



GUIDELINES FOR HYBRID WORK PILOT

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS – PRESIDENT’S OFFICE

Effective September 27, 2021

- I. [INTRODUCTION, DEFINITIONS, and BENEFITS](#)
- II. [DEPARTMENT AND INDIVIDUAL HYBRID SCHEDULE](#)
- III. [HYBRID POSITION CLASSIFICATION](#)
- IV. [OPERATIONAL NEED, HYBRID WORK ASSESSMENT and NEW HIRES](#)
- V. [AVAILABILITY WHILE TELEWORKING](#)
- VI. [STATUS, LEAVE and ACCOMODATIONS](#)
- VII. [OFFICE SUPPLIES AND PARKING](#)
- VIII. [INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY](#)

- I. [INTRODUCTION, DEFINITIONS, and BENEFITS](#)

- a. [Introduction](#)

The University of Massachusetts President’s Office (UMPO) hybrid pilot program will begin on Monday, September 27, 2021. In June of 2022, the UMPO Senior Executive Team (SET) which includes the President, the Executive Vice President, and their direct reports, will determine if the hybrid work model will become permanent, be altered, or cease. The adjustments or cessation of the program could occur before or during the week of September 12, 2022.

The UMPO reserves the right to clarify, amend, or rescind the pilot and these guidelines based on the operational needs of the organization at any time, including prior to September 11, 2022. The University also reserves the right to implement different temporary guidelines in response to an emergency situation.

- b. [Scope of Guidelines](#)

The guidelines in this document apply to non-unit (also referred to as non-union) employees who are employed by the UMPO.

- c. [Definitions of Telework and Hybrid Work](#)

Telework – also known as telecommuting or working remotely – is an alternative workplace arrangement which provides employees the opportunity to work at a place other than a UMPO assigned on-site work location. An alternative workplace may be an employee’s residence, or an alternative location approved by the employee’s supervisor/manager, including a satellite office near the employee’s home.

A hybrid work model is a workplace arrangement that seeks to capture the benefits of both on-site work and telework and consists of employees who have a mix of both as part of their regular schedule. This also includes a limited number of employees who may be either on-site on a full-time basis or teleworking on a full-time basis.

d. Benefits of a Hybrid Work Model

On-site work plays a key role in the development and maintenance of effective working relationships and vibrant, informal communication and problem solving. It cultivates a sense of membership in the workforce and reinforces that each member is part of one interdependent entity with a shared mission.

Telework benefits our society by reducing energy consumption, decreasing environmental pollution, and reducing traffic congestion. Telework may also allow some employees to continue to work when emergency circumstances prevent employees from reporting on-site. Additionally, telework benefits both the employer and employees by reducing the amount of money spent on office space, saving commuting costs, allowing flexibility in work schedules, and promoting a positive work/life balance.

II. DEPARTMENT AND INDIVIDUAL HYBRID SCHEDULE

a. Department/Business Unit Hybrid Schedule

The regular hours of operation for UMPO are Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM (excluding holidays). Departments must be staffed and providing service during those hours. However, staffing and the provision of services may consist of a blend of on-site and remote work.

Some departments may adopt a hybrid work schedule for the entire department (as opposed to for an individual employee). This schedule will specify the hours that the department is staffed on-site and the hours that some or all employees in the department will be teleworking. The department's hybrid schedule must be based on the business needs of the University. Some business units within a department may adopt their own distinct hybrid schedule based on distinct business needs.

Decisions about the hybrid work schedule for a department, or business units within a department, must be approved by the Senior Executive Team (SET) member who oversees that department of the President's Office.

An example of a business unit's hybrid work schedule and location is below:

The SET member determines the following for a business unit:

- The business unit will have on-site staff at Shrewsbury on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
 - All employees in the business unit will be classified as regular reporting, with the exception of one employee who will be designated fully on-site.
 - All employees within the business unit must be on-site on two of these three days.
 - All employees within the business unit must be on-site on Wednesday.
 - The department head can determine the other day (Tuesday or Thursday) upon which individual employees will be on-site.
 - Employees who want to be on-site for all three days are welcome to do so.

