

FLEXIBLE AND ALTERNATE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

POLICY REFERENCE: [DIA FLEXIBLE AND ALTERNATE WORK ARRANGEMENTS - STAFF](#)

Compressed Work Week Frequently Asked Questions

What is a compressed work week?

A compressed work week allows staff to work longer days for part of the week in exchange for a day off each week. Compressed work weeks are most appropriate in situations where staff do not have to keep pace with the incoming work on a daily basis or where there are several staff members that perform the same or similar work. The College's compressed work week is a four 10-hour day workweek in which the staff member would be off one (1) workday per week.

Who is eligible to request a compressed work week?

Exempt and non-exempt staff (1.0 FTE) who are employed in a job position designated as suitable for flexible/alternate work arrangement.

Considerations for staff requesting compressed work week:

- A compressed work week is not appropriate for all positions, in all settings, or for all staff members.
- Staff who have difficulty with punctuality, attendance and/or performance, or who require close supervision, are not good candidates.
- A compressed work week should not negatively affect the workload or productivity of coworkers either by shifting burdens or creating delays and additional steps in the work flow.
- A staff member on a compressed workweek should schedule preventative appointments (doctor, dentist, child's school etc.) on his/her scheduled day off to limit further interruption to the workflow.

How does a staff member request a compressed work week?

The employee submits a written or verbal request to his/her manager. Manager will discuss the request with the employee and his/her Cabinet member. If the employee is approved for the compressed work week, a [Compressed Workweek and Telework Agreement](#) is completed and a trial period of three (3) months will be established. During the trial period both the employee and the manager should make note of what works well and what does not work well with the compressed work week.

What happens once the trial period has ended?

Within ten (10) days of the end of the trial period, the manager should complete a review of the compressed work week to determine:

- Did we have coverage available as necessary to meet operational and business needs?

- What has been the positive impact of the compressed work week?
- Has there been positive and/or negative impact on co-workers?
- How has the schedule impacted customers/clients or others who work with the department?
- Was Outlook used to identify staff member's schedule and was that effective for setting meetings?
- Were preventative/non-emergent appointments (doctor/dentist/child's school) scheduled on days off to reduce additional time out of the office?
- Were performance expectations met? Were deadlines met, calls returned timely, etc.?
- Was staff member available on days off for emergencies? If yes, and the staff is non-exempt, did the manager make sure to account for all time "working" and edit the timecard appropriately?

Following the assessment, the Compressed Work Week form should be noted to designate whether the compressed work week will continue or be terminated.

How does the compressed work week affect requests for paid leave (vacation, sick)?

Employees must have an established schedule based on the compressed work week and will be expected to take leave based upon the schedule. This means requesting ten (10) hours for a full day absence.

If a paid holiday falls on a day the staff member is not normally scheduled to work, can one of the other regularly scheduled days be taken off that week?

Exempt staff who are not normally scheduled to work on the day on which a holiday falls should *not* take another day off that week unless he/she schedules vacation or personal time.

Example:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Regular Schedule	10	10	10	10	Off
Holiday Week Schedule	10	10	10	10	Holiday Off

Non-Exempt staff will earn eight (8) hours of holiday time, on the holiday. The staff member will adjust their time during the week to reach their scheduled hours or complete a vacation leave request for the additional time.

Example:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Regular Schedule	10	10	10	10	Off
Friday Holiday Option 1	8	8	8	8	8 holiday hours
Friday Holiday Option 2	0	11	11	10	8 holiday hours
Friday Holiday Option 3	Use 2 hours leave time	10	10	10	8 holiday hours

How do you address paid holidays when the holiday falls on the staff member's normal scheduled day?

Exempt staff has the holiday off in addition to his/her normal scheduled day off.

Example:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Regular Schedule	10	10	10	10	Off
Holiday Week Schedule	Holiday Off	10	10	10	Off

Non-Exempt staff when the holiday occurs on one of the four ten-hour work days, eight (8) holiday hours are applied to that day. In order to have 40 hours for the week, staff will need to work additional hours on their scheduled days or use vacation leave for two (2) more hours on the holiday.

Example:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Regular Schedule	10	10	10	10	Off
Monday Holiday Option 1	8 holiday hours Plus, Manager submits 2 hours of leave time for staff	10	10	10	Off
Monday Holiday Option 2	8 holiday hours	11	11	10	Off

Telework Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible for telework?

Exempt and non-exempt staff (1.0 FTE) who are in a job code designated as suitable for telework are eligible for consideration to telework. Staff on probation due to disciplinary action may not telework. Managers have discretion to approve telework arrangements for employees who are on a performance improvement plan.

Amarillo College recognizes the work of the faculty is unique to the mission of the College and as a result work flexibility is necessary in their roles. While faculty are not covered in the scope of the telework guidelines, Chairs and Deans have the discretion to use the guidelines and resources to assist in supporting the academic endeavors of the faculty by setting forth appropriate expectations for faculty members.

