**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

1. **What are the benefits of a Flexible Work Arrangement**

Benefits to the University:

* *Increase employee engagement, productivity, and retention*: Flexible work arrangements are highly sought after by employees. Flexible arrangements lead to reduced turnover costs; fewer absences/sick days; improved employee health; and improved morale, engagement, and job satisfaction.
* *Broaden the pool of available talent, increase diversity:* Flexible work facilitate our enhanced competitiveness in recruiting for the best available talent. The University can also more readily hire part-time, semi-retired, disabled, or homebound workers.
* *Use workspace more efficiently and save money*: The University can optimize its use of its limited office space and parking by offering flexible work opportunities.
* *Ensure business continuity*: Flexible work schedules allow employees to remain productive during emergencies, such as a power outage or pandemic.
* *Contribute to sustainability goals*: Flexible work opportunities can be used to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing commuting resources to University locations.

Benefits to Employees:

* Reduce commute time, costs, and stress;
* Balance work and home life more easily (e.g., being able to schedule doctor, repair, and other significant appointments during the workweek);
* Maintain better health;
* Work when you are most productive;
* Work when and where you have fewer distractions; and
* Provide dependent care.

Benefits to the Community:

* Decreased traffic congestion; and
* Reduced air pollution
1. **What is the difference between a telecommute agreement and a remote work agreement?**

A [telecommute agreement](https://ucanr.edu/sites/ANRSPU/files/351889.pdf) is short term and modifiable by the supervisors based on business needs. A [remote work agreement](https://ucanr.edu/sites/ANRSPU/files/351889.pdf) is when an employee works permanently off site some or all of the time by virtue of the nature of the work and is a part of the employment agreement. The remote work agreement may be changed only through official notice of change in conditions of employment.

1. **Who is eligible for a flexible work arrangement?**

Flexible Work Arrangements are available to academic and staff employees (including permanent Career, Contract and Limited employees). Employees must be in good standing with performance meeting all expectations.

1. **How do I determine if I am a good candidate for a telecommuting agreement?**

Flexible Work Arrangements are not appropriate for every position, nor are they a guaranteed employee benefit. Factors to consider could include:

* whether the office and operational continuity is jeopardized by working remotely, whether the employee can work productively with minimal supervision
* whether the team dynamic and collaboration is compromised due to remote arrangements
* whether there are clearly defined measurables that can be successfully accomplished with a Flexible Work Arrangement.

If you are looking for support in determining if you may be a good candidate for a remote work or telecommuting agreement, please use the [Flexible Work Arrangement – Decision Matrix](https://ucanr.edu/sites/ANRSPU/files/352383.xlsx).

1. **Do we need telecommute agreements for employees working from home?**

Yes. After September 30, 2021 a [Flexible Work Agreement Form](https://ucanr.edu/sites/ANRSPU/files/351889.pdf) will be required for all employees.

1. **Can I work from another state/out of the country?**

UC ANR prides itself on being a collaborative, community-focused organization with a mission to improve the lives of Californians throughout the State.  To serve that mission, it is critical that we continue to be considerate of when and how we work outside of the State.

Employees may temporarily relocate out of state to work in limited situations where the remote work would not impact the duties of the position, and/or opportunities for engagement. Employees in these temporary arrangements should keep in mind there may be additional considerations on health insurance and income, state or local tax implications. Permanent out of state remote work opportunities are not currently supported.

A few examples of potential temporary out-of-state work situations:

* + Employee is relocating to California and needs time to transition.
	+ Employee is requesting an accommodation due to a medical or disability need.
	+ Employee is travelling for a short period of time and would like to be able to continue to work.
	+ Employee is in a temporary position (limited term/contract/similar) on a short term project that will not continue and can be completed remotely without hindering operations.

ANR does not allow employees to work outside of the US. Temporary out of country telecommuting may be considered on an exceptional basis only. Please discuss with your department head and contact Human Resources for additional information.

1. **How do I ensure my space at home is set up ergonomically?**

The University is responsible for ensuring that that work assigned to the employee can be performed safely offsite and for providing the employee with ergonomic equipment in accordance with local procedures. When performing work for the University, the employee is responsible for maintaining a safe and secure work environment and for arranging the remote worksite in an ergonomically sound manner.

Ergonomics while working from home is as critical as ergonomics in the office. Please check out these handy guides: [Computer Ergonomics at Home](http://ucanr.edu/sites/safety/files/321856.pdf).

Contact David Ritz if you have additional questions about ergonomics.

1. **How do we best handle incoming/outgoing calls? What if I don’t have a cell phone?**

The use of Zoom has been provided to those who do not choose to use their personal cellular devices as well as potential for the use of Zoom Phone lines where needed. Employees are not required to use their cell phones and we hope that in those cases where it will cause a hardship, employees are using the tools UC ANR has provided to support them.

If employees do not have or cannot use their own devices, please contact your unit Director for assistance. Unit Directors, please feel free to coordinate with UC ANR IT for additional support as needed.

