommuters actually leave their house, go around the block, return, and begin their workday. Others play specific music, ride a bike, or begin working after a morning exercise session. Each worker should find a ritual that will work for them.

Make a daily “Things-to-Do” list – Develop a list of goals and assignments as you would for on-campus working. At the end of the day, go over the list and see how much has been accomplished and stay on-track the following day to accomplish your list.

Managing the work – As a telecommuter, it is necessary to manage work efficiently. It is up to the telecommuter to make sure they stay well informed and continue with a high level of performance.



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Maintain contact with the office – Be sure to stay in touch with the office while working remotely. Try establishing a buddy system with a trusted co-worker, or an administrative support person in the office who can be called once or more a day. You will be responsible for having your web camera on when attending virtual meetings. Frequently call the office, or listen to voice mail messages, and return phone calls if you cannot forward your work phone to your home, or cell phone. Do not fall out of touch when working from AWL.

Stick to deadlines – While telecommuting, follow the same rules for deadlines as in the office. **Do not miss deadlines.**

Keep your supervisor and colleagues informed – The employee needs to keep their supervisor informed about the status of projects, progress, and challenges encountered.

Office supplies – Develop an understanding with family members about how office materials are used. Tell them that the office supplies are for business only. The worker may want the workspace to be off limits to other members in the household.

Telecommuting is NOT a replacement for dependent care – Do not assume working at home means the ability to take care of children. There is more flexibility in accommodating childcare needs, however, it is not a replacement for childcare. The same is often true when older family members can benefit from someone being home with them. The key is how much time and how many distractions occur because of this care.

These are areas that can bring the most benefit to the employee and their family, and in turn benefit the employer, but, requires the most careful thought. The needs of the workplace must be met and expectations, and the ability to do the job, fully understood.



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Alternate Work Location Agreement

Remote work must be documented as approved through both a remote work agreement with the university and an agreement between the employee and their supervisor. These documents establish the specific conditions that apply to employees working in alternate locations. The remote work agreement must be approved by the employee's supervisor, the Senior Vice President, and the Office of People and Culture. Both agreement forms can be found in the Resources Section of the AWL policy.

A term agreement typically will be for one year, with a renewable term, but an agreement may be made for a shorter term. Renewal is not guaranteed; the remote work arrangement, employee performance and other circumstances will be considered by the supervisor in determining whether to renew the agreement.

1. **Exceptions to the Remote Work Agreement Requirement.** It is an accepted practice for teaching and research faculty, for instance, to carry out their work with varied schedules on campus and at alternate locations. Normally, a formal telecommuting agreement will not be required unless the normal work assignment is consistently at an alternate location (i.e. not the standard assigned office).

On occasion, a department may also determine that employees may need to work at alternate worksites for a short period of time to accommodate unusual circumstances, such as a brief office closing for renovations or relocation. In such cases, the formal telecommuting agreement is not required, but should be documented for department files by memorandum or email, specifying work expectations and duration.

2. **Modification or Termination of the Alternate Work Location Agreement.** The supervisor, in consultation with the Office of People and Culture, may modify or terminate the remote work agreement early (before the end of the specified term) for performance concerns, changing operational needs, or any other non-discriminatory reason. The employee may also terminate the telecommuting agreement at any time, unless it was a condition of employment. Any termination typically will be made with at least two weeks' advance notice.