How does a staff member request a telework arrangement?

The staff member should review the Flexible and Alternate Work Arrangements policy ([DIA](#)), and discuss the option of telework with his/her manager. The employee and the manager should engage in honest discussion about whether the option of telework would be appropriate. Complete the [Compressed Workweek and Telework agreement](#).

Can my request for telework be denied?

Yes. Telework is not universal or an entitlement. Through telework Amarillo College is striving to balance the needs of the staff and department. Telework arrangements work best when there is a positive contribution to the staff member's work/life balance while not negatively impacting productivity and availability. Managers need to assess the business need and continuity of operations, customer service and to assure meeting individual and department goals are not negatively impacted.

Who has to approve my request for telework?

Your manager and your manager's Cabinet Team member.

May I telework from anywhere?

Employees must perform regular telework in the state of Texas and be able to report to campus on short notice and on regular in-office days. The College may in very limited circumstances approve 100% remote arrangements for hard-to-fill positions or contract labor situations.

Why can I telework only in the state of Texas?

Amarillo College is not set up in any other states to operate as an employer and withhold appropriate state taxes.

Telework Guidelines indicate the work must be performed in the state of Texas. What if I'm on vacation or business travel outside the state of Texas, may I still work?

For exempt staff, if you are on vacation and choose to work that is not considered telework and the issues with taxability do not apply. While on business travel for the College, you may continue to work without concerns regarding taxability.

Non-exempt staff may NOT perform any work while on vacation leave unless they change their vacation request. Work while on vacation must be pre-approved by the manager. Non-Exempt staff working while on vacation without authorization are subject to corrective action.

Non-exempt staff on business travel should perform no work without tracking and recording and submitting their hours to their manager. Failure to appropriately record hours may result in corrective action.

If I'm required to come to an AC campus on a day I am scheduled to telework, will I be paid for travel time (non-exempt only)?

Perhaps. If your manager expects you to spend part of your day at AC (or at another location), the time spent traveling *may* be paid time. The travel time to continue work at the next location is the only paid portion of travel. Travel to begin a workday or to end a workday is commute time and is not paid.

Examples:

Schedule is 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The employee begins the workday at home and travels to AC for a 10:00 a.m. meeting working on campus until 11:00 a.m. and then travelling home to continue their work day. Both the travel to AC and back home is considered “travel time” and compensable.

Schedule is 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The employee begins the workday at home and travels to AC for a 2:00 p.m. meeting working on campus until 5:00 p.m. and travels home. The travel from home to AC is considered “travel time” and compensable. The travel home at the end of the work day is not compensable

The need to come to AC during a telework day should be kept to a minimum. If the employee does need to spend part of their telework day on campus, managers should adjust the telework schedule for staff to start or end their day at AC to reduce the amount of travel time. Managers may request staff to work their full schedule on campus.

Consistent requirements for staff to report to campus may require a review of suitability for a position to telework.

If I’m required to come to AC for the full workday on a day I am scheduled to telework can I request mileage/travel reimbursement?

No. This travel is considered “commute to work” and will not be reimbursed.

I have young children or an elderly relative at home; is this a reason to telework?

No. Telework must be treated similarly to working in your AC workplace. Telework cannot be a substitute for child or other dependent care.

My children or elderly relative are self-sufficient and do not need my care. Can they be in the home when I’m teleworking?

It depends. Even older children or a self-sufficient older relative can distract you from your work. It’s important to be honest with yourself and your manager. Are your children old enough and mature enough to be self-managing? Do family members understand the boundary between work and non-work? Will you be able to commit your full attention to your job?

These resources may be helpful

[Leaving Your Child Home Alone](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

[Work and Eldercare](#) (Family Caregiver Alliance)

May I telework if the schools are closed for weather or other unexpected emergencies?

Perhaps. This decision is at the manager’s discretion. It’s best to work out these questions in advance with your manager so if a situation arises, expectations and procedures are clearly defined.

May I change my telework schedule if my children's schools are closed for weather or other unexpected emergencies?

Perhaps, if you already have a Regular Telework Agreement in place and the day you need to be at home is not currently part of your schedule. You and your manager will need to determine if changing the schedule for this limited period allows AC to continue to meet operational and business needs. If you have an Occasional Telework Agreement in place you and your manager will determine if teleworking on the day you need to be at home due to school closure is appropriate or if use of Vacation Leave is necessary. Manager approval of telework once for this situation does not set a precedent for future requests. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

Do I have to Telework on a day when AC is closed for inclement weather?

Depends. If you perform essential services that are necessary during a shut down, you may be requested to continue working. For exempt staff, there is no additional compensation for performing these services. For non-exempt employees, in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, you will need to record your hours worked and will be paid for time worked. You will have a discussion with your manager to determine if any duties you perform are essential when AC is closed.

If you do not perform essential services necessary during a shut down, you are not required to telework and you will be paid in accordance to the Amarillo College Weather and Emergency Closing Policy.

