**Foothill-De Anza**

**Community College District**

**Remote Work Suitability Guide**

The *Foothill-De Anza Community College District Administrative Procedure for Remote Work* (AP 7280) outlines the requirements for supporting remote work agreements for Foothill-De Anza employees. This *Foothill-De Anza Community College District Remote Work Suitability Guide* is designed to determine how supervisors can implement the *Foothill-De Anza Community College District Administrative Procedure for Remote Work* to support employee flexibility and department goals associated with remote work.

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# **Overview**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foothill-De Anza Community College District moved to essential operations, transitioning a significant proportion of its workforce to fully remote work. As the district moved to modified operations in preparation for the fall 2021 semester, Foothill-De Anza administrators, supervisors, and employees worked to determine which positions and employees were well suited for regular or occasional remote work.

While recognizing that some work can only be done on-site, the district encourages the use of remote work arrangements for employees where remote work is an option.

In order to meet the needs of district employees, while providing support for operations, it is recommended that employees be allowed to continue to work remotely when their job responsibilities allow it. Supervisors are asked to be flexible with employees while maintaining clear performance expectations. Where practicable, supervisors should be supportive of employee requests for remote work.

# **Benefits of Remote Work**

Benefits/Statistical Information pulled from: [Global Workplace Analytics](https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/telecommuting-statistics) and [Monster.com](https://hiring.monster.com/employer-resources/recruiting-strategies/talent-acquisition/todays-candidates-want-flexibility-and-autonomy-heres-how-to-hire-them/)

* Studies show that over 90 percent of candidates want an option to work remotely.
* 50 percent of the US workforce has a job that is conducive to at least part-time remote work.
* 35 percent of employees would change jobs for the opportunity to work remotely fulltime.
* The district can offer greater benefits in recruitment efforts, seeking candidates with diverse backgrounds who would be unwilling to consider district employment without a Remote Work Arrangement option.
* One of the considerable benefits of working from home is having access to a broader range of job opportunities that are not limited by geographic location. This can be especially helpful for job seekers living in rural communities and small towns where there may not be many available local positions.
* Remote Work Arrangements offer avenues for better accommodations for many employees with disabilities.
* Remote work enables organizations to embrace diversity and inclusion by hiring people from different socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural backgrounds and with different perspectives. By hiring employees who can work from home in the communities where they feel the most comfortable and supported, organizations choose to support diversity, community, and family.
* Remote Work Arrangements can reduce building costs for over-capacity workspaces with shared office space.
* On average, an employer can save $11,000 per half-time remote worker per year in overhead, real estate costs, turnover, and continuity of operations.
* Remote Work Arrangements have proven to improve employee retention and job satisfaction. A reported 72% of employers say remote work has a high impact on employee retention.
* Remote Work Arrangements can enhance work life balance and wellness for employees. The average one-way commuting time in the U.S. is 27.1 minutes—that’s nearly an hour each day spent getting to and from work. According to the Auto Insurance Center, commuters spend about 100 hours commuting and 41 hours stuck in traffic each year.
* More than 30 minutes of daily one-way commuting is associated with increased levels of stress and anxiety, which may impact insurance premiums through user experience. Research shows that commuting 10 miles to work each day is associated with issues like:
	+ Higher cholesterol
	+ Elevated blood sugar
	+ Increased risk of depression
* Remote Work Arrangements can have a positive environmental impact. One of the fastest ways to affect climate change is by reducing commuter travel. 7.8 billion vehicle miles are not traveled each year for those who work at least part-time from home, 3 million tons of greenhouse gases (GHG) are avoided, and oil savings reached $980 million.
* Remote Work Arrangements lead to increased productivity and performance. Working from home usually leads to fewer interruptions, less office politics, a lower noise level, and less (or more efficient) meetings. Add in the lack of a commute, and remote workers typically have more time and fewer distractions, which leads to increased productivity—a huge benefit of working from home for both employees and employers alike.
* Remote work allows employees and companies to focus on what really matters - performance.

# **Purpose**

The Foothill-De Anza Community College District administrative procedure for Remote Work outlines the requirements for supporting remote work arrangements for district employees. This document helps supervisors in determining what positions and employees are well-suited for regular or occasional remote work options.

Two critical steps must be followed to determine remote work suitability:

Step 1: Determine the suitability of positions based on job duties and responsibilities.

Step 2: Determine the suitability of employees based on past work performance.

