

TO: Chairs/Directors and Administrators

FROM: Eric M. Wilcots, Dean

DATE: July 7, 2022

RE: L&S Remote Work Guidance and Resources

I hope you are able to enjoy the beauty of this summer as we begin to look forward to the new academic year ahead. I am writing to share guidance and resources to assist with evaluating remote work options and how we will continue to strategically utilize these options in the College of Letters & Science.

As we know, COVID has impacted employee remote work expectations on a national level. We have learned that remote work can be an effective recruitment and retention tool for certain positions. We also recognize that UW-Madison is a residential campus and L&S must continue to provide an engaging and robust on-campus student experience. As stated in our mission, we are here to create a learning environment that is stimulating, joyful, and productive. This should hold true for our work environment as well. As we continue to work collaboratively to bring these concepts together, we would like to take this opportunity to provide the expectations of the College relevant to remote work so that supervisors and employees are prepared for the upcoming academic year.

As I have previously communicated, a significant portion of work performed will continue to be completed on campus and in-person. For example, the vast majority of research and student-facing positions are currently working on campus and will continue to do so. In addition, almost all of our instruction will continue to be in-person. For other staff, a hybrid work approach may continue to be available based on a number of factors such as:

- Job responsibilities;
- The effective functioning of the overall unit (e.g., a vibrant, welcoming environment; trainees and/or new staff assistance and onboarding; speed and efficiency with flow of information);
- Employee performance; and
- Equipment needs, workspace design considerations, office space, and scheduling issues.

Having conversations and providing details related to operational needs that require physical presence in the workplace will be key. This would also be a good time to reiterate general expectations around job tasks, duties, or other events when in-person participation is expected (e.g. group or department meetings, office hours, seminars or training, SOAR advising, etc.).

There have been questions about the specific number of days that should be approved for jobs that allow remote work but there is not a “one size fits all” approach. We strongly encourage supervisors to continue having conversations about expectations and what individual work schedules may look like based on the factors identified above.

L&S general guidance:

1. A remote work agreement is not required when providing workplace flexibility, which is

defined as performing work at an off-campus work site on a sporadic basis and does not follow a regular, repeated schedule.

2. Requests related to international remote work may be allowed for limited temporary situations for business necessity (e.g., doing research and need to travel to relevant site(s)). Please note remote work is restricted in certain countries due to export control. Requests to perform work at international locations must be made in advance; we do not expect to approve ongoing requests for 100% remote work from locations outside the United States.
3. Requests related to 100% remote work outside Wisconsin may be allowed for limited situations for business necessity and when the work is enhanced by working remotely (e.g., lobbyist who needs to work from Washington DC to collaborate with others).

Prior approval is required for remote work occurring outside Wisconsin. The flexible work location must be based on business necessity, stated in the PVL, and, for new hires, approved by L&S HR prior to the PVL being posted.

4. Requests related to 100% remote work in Wisconsin (and the general local area) may be allowed for business necessity and when the work is enhanced by working remotely.

We expect most staff will be allowed a hybrid approach of working remotely, when possible, depending upon their individual roles and responsibilities. In the College of Letters & Science, the minimum expectation for in-person work is 1 day/week unless prior approval is given. It is important to note the 1 day/week expectation is a general guide and, as stated earlier, is not intended as a “one size fits all” approach. Each situation warrants review and discussion to ensure the approach fits the overall expectations and responsibilities of the position; each situation needs to start with the “why.” For some positions these conversations may result in the position being onsite full-time or more than 1 day/week; for other positions, the position may be suitable to request a full-time remote schedule.

OFFICE SPACE CONSIDERATIONS

The pandemic has clearly altered campus space use patterns, particularly office space. This change has created some challenges, but also provides new space opportunities for departments and programs. First and foremost, it is important to recognize that campus buildings are owned by the State of Wisconsin and are allocated to campus as a resource to conduct our academic functions. As a resource, we need to use office space as efficiently as possible and according to campus and System space policies. The following information from Campus should be used when determining space allocations within your unit.

1. Campus has provided the following emerging model for space allocation based on the number of days per week working on campus. You are encouraged to consider these standards when making space allocation decisions, particularly for those with remote work agreements.

UW-Madison Pilot Office Space Models for a Post-COVID-19 Transition ¹

These will be used as needed to meet short and midterm space needs and to pilot long-term implementation of new work models.

	Fully on-site	Alternating on-site	On-site on-demand	Connected remote	Fully remote
Remote hrs/week	0-8	8-16	16-28	28-36	36-40
	<p>Employees are on-site 100% of the time.</p>	<p>Employees alternate days or weeks on-site</p>	<p>Employees job duties require periodic and time specific work in the office</p>	<p>Job duties require necessary but infrequent in-office attendance</p>	<p>Job duties do not require an in-office presence</p>
	Hybrid				

Office allocation (based on job duties)	Dedicated, assigned space and/or shared common areas*. Planning ratio of 1 person to 1 space.	Shared, assigned space and/or shared common areas*. Planning ratio of 2 people to 1 space.	Shared, unassigned, reservable space and/or shared common areas*. Planning ratio of 4 people to 1 space.	Shared, unassigned, drop-in space and/or shared common areas*. Planning ratio of 10 people to 1 space.	Employees can use on-site facilities, if needed, but no space is planned for them.

*Shared common areas include, but not limited to, conference rooms, break rooms, copy/print, storage, or other spaces shared within or across units.

¹ Model outline and percentages based on Boston Consulting Group publication Remote Work Works - Where Do We Go from Here? <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/remote-work-works-where-do-we-go-from-here>

2. Office space allocations should be reviewed annually, preferably over the summer in anticipation of space needs for the following academic year. This review should take into account all office space needs in the department/program, including remote work agreements, new hires, retirements, sabbaticals, and any other personnel changes that impact how space should be allocated for the coming year(s). Please see the [campus space standards for office allocation](#). (Note these standards do not recognize the variable office sizes in many of our campus buildings. Discretion should be applied to fit your particular building office space configuration.)

In summary, office space allocations should be flexible on an annual basis. We recognize this has the potential to be a change for many of your colleagues who are accustomed to static long term office space assignments. It is important to focus on the work-related needs of your faculty/staff in determining office space allocations. For example, some staff positions may require a private office due to tasks that require confidentiality, while others can function as effectively in a workstation setting, and/or with a remote work agreement.

Please do not hesitate to consult with L&S Assistant Dean for Facilities Chris Bruhn or your Academic Associate Dean on any questions related to space allocation.

REMOTE WORK AGREEMENT & OTHER RESOURCES

All employees working remotely must have an active remote work agreement (RWA) in place and should be evaluated no less than annually. Detailed instructions on how to complete an RWA can be found on the [Office of Human Resources Remote Work website](#). This website also includes additional resources such as the [Campus Remote Work Policy](#) and additional guides and best practices. In addition, L&S will provide ongoing support for continued conversations regarding remote work and best practices. Of note, if you previously submitted an RWA for the upcoming 2022-23 academic year, you do not need to complete a new one.

Additional information regarding equipment, materials, and supplies for remote workers can be found in Section V of the [Campus Remote Work Policy](#). The approval, tracking, and associated costs of these items are the responsibility of the department.

The decisions around remote work are dynamic; we will continue to challenge our assumptions and maintain the spirit and culture that is L&S. As I have said before, what makes UW-Madison and L&S great are the people. I want to thank each of you for your dedication, creativity, and continued efforts for the benefit of our students, faculty, and staff. Working together, we will find ways forward that make the College even stronger.