What happens if on my telework day I lose power, internet connection or some other reason I'm not able to continue my work from the telework site?

Communicate with your manager. You may be expected to work on campus or use Vacation Leave.

How do I communicate with colleagues on the AC campus?

It is important communication does not suffer when you are teleworking. You should be using Outlook to indicate your telework schedule on your calendar and profile. This will be very helpful when trying to schedule face-to-face meetings. You can use instant messaging, email, phone, and Google Meet, Zoom etc. to stay connected. Colleagues should be able to connect with you as easily while you are teleworking as they would if you are on campus. A best practice is to show teleworking time as "working elsewhere" on your Outlook calendar to assist other employees scheduling meetings. This communicates to others when you are not on campus.

I work with sensitive data. Is teleworking out of the question for me?

No. ITS has technology tools that ensure a secure connection from remote locations. You should be able to access this sensitive data electronically as much as possible. AC requires that sensitive paper documents remain on campus.

Where should I save my work?

Work should be saved on your work computer only, especially when working with sensitive data. One of the most effective ways to safeguard documents containing sensitive personally identifiable information (PII), is to keep electronic documents within the organization's network. When teleworking, identify the files you need to work on in advance, and organize them on network shares or organizational laptops, so that they will be easily accessible while teleworking. Have a back-up plan in mind in case issues are experienced with network connectivity, but never transfer files to personal computers using thumb drives or other portable electronic devices.

What equipment will AC provide for me while teleworking?

AC may provide a computer or other equipment only with cabinet approval. All employees seeking a regular or occasional telework agreement must complete the [ITS Teleworking Requirements and Remote Access Request](#) documents prior to doing any work from an alternate location. Any questions regarding either can be directed to the Information Security Lead, 806-371-5678.

Can I be reimbursed for teleworking expenses?

No. AC assumes no other responsibility for operating costs associated with using your personal residence or other location as an alternate work location.

What happens if I transfer to another position and/or department. Does my telework agreement move with me?

Maybe. If changing to a different job position which is designated as suitable for flexible/alternate work, the manager will assess the needs of the department to determine if the telework agreement can continue. Communicate your request to continue teleworking to your manager for your new position/department.

What is the difference between regular telework and remote work?

Staff who telework are on campus and in their office generally 1 to 3 days a week. Remote workers have little to no presence on campus and do not have an office. Amarillo College currently does not support fully remote work.

Can my manager amend/terminate my telework agreement?

Yes. With a ten (10) business day written notice, your manager may change or terminate your telework agreement. There may be many reasons to terminate or amend the agreements, including operational changes, staffing changes, leadership changes, performance, etc. If amending the agreement, a new telework agreement must be completed.

If you receive a verbal warning, written warning, performance improvement plan, or suspension for deficiencies in performance, attendance or conduct, your telework agreement will be terminated **immediately.**

May I amend/terminate my own telework agreement?

Yes. You may request to amend or terminate the telework agreement with ten (10) day's written notice. Managers may agree to a shorter notice. If amending the agreement, a new telework agreement must be completed.

Manager FAQs for Teleworking

What are the benefits of teleworking?

Benefits of teleworking may include: Improved productivity; employee retention and engagement; uninterrupted time for creative, repetitive or highly detailed work; cost savings by reducing staff turnover and training costs; improved recruitment as telework options may attract more and higher quality candidates for positions.

I have employees who want to telework, but I need them physically in the office. What do I do?

Managers are not obligated to approve teleworking. If there is a business need for employees to physically be in the office, you can choose not to designate job positions as suitable for flexible/alternate work. If you have designated a job position as suitable for flexible/alternate work arrangement, you still may deny an employee's request based on the employee eligibility above.

I'm uncomfortable with the thought that I may be pressured by my staff to use telework options. How can I put this in perspective?

As a manager, you are the ultimate arbiter to determine if telework is appropriate for your department and staff. It is important that you fairly and consistently consider each staff member's request, but you are not obligated to approve every proposal.

How do I address the situation where I approve one staff member's telework request but not another?

All decisions should be focused on business needs and objective criteria related to work performance and job demands. Use a consistent approach to analyze the situation. Document the basis for your decisions in case questions should arise later.

Can telework arrangements be used for a limited period to meet fluctuating work demands?

Yes. If you have staff with a regular three day a week telework schedule and there is a special project that having a full week of telework would be beneficial, managers have discretion to allow this. For staff with occasional telework, approving telework for a week in order to complete the project is at the manager's discretion. These short-term adjustments should be documented in writing.

How do I manage staff who are not in the office?

Outcome-based management is effective with staff not physically in the office. Discussion of goals, assignments and due dates, and then reviewing projects on an ongoing basis can keep staff on track. Prior to executing a telework agreement with any of your employees, you must complete the college's [training module](#) to improve your skills and outcomes in managing a flexible workforce.