As a result, there are four schedules within the business unit that are consistent with the SET member’s decision:

| Employee | Hybrid Classification | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Tyler | regular reporting | telework | telework | on-site | on-site | telework |
| Catalina | regular reporting | telework | on-site | on-site | telework | telework |
| Jade | regular reporting | telework | on-site | on-site | on-site | telework |
| Keith | fully on-site | on-site | on-site | on-site | on-site | on-site |

SET members may delegate the determination of the hybrid work schedule for an individual employee to a department head, provided the individual employee’s schedule is consistent with the hybrid scheduled that was approved for the department. (For example, the department head can determine whether Catalina works on-site on Tuesday or Thursday.) To the extent the employee’s personal preference can be accommodated within this framework, then department heads are encouraged to do so.

b. Individual Employee Hybrid Schedules

Instead of adopting a hybrid schedule for a department, the SET member may decide that a department will have on-site staff available during all business hours. However, they may choose to enter into a hybrid work schedule with individual employees to accomplish that objective. In these circumstances, the SET member, or their designee, and an employee must execute an individual Hybrid Work Agreement. The Hybrid Work Agreement will identify the employee’s work schedule and identify which days and hours, if any, the employee will be working remotely.

In addition, some departments may adopt a hybrid work schedule for the department but grant an individual employee a hybrid schedule that differs from the hybrid schedule that was authorized for the rest of department or business unit. (This could also include a situation where any employee seeks to be on-site full time and not have a hybrid schedule.) In these circumstances, the SET member, or their designee, and employee must execute an individual Hybrid Work Agreement.

To the extent practicable, UMPO Human Resources encourages departments to adopt department or business unit hybrid schedules rather than individual hybrid schedules.

c. Variations and Flexibility in Schedules

Whether a department opts to have a department/business unit hybrid schedule, or whether it opts to have some individual hybrid schedules, there may be differences in employees’ schedules based on the nature of their position and the needs of the business unit. There will be variations in the number of on-site and telework days that any individual employee works within a department and business units, as well as differences with other departments and business units.

d. Variation in the Beginning and End of the Workday.

The regular hours of operation for UMPO are Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM including a half hour lunchbreak (excluding holidays). However, on a case-by-case basis, a SET member, or their designee, may authorize an employee to have a different beginning and end time within a workday, provided that the employee work the same number of hours that day. (This variation in the beginning and end time of an individual employee’s schedule does not need to be recorded in a hybrid work agreement.)

e. Temporary Incidental Variations

An employee and their supervisor can agree to temporary incidental changes to the employee's hybrid work schedule. For example, a supervisor can direct an employee to work on-site on a different day for the next four weeks to attend an on-site training program or the supervisor and the employee can agree that the employee will telework on a different day other than the one scheduled (i.e., telework on Wednesday of that week rather than the employee's normal schedule of teleworking on Friday of that week). However, if the parties agree to a permanent change in the employee's hybrid work schedule that is contrary to the department or business unit's hybrid work schedule, or contrary to the employee individual Hybrid Work Agreement, then they must execute (or amend) a Hybrid Work Agreement and file it with Human Resources. Hybrid Work Agreements will be reviewed as part of the overall decision to make permanent, amend or cease the UMPO Hybrid Work Pilot.

f. Discontinuation of Hybrid Work

A SET member can modify or discontinue a department, business unit, or individual employee's hybrid work schedule (including during the pilot period) if they determine a modification or discontinuation is in the business interest of the department or business unit. The SET member is encouraged to provide any impacted parties with as much notice as is possible.

III. HYBRID POSITION CLASSIFICATION

a. Classifications

Each employee's position should be classified in one of four categories below:

Fully On-Site – These employees report to their on-site business location for their full work week, and they do not work remotely as a regular part of the schedule. (Some incidental remote work may be approved by the department head, but not as part of the employee's regular schedule.)