# **Step 1: Determining which positions are conducive to remote work**

A position can be considered suitable for remote work if some or most of its responsibilities can be performed away from a physical district work location. The change in work location should not impact productivity, customer service, operational efficiency, or team collaboration. The determination should be first based on the type of work, not on employee performance.

Each position should be considered individually, per the responsibilities of the position, to determine if the work can be done outside of a district location. IT ability and access to high-speed internet networks also play a large part in determining remote work ability.

* Does a specific function require access to equipment to perform the function?
* Does a specific function require access to high-speed Internet for an employee to be able to complete tasks and communicate with supervisors and team members?
* Do the core responsibilities of a specific function require access to equipment, materials, and files that can only be accessed on site?
* Does a specific function require an employee to be on-site for face-to-face meetings with supervisors, other employees, students, or customers?

## Remote Site Equipment and Setup:

The Foothill-De Anza Community College District administrative procedure for Remote Work includes information on the equipment that will be provided to remote work employees. The specific equipment provided by the district will be in accordance with each position's responsibilities. The district will not duplicate equipment for a remote work employee who works partially at a district location.

Printers, copiers, fax machines, shredders, white boards, and other traditional office equipment will be located at a district location. Remote work employees that wish to have these items at their remote site will need to purchase them with their own resources, unless their supervisor approves otherwise based on a special circumstance specific to the employee’s responsibilities. Remote workers will be reimbursed for supplies such as paper, pens, and notepads, necessary to perform their job. Employees should work directly with their supervisors on appropriate fiscal processes for such reimbursements.

Remote work employees are expected to establish for themselves an adequate workspace that allows them to work comfortably with appropriate ergonomic considerations. Employees should complete an Office Ergonomic Checklist to assess their remote work site and address any adjustments that may need to be made.

Any employee wishing to request an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should contact Human Resources for the necessary request forms. Accommodations under the ADA will be evaluated for approval through an interactive process between Human Resources and the employee. To ensure fair and consistent, documented accommodations, supervisors should not approve accommodations for employees outside of this process.

## Phone and Internet Access:

High-speed Internet access is required to work remotely. The remote employee must provide their own Internet connectivity. The Internet Service Provider (ISP) that they choose must be able to provide a minimum download speed of 10Mbps and a minimum upload speed of 5Mbps. Higher speeds in both directions are strongly recommended. IT Support can offer advice when choosing or changing an ISP; however, they are unable to assist with home network or ISP issues.

Most full-time employees are assigned an office telephone number. Those employees who are on-site full time will also be provided a desktop telephone. Remote work employees have to use a software-based telephone to make and receive phone calls via their laptop or mobile device. Employees who meet criteria outlined in the district policy/procedure X may request a wireless communication stipend.

## Security of Information:

All employees, including those working in remote locations, must adhere to all applicable security procedures to ensure confidentiality and security of data. Employees and supervisors should familiarize themselves with Board Policies and Procedures X for requirements around acceptable use, information management, and security.

Employee's remote work computer shall be in compliance with all district guidelines for uses of hardware and software including virus protection software, licensing provisions, system security and passwords.

The employee will protect all confidential district documents from unauthorized access. This may require having access to secure file drawers or cabinets at the remote work site.

All products, documents and records that are used, developed, or revised while teleworking remain the property of district.

## Hybrid Roles:

Some positions may be suited for a certain amount of remote work even if many of the responsibilities must be done at the regular work location. These roles could be considered for a limited amount of remote work. Office sharing options may be pursued for employees working a hybrid remote work arrangement. Preference for work space will be given to employees based on the percentage of time they work at a district location.

# **Step 2: Determine the suitability of specific employees who are interested in remote work**

Once it has been determined that all or some of the position’s responsibilities can be performed outside of the regular work environment, it must be determined if an employee in a position is compatible to remote work.

This must be considered on a case-by-case basis for current employees and should be considered when interviewing candidates for a position. The remote work approval or denial determination is made by the employee’s supervisor. This determination should be made from an employee’s individualized request based on the supervisor’s assessment of the position’s **and** employee’s suitability for remote work. Supervisors can use the Remote Work Suitability Assessment, when assessing applicability of remote work requests.

Factors for this determination should include but are not limited to:

* Employees with childcare or eldercare needs that may benefit from a more flexible arrangement.
* The employee’s most recent performance history (including disciplinary action).
* The employee’s time management and organizational skills.
* Does the employee have the necessary computer and communication skills to complete their job functions outside of a district location?
* Does the employee understand their role and expectations, and require little supervision to complete their tasks?
* Is the employee a self-starter and consistently meets deadlines?

