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**From:** ['Cheryl Adams Kadera' via ls-chairsandadmins-all](#)  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 29, 2021 9:09 AM  
**To:** [ls-chairsandadmins-all@g-groups.wisc.edu](mailto:ls-chairsandadmins-all@g-groups.wisc.edu)  
**Subject:** Remote Work Agreement Process

Please share with others as appropriate

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TO: Department Chairs/Directors and Administrators

FROM: Cheryl Adams Kadera, HR Director

Throughout much of 2020 and 2021, essential workers continued to perform their duties on site and employees whose positions required some campus work adopted a hybrid modality. Others have been working fully remotely. As fall 2021 approaches, the university is returning to its more standard state, as a primarily residential institution of higher education. The default work modality is on-site for employees, with the use of hybrid or fully remote [work modalities](#) where appropriate and in alignment with university policies. On July 26, campus implemented workflow to manage the remote work agreement (RWA) process. As a reminder, the campus remote work policy takes effect on August 1, 2021, and requires all current remote work agreements to be re-executed by August 31, 2021.

Remote work describes a work modality in which some or all work is performed at an off-campus work site, such as home or in an office space near home. This definition does not include workplace flexibilities, research trips, sabbaticals, or permanent off-campus work sites established by the university. A RWA is necessary for all work arrangements involving remote work (i.e., for hybrid and fully remote work modalities).

All employees including **graduate assistants and faculty are subject to the remote work policy if they plan to pursue remote work out of state or internationally on a regular, ongoing basis**. The remote work agreements for these modalities are complex and will require multiple levels of approval.

The College of Letters & Science supports the use of appropriate flexible and remote work options for employees. To minimize confusion and align with university policy, understanding the formal definition of the term “workplace flexibility” is important. Workplace flexibility refers to work that is performed at an off-campus worksite on a sporadic basis and that does not follow a regular, repeated schedule.

Examples of workplace flexibility, provided supervisor approval is obtained, include:

- working remotely for the remainder of a day after a doctor’s appointment or dental cleaning
- working from home while waiting for a furnace repair service professional
- an employee working remotely during severe weather (see [UW–Madison Inclement Weather Policy](#))

- an employee traveling for 2 weeks and checking email sporadically

A department/unit should consider many items before approving RWAs and communicate broadly to supervisors regarding expectations. Please see Dean Wilcots' July 9 [email](#) regarding expectations in L&S. If you have not already done so, please send your department/unit remote work policy/procedure to Cheryl Adams Kadera by July 31, 2021.

Elements to consider in creating the unit plan:

- Mission of the unit/department;
- The job functions of employees in the work unit and how job tasks might be completed;
- Job responsibilities (e.g., jobs that require physical presence for effective performance are not suitable for remote work);
- The effective functioning of the overall unit (e.g., a vibrant, welcoming environment; trainees or new staff may need in-person assistance; flow of information may be shared more quickly among those physically present);
- Employee performance;
- Equipment needs, workspace design considerations, office space, and scheduling issues;
- Adverse impact between employees with similar job responsibilities in the work unit (prevent inequities);
- Providing details and/or having conversations related to business 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 where in-person participation is expected (e.g. group or department meetings, office hours, seminars or trainings, SOAR advising, etc.).

Remote work environments should simulate office-like conditions where an individual can ensure productivity levels similar to working on campus. Employees working in a remote environment should be free from regular distractions to their work responsibilities. When discussing confidential matters (e.g., protected health information (PHI), contracts) in virtual meetings, employees should ensure that their immediate remote work environment is separated from non-business activities and individuals and that they are properly safeguarding confidential information, including [internal, sensitive, and restricted data](#). An employee must ensure that their remote workspace has the privacy, physical and technical security, appropriate equipment, software, and internet access to adequately perform their work responsibilities.

**Entry of Remote Work Agreements:** The employee will initiate the RWA approval process after discussion with their supervisor. See [tipsheet](#) regarding employee entry of a RWA in the MyUW portal. Please remember to **SAVE your work often** as the system will time out after 30 minutes!

**Approval of Remote Work Agreements:** RWAs will be [approved](#) by an employee's supervisor (the supervisor is considered a level 1 approver and stems from HRS "reports to" field), along with the department administrator (level 2 approvers) and submitted to the Dean's office (HR manager is level 3 approver). For purposes of the RWA process, the department administrator in each unit has been designated as the level 2 approver. Please reach out to your HR manager if you have questions/concerns about this. **Remote work agreements for those who wish to work remotely after September 1, 2021 must be submitted by employees and approved by supervisors and department level 2 approvers by August 24, 2021.**

Once a RWA has been implemented, it is important to ensure the work modality arrangements stay on track. Means of doing so include:

- Regular check points (e.g., regular employee/supervisor one-on-one meetings)
- Performance evaluation meetings (e.g., mid-point conversation, summary evaluation)
- RWAs should be reviewed and updated at a minimum annually.

- RWAs must designate the employee's onsite and remote work locations effective throughout the remote work period. Any changes in remote work location during the agreement period requires the approval of a new RWA.
- RWAs can be updated or canceled as warranted due to changes in factors such as evolving work responsibilities, availability of equipment, and business needs. Some updates may require the approval of a new RWA.

We are still waiting for clarification regarding **zero dollar appointees** and whether remote work agreements are required so please hold on this population until we get further information from campus.

If you have questions about the RWA process or policy, please reach out to your [HR manager](#).

Gateway Resources: <https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/23785>

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