Regular Reporting – These employees report to the on-site work location on a regularly scheduled basis. However, the frequency may vary considerably based on their department's hybrid schedule, the specific job duties of the individual position and the need to physically staff their department's on-site hours. The variation of on-site work may range from one day per month to a few days per week. On the days employees are not on-site, they are teleworking.

In addition to their regular reporting days, the department heads may direct these employees to report on-site as needed on additional days for meetings, trainings, or other business needs.

On-Site As Needed – These employees will have a designated on-site work location. However, they will only report to that location when directed to do so by their department head or supervisor. Department heads may direct the employee to report on-site as needed for meetings, trainings or other business needs. Department heads are expected to provide these employees with reasonable notice, to the extent possible, of the need to report on-site.

Fully Remote – These employees work remotely, and there is no expectation that they be available to report on-site on an as-needed basis.

IV. OPERATIONAL NEED, HYBRID WORK ASSESSMENT and NEW HIRES

a. Operational Need

Each department must have the necessary staff on-site to operate during its designated on-site business hours. Hybrid work must not result in a decrease in productivity, a decrease in communication or coordination, or a decrease in the level of service to internal or external customers.

b. Reassignment of Work

A hybrid work schedule must not result in an employee performing different work while teleworking than they would perform if they were working on-site. Additionally, a hybrid work design should not result in any of the duties of the employee being reassigned to other employees.

c. Types of Work Suited for Telework

Different types of work have characteristics that are well suited to telework assignments while other types of work are less so. When evaluating whether or not to allow an employee to telework, a department head should consider these characteristics. In general, work with easily measured outputs is better suited to telework assignments.

Characteristics of work that are not well suited to telework include:

- Work that regularly requires in-person communication with a supervisor, peers, or customers (e.g., an employee who regularly greets internal or external customers, an employee who maintains IT networks.)
- Work that regularly requires access to hard copy files (non-electronic), financial documents, mail and other hard copy documents that should not be regularly removed from the work site. (Any employee who removes documents from the office for the purpose of accessing those documents while teleworking must return the documents to their on-site work location and comply with any record retention requirements.)
- Work that requires regular access to supplies and/or equipment that should not or could not be reasonably brought to or provided at a remote worksite.

d. Hybrid Work for Newly Hired Employees

Newly hired employees may work a hybrid work schedule in accordance with the terms and approval process above. The SET member or their designee and Human Resources must inform the new employee that they do not have a right to a hybrid work schedule as a term and condition of their employment; instead, their hybrid work scheduled is part of this overall pilot program. Newly hired employees should expect they may need to be on-site at additional times during the beginning of their employment for certain on-boarding and training related matters.

V. AVAILABILITY WHILE TELEWORKING

a. Availability

When teleworking, an employee must be readily available by email, telephone, web conferencing and/or the other relevant communications tools deemed necessary by their department (e.g., Slack) during their regularly scheduled work hours.

b. Non-Work Related Responsibilities While Teleworking

Employees are reminded that while teleworking, all workplace policies remain in effect, including time and attendance, and expectations for performance and conduct. Employees who telework must be able to commit their attention to work during their agreed upon hours and are not to perform non-work-related activities during work hours.

However, in circumstances when an employee is teleworking due to a declared state of emergency, a time when the on-site work location is closed due to an emergency situation, or when ordinary dependent care services are unavailable as a result of these factors, an employee who teleworks may also perform non-work-related activities if no alternative is available, provided that they are still able to work their regular number of hours that day. If the employee is unable to work their regular number of hours that day, then they must use paid leave; if paid leave is unavailable, the employee must take unpaid leave.

c. Temporary Closing of On-Site Work and Temporary Inability to Telework

In the event UMPO must close an office location because of weather, construction/renovations, or other circumstances, employees who are classified as regular reporting, on-site as needed, and fully remote are expected to telework during this period. Should such employee not have the capabilities to telework (because of a power outage or similar circumstance), the employee may be excused from work with pay but must contact their supervisor and/or Human Resources for approval.

Employees who are classified as fully on-site are not expected to report to their office location (unless they are required to be on-site for emergency purposes) and if not equipped to telework, are not expected to do so.

VI. STATUS, LEAVE and ACCOMODATIONS

a. Paid Leave

Employees should continue to use paid leave, including vacation, sick, family and medical leave in accordance with existing practice while working a hybrid work schedule. Requests for paid time off must be approved in advance in accordance with standard operating procedures within the employee's department.

Department heads and supervisors should inform all employees, whether they work on-site or work remotely, that they are expected to utilize their accrued vacation leave and other types of leave as is appropriate.

b. Workers' Compensation and Safety

Employees will be covered under applicable workers' compensation laws if injured while performing official duties while teleworking. While teleworking, employees are required to maintain a safe working environment. The UMPO is not liable for any damages to the employee's property that results from participation in the hybrid work pilot.

c. Tax Status

If an employee lives outside the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and/or if they regularly work outside the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, then the employee needs to consult with the Director of HR Operations and Assistant University Treasurer to ensure they understand any obligation or risk related to their state taxes.

d. Requests from Employees to Remain Fully Remote For Documented Medical Reasons

This request will be handled consistent with the process for addressing reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If an employee is unable to safely work on-site, they will need to provide the Senior Benefits Generalist (Katie Temple) with medical documentation that supports that position. If supported by documentation, then Human Resources and the employee's department head will assess whether the employee can perform all the essential functions of the position while working remotely. If yes, then UMPO may make the accommodation.

As is the case with all ADA accommodations, the employer retains the right to periodically ask for updated medical documentation to support the underlying claim and to periodically review whether all the essential functions are being performed while the accommodation is in place.

VII. OFFICE SPACE, SUPPLIES AND PARKING

a. On-Site Office Space Assignment

Over the course of the hybrid work pilot period, and periodically thereafter, the UMPO will assess its office space needs. Based on the workspace assessment, there may be a determination that a reduction or alteration in physical space is warranted. If a workspace reduction or alteration is implemented, it is possible that there will be an increase in the use of shared office space or co-working spaces.

b. Office Supplies

Employees with a hybrid work schedule are expected to secure the office supplies that they need to telework when they report to their on-site location. The department should purchase the needed office supplies through the regular office supply procurement process. Employees will be responsible for bringing the necessary office supplies from their office to their telework location. The department may make arrangements with the appropriate vendor to have office supplies delivered to an employee who is classified as fully remote. Employees who are classified as on-site as needed are responsible for coming on-site if they need office supplies.

The University will not supply employees with, or reimburse employees for, toner for the employee's personal printer unless the employee is fully remote.

c. Other Costs

An employee with a hybrid work schedule is responsible for operating costs, office furniture (including standing desks), home maintenance, or any incidental cost (e.g., utilities including Internet costs) associated with the employee's use of their residence for telework.

d. Parking

If an employee parking at the University office location is charged on a daily rate, an employee only needs to pay for parking on a day that they report and utilize parking.

However, if parking is charged based on a weekly or monthly rate (or greater segment of time) as is currently the case at the Shrewsbury facility, then an employee who teleworks anything less than full time will still need to pay the full parking rate.

e. Travel Expenses

With the exception of fully remote employees, when employees do report to their designated on-site work location, they are not eligible to be paid for the time it takes to commute to the office and their travel expenses are not reimbursable.

Employees who are directed to report to a location other than their designated on-site work location on an incidental basis may be paid for travel expenses in accordance with the University Travel Policy, which reads:

Mileage is measured from the employee's home to the destination and return, or from the University or Department Address to the destination and return, whichever is less. Mileage between an employee's residence and place of work is not reimbursed.

VIII. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

a. Equipment

Employees with a hybrid work schedule will be required to use their University owned/provided laptop when teleworking. Employees will be allowed to take their designated equipment home with them, though no additional equipment will be provided for teleworking. The equipment available to take home consists of University owned:

- Laptop
- Wireless keyboard/mouse
- External camera (if provided)
- Monitor(s)
- Docking station

Equipment not listed here is not eligible to be taken off-site to