

## **Flexwork Framework**

As the world's premier women's college, Wellesley has the opportunity to create a workplace that lifts up employee lives and careers. We also have a responsibility as a residential college to sustain a vibrant campus community where in-person engagement is essential to student success and to institutional effectiveness.

We have developed the following flexwork framework aimed at promoting a work environment that simultaneously advances the educational mission of the College and supports the work-life priorities for our employees.

## **General Information**

### **Definitions and Examples of Flexwork**

The term flexwork incorporates flexibility across two dimensions, both time and space. It is possible, and sometimes desirable, to have one kind of flexibility without the other.

***Telecommuting** refers to flexibility in the place of work, i.e. working the same schedule that you typically work, but doing so at a different location.*

- We expect that all employees will live within daily commuting distance to campus to work in-person when scheduled or when necessary. Permitted states include: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and Connecticut. In addition to ensuring in-person work as needed, this policy reflects the College's obligation to comply with complex state employment laws and regulations. It will be allowable to work remotely for one week in states not mentioned above with manager's approval.
- The division head and department head will determine the degree of on-campus presence necessary based on the role. For positions that allow for Telecommuting arrangements, up to 2 days of remote work per week is typical. In some cases, based on role, the division head may approve additional remote work. Schedules should be reviewed periodically to determine whether or not to continue.
- Departmental workspaces should be reconsidered when greater remote work is provided and on-campus time will be limited. Consider the best use of space for team-building and building community.

- For positions that are not able to work in a hybrid environment due to their role supporting students and other constituents, greater flexibility for remote work may be offered in the month of January and during a portion of the summer. Employees and managers should meet to determine what degree of on campus work is necessary during this period.
- Telecommuting arrangements give employees the opportunity to work on their job remotely. While doing College work, employees should not simultaneously work at other jobs, run their own businesses, or engage in regular childcare or other family care.
- Employees who foresee that their telecommuting arrangement will require a schedule adjustment in a given week may request a schedule change to their manager. The manager will have discretion to determine whether to permit such an adjustment.
- Employees who would benefit from working remotely for a specific project for a finite period of time may request this to their manager. The manager will have discretion to determine whether or not to permit such an adjustment.
- Managers should articulate the degree of flexibility in job descriptions for posting purposes and for current incumbents.

*Flextime refers to flexibility in the timing of work, i.e. working the typical schedule with adjustments earlier or later.*

- A flexible schedule must still be predictable; erratic hours from week to week or month to month are unlikely to meet the needs of colleagues or constituencies served. When agreed to, flextime should follow mostly standard work hours with modest flexibility.

### **Eligibility for Flexwork**

Flexwork arrangements apply to administrative staff. The decision to offer flexwork is based on a number of factors: the nature and requirements of the position, and the feasibility of doing the work independently; the impact on the College community and those served by the department and the position; the impact on the employee's co-workers and on the effectiveness of the department; and the employee's work performance.

### **Eligibility requirements:**

- Suitability of position responsibilities—the position has clearly defined tasks and measurable goals.
- Some or all of the employee's job responsibilities can be performed remotely, and do not require their physical presence at the College.

- The arrangement does not alter the position responsibilities, or compromise the level of service to constituents or the performance of the team.
- The employee has demonstrated consistent performance and the ability to accomplish the work independently. For new employees, this would require evidence from previous employment. The best way to receive this evidence is through reference-checking prior to hire by asking questions about their ability to work independently and the ways the candidate provides updates on their goals and objectives.
- The employee is accountable for working the number of hours and days agreed upon and showing evidence of meeting goals.
- The off-site work environment permits working without interruptions.
- Non-exempt employee roles that permit flexwork will be required to comply with all policies and laws pertaining to overtime, recording time, meal, and rest periods.
- The employee must have appropriate computing and reliable network resources needed to perform their work remotely. Costs associated with network access at a reliable level of bandwidth is the responsibility of the employee.
- The employee is able to comply with all data and network security requirements outlined in the [WISP](#), including accessing secure data through a VPN connection, and completing the security training program required for accessing confidential data remotely.

Note: Flexwork is not an employee benefit or entitlement, and the College's and the department's needs must take priority over the arrangement if there is a conflict that may necessitate alteration of the arrangement. New employees and part-time employees may be eligible for flexwork if the division head determines that the position meets all eligibility requirements.

### **Principles:**

- The process for determining flexwork options will be based on the role and this approach should be the same across all divisions, although the outcomes will vary from department to department and individual to individual because decisions are dependent on the needs of the College, the department, those they serve and the role, as determined by the division head.
- Effective functioning of the department, team cohesion, coordination across divisions, serving the needs of constituents, and maintaining high quality work are essential in any flexwork arrangement.
- Flexwork should be functionally equivalent to working in person. The employee needs to be equally productive, participate in meetings as required, respond to phone calls etc.

- Offices should be adequately staffed in person during College business hours. Additional student workers should not be hired to substitute for staff working remotely.
- It is not necessary for an employee who meets the eligibility requirements for flexwork to demonstrate any additional reason to request flexwork. Employees should not be asked, nor do they need to disclose personal reasons why flexwork is being requested.
- Flexwork should provide opportunities for positive impact on the experience of students, colleagues, or other constituents (e.g. prospective students).
- Flexwork schedules must be responsive to change and urgent needs.

### **Computing Resources for Remote Access**

Staff who are approved for flexwork arrangements and currently have a College desktop computer will be provided with a laptop and the desktop computer will be reclaimed. The College does not provide additional computers for employees to work at home. To ensure the best possible remote connection, the computer and network an employee uses for telecommuting should meet the minimum requirements outlined in the [“Computing Resources for Remote Access.”](#)

### **Role of Division Heads, Department Heads and Employees**

#### **Division Head Role:**

- Division Heads clearly articulate their staffing expectations for the division to achieve the goals and objectives of the division and to meet the needs of relevant constituencies. These staffing expectations will vary depending on the nature of the work. Division heads make final decisions regarding flexwork arrangements for the division.

#### **Direct Report to Division Head Role (department heads):**

- Direct reports will be responsible for on-going meetings with respective teams to discuss flexwork in the context of the College guidelines, divisional and community expectations. By meeting with their team, direct reports can facilitate a discussion of how flexwork plans can support collective work and employee needs. The direct report to the division head will determine the staffing plan after reviewing individual roles and discussion flexwork with the team. Decisions are not final until the division head reviews and approves.

#### **Employee Role:**

- Review Wellesley College Flexwork Guidelines and understand College-wide expectations as well as department specific expectations.

- Think through the work, the work of colleagues, collaborative work within teams, and the needs of those the employee serves in the College community.
- Consider how to meet the in-person accessibility expectations for the role when incorporating flexwork arrangements. Consider any technology requirement to ensure that you can maintain confidentiality and security of all College information and ensure that the remote work environment meets the computing and networking requirements outlined in the “[Computing Resources for Remote Access](#).”
- Make sure that the off-site work environment permits working without interruptions.
- If an employee has concerns about decisions regarding flexwork, they may contact Human Resources or the Ombudsperson to discuss their issue.