A few things to keep in mind:

* If the employee is not well suited for remote work or is denied based on a previously documented performance issue, it is required the supervisor communicate that reasoning with the employee.
* In this instance, a discussion about job performance and growth opportunities should be had between the employee and their supervisor before the option for remote work can be re-assessed in the future.
* Supervisors should keep documentation of the alternative work arrangement agreement approvals and denials for each employee and provide a copy to Human Resources.
* As a supervisor, if you are unsure of how to approach this conversation with your employee, please contact Human Resources for guidance.
* The employee is in charge of setting up their workspace in a remote work environment. This includes adequate access to the Internet and a quiet place for calls or video meetings.
* If employees experience any technical issues or have concerns, they are welcome to reach out to IT Support for assistance or guidance.
* Employees should try to minimize distractions in their work area.
* Employees should be cognizant of how their environment appears during video meetings.
* Employees should be aware of their childcare/eldercare obligations during work hours.
* Employees must work with supervisors to establish a standard work schedule and expectations for communication, including during virtual meetings.

# **Supervisor Responsibility to Ensure Remote Work Success**

A supervisor should consider their own management and supervision style, as well as their level of trust in the employee to perform their assigned job duties in a remote work environment. Keep in mind that trust issues with employees may not be resolved by having them report to the regular work location and alternative methods for performance management may be more effective than restricting remote work. Use the Remote Work Suitability Assessment to gauge how remote work fits the employee, supervisor, and position together. Supervisors should consider the positive impact of remote work and remain open to requests from employees. They should also consider the impacts of team building with a remote workforce. Opportunities for team interactions and periodic in-person meetings are encouraged. Expectations should be clarified with staff so employees can stay connected with their teams. Particular attention should be paid to onboarding a remote employee so they have adequate opportunity to get to know their colleagues.

## Conversations between supervisors and employees should include:

* Childcare/eldercare needs: Flexibility with childcare and eldercare may be granted when working remotely provided it does not impact the employee’s performance. When an employee is actively caring for a child or family member, that time is not considered work time; appropriate leave should be used during those times.
* A standard work schedule for remote work.
* Balance of presence in virtual and on-site meetings: Supervisors should set clear expectations on how employees should participate in meetings. Zoom should continue to be used to provide all meeting attendees the opportunity to participate.
* Expectations for focused, uninterrupted time for completing job responsibilities and attending meetings: If an employee is unable to set boundaries for work time, then the employee is expected to use leave or resume working at a district location.
* Performance management expectations and metrics of monitoring work performance.

# **Tips for entering into a Remote Work Agreement**

## Be Specific:

After determining that both the position and employee are suitable for remote work, a Remote Work Agreement must be created to establish the specifics criteria for conducting and evaluating remote work.

This should include, but is not limited to:

* Days of the week that the employee can remote work.
* Expectations of the level of communication and responsiveness expected on remote workdays. This should be from both the employee and the supervisor.
* Expectations of attendance for meetings and other interactions throughout the district.
* Any other expectations of work to be done and metrics on how this work will be recorded.

Additionally, expectations for communication between both the employee and supervisor should be identified and discussed ahead of time.

These topics should include:

* Balance of presence in virtual and on-site meetings.
* Performance management expectations and metrics of monitoring work performance.
* Physical space arrangement and accommodations including what technology is necessary to perform work functions outside of a district location.
* Managing various work styles including communication expectations from both supervisor and employee.
* Mediums to be considered in maintaining communication include Zoom, email, phone, text message, etc.
* Balance of employee childcare or eldercare needs. Remote work is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate childcare.
* Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate childcare/eldercare needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands. Prospective remote workers are encouraged to discuss expectations of remote work with family members prior to entering a trial period.
* Managing other distractions at home and setting expectations for professionalism to include dress code.

## Develop the Remote Work Agreement:

Employees must complete the Remote Work Agreement Request Form. Contact Human Resources with any questions about completing this form.

## Conditions of Employment:

* Performance expectations and evaluations will not change as a result of remote work.
* Conditions of employment will remain the same, and expectations should be clear and measurable. The supervisor will evaluate employee’s job performance in accordance with applicable performance planning and evaluation.
* Salary and benefits will not be affected by remote work.
* Arrangements that assure adequate communication between employee, co-workers, supervisor, students, or the public must be established. For example:
	+ Establish regular check-in times or plans to email when workday begins and ends.
	+ Use shared calendars to post schedules of remote workers, on-site colleagues, and supervisors.
	+ Use basic communication tools such as phone, email, and/or instant messaging, and consider collaborative tools such as audio and video conferencing.
	+ Coordinate staff meetings and remote work schedules, promoting team cohesion and social interaction; it may be necessary for the remote worker to come to a district location for such events.
* The Remote Work Agreement does not automatically go with an employee in a new position or apply when a position previously done via remote work is assumed by a new employee or supervisor. A new agreement must be requested and reviewed when the above situations occur.