Please check out this handy guide: [Getting Ready to Work Remotely](https://ucanr.edu/sites/Professional_Development/files/321850.pdf)

1. **What equipment should be standard for a home office:**

ANR will provide employees with one set of standard IT equipment needed to perform their job duties. ANR provides a wide range of tools that aid effective and productive teamwork, including but not limited to virtual private network (VPN) software, single sign on (SSO) & two-factor authentication, email and calendar, soft phone dialer, video and audio conferencing, electronic document storage, and other corporate technology tools such as financial, collaboration and productivity applications.

For employees working remotely 50% of the time or more, additional equipment may be provided by ANR to reasonably accommodate specific needs after an ergonomic evaluation. If departments have funds available and an ergonomic need, the following ergonomic and safety related equipment may be available for purchase for a remote office.

1. Standard Monitor
2. Docking Station
3. Keyboard
4. Mouse
5. Wrist pad
6. Footrest

Directors should consider funding and ergonomic needs prior to considering purchasing additional equipment. Directors should confirm appropriate use of fund sources with their respective business officers and ANR Resource Planning and Management before purchasing.

The employee is responsible for supplying any equipment needed for their workspace not provided (e.g., printers, chairs, desks, etc.). Employees requesting a remote work arrangement must ensure their home workspace is safe and ergonomically sound. Any ANR-owned and issued equipment must be properly returned prior to separating from employment. The employee is responsible for working with their supervisor and appropriate department to arrange timely return of equipment.

1. **My internet is unreliable; how can I work from home?**

Employees who are not able to work from home due to lack of access to the internet should contact IT and/or HR for alternative solutions. This may include recommendations such as:

* + 1. utilize tools to improve wifi if available
		2. return to the office (if it can be done safely according to state and local guidelines)
		3. other alternative solutions, may be determined jointly between the employee, the supervisor in consultation with UC ANR HR
1. **What expenses are allowable when telecommuting?**

Employees should work with their departments for regular office supply needs, rather than purchasing themselves and requesting reimbursement. Only business-related equipment that can be returned to the office at the end of the remote work arrangement should be purchased for the employee, by UC.

Expenses related to work needs, such as internet connectivity or phone usage, are governed by [Business and Finance Bulletin G-46: Guidelines for the Purchase of Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices](https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/3420357/BFB-G-46).

If any item needs to be installed, charges related to the installation are the responsibility of the employee.

1. **I’m worried my staff will feel disengaged or unappreciated while working from home. How can I manage from home?**

Coaching and managing while at a distance is a skill that must be practiced and learned, but when done well can allow for a high level of engagement with both the employee and supervisor.

Please check out this handy guide: [Tips for Managing Work While Telecommuting](https://ucanr.edu/sites/Professional_Development/files/321828.pdf)

1. **Will I still have workspace in the office if working from home in an approved hybrid telecommute arrangement?**

Employees on a flexible work agreement who perform their duties from a non-University worksite fewer than two days a week should have an assigned workspace at their location.

Employees on a flexible work agreement who perform their duties from a non-University worksite three or more days a week may have a shared assigned workspace or an alternative workspace arrangement will be made.

1. **When working from home, what Travel expenses are allowable for reimbursement?**

Remote and Hybrid-Remote employees who are working outside of the job location at their own convenience are not on travel status as defined in [Business and Finance Bulletin G-28](https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/3420365/BFB-G-28), as “the period during which a traveler is traveling on official University business outside the vicinity of their headquarters or residence.” When employee travel to their job location that is considered a non-reimbursable commuting expense.

When not on travel status, mileage reimbursement shall be made for mileage expenses incurred between their official post of duty and the assignment location, or home and the assignment locations, whichever is less”

1. **What if I am injured while telecommuting?**

Work-related injuries incurred in the off-site workspace and during agreed upon working hours, should be reported promptly to the supervisor. Such [reports of injuries](http://safety.ucanr.edu/Guidelines/Reporting_an_Injury/) will be handled in the same manner as reports of injuries in the normal workplace.

1. **How do I request a disability accommodation? Will it impact my ability to work remotely or have any specific flexible work arrangement?**

Requests for disability accommodation should be handled in accordance with Personnel Policies for Staff Members 81 (Reasonable Accommodation) or the applicable CBA. This includes situations where an employee with a disability requests a flexible work arrangement as a reasonable accommodation. It also includes situations where a remote employee with a disability or a hybrid remote employee with a disability may need a reasonable accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of their position.

Please begin the interactive process and speak with your supervisor, and contact David Ritz (daritz@ucanr.edu), Disability Management Coordinator, for additional information.

1. **Who do I contact if I still have questions?**

**Human Resources**

Disability Accommodations: Dave Ritz, daritz@ucanr.edu

Flexible Work Agreements: Jodi Rosenbaum, jrosenbaum@ucanr.edu

Employee and Labor Relations: Bethanie Brown, brbbrown@ucanr.edu

General: humanresources@ucanr.edu

**Risk Management**

General - Brian Oatman:

**IT**

General: Sree Mada, smada@ucanr.edu, or help@ucanr.edu