## Hours of Work:

* The required number of work hours will not change, and employees are responsible for appropriately reporting time worked, leave used, and for adhering to district attendance policies.
* Time worked for overtime eligible employees will be treated no differently for remote employees than hours worked at a district location. Supervisors must approve any overtime in advance. Failure to get necessary approval for overtime may result in termination of the remote work agreement and/or disciplinary action.
* For overtime eligible employees, hours worked must be recorded just as they would be when working at a district location. Any time spent working, including checking emails, responding to work phone calls, etc. is considered work time and must be recorded.
* Sick/annual leave is recorded based on the number of hours an employee is scheduled to work on the day they use the leave, whether they are at the office or remote work location.
* Paid holidays will count as 8 hours.
* Supervisors may require employees to report to a district location for work-related events or may meet with them at an alternate location, as needed.
* Remote work is not to be used in place of sick or annual leave; however, in consultation with Human Resources, a department may choose to offer remote work arrangements as an opportunity for partial or full return to work based on policy and procedure and the criteria normally applied to decisions regarding the approval of temporary remote work.

## Safety:

* The district does not assume responsibility for injury to any persons other than the remote worker arising out of duties at the remote work site during the standard work schedule.
* Employees are covered by the Workers’ Compensation Program if injured while performing official duties at a district location or a remote work location and must immediately notify the supervisor of an injury sustained at a remote work location and complete any necessary reports. Once an employee reports a job-related injury, the supervisor or department personnel should contact Human Resources to file a report.



# **Remote Work Suitability Assessment**

**Employee Name: Title: Date:**

This assessment is designed to assist supervisors in determining the feasibility of a remote work arrangement. The supervisor and employee independently measure how well the employee and the proposed remote work meet each criterion. If the supervisor and employee assessments do not agree, this is an opportunity for further discussion. It is the supervisor’s assessment that will be used to determine if employees are candidates for remote work. For new employees, the supervisor can use responses to interview questions and details from reference checks to complete their assessment of remote work eligibility.

5=Always 4=Usually 3=Sometimes 2=Seldom 1=Never

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Successful remote workers tend to be those who:** | **Employee** | **Supervisor** |
| Understand the job and can deliver to outcomes based upon defined goals and performance measures |  |  |
| Understand college/district culture and are knowledgeable of policies and procedures (for new hires supervisor commits to effectively onboarding the employee) |  |  |
| Have the training and can comfortably use technology needed to do the work |  |  |
| Can work within timelines, meet deadlines and produce quality work with minimal direct supervision |  |  |
| Have effective written and verbal communication skills and keep supervisor and colleagues informed about their work |  |  |
| Work well in an environment with little structure and manage duties between days on site and remote work locations |  |  |
|  Are socially self-sufficient and don’t need constant reinforcement to feel good about their work |  |  |
| Have earned the trust of colleagues, supervisor and customers |  |  |
| Have a work location free from distractions in order to successfully perform the duties of the position |  |  |
| Are well organized and have good time-management skills |  |  |
| Rely on electronic data so that limited physical, business documents are transported between work site and remote work location |  |  |
| Have reliable Internet connection at remote location |  |  |
| Are adaptable to changing routines and willing to come to a district location (or other location) on a regularly scheduled remote work day, if necessary |  |  |
| **Successful remote work positions tend to be positions that:** |
| Have defined work products with measurable performance measures (project work, defined outcomes) |  |  |
| Are information-intensive (analytical, evaluative, auditing, research, design, planning) |  |  |
| Are telephone-intensive (customer service) |  |  |
| Include administrative tasks (data entry, writing, preparation academic resources and training documents) |  |  |
| Include IT related tasks (computer programming, software development, web design and development) |  |  |
| Can be accomplished without frequent access to material that cannot be electronically shared and do not require transportation of personally identifiable information (PII) |  |  |
| Can be accomplished without regular face-to-face contact where video conferencing will not suffice |  |  |
| Can control when and where interactions with customer and colleagues take place (i.e. Tend to be planned or are not face-to-face) |  |  |
| There is no difference in the level of service provided to the customer regardless of work location |  |  |
| Have minimal requirement for special equipment |  |  |
| **Remote Work Score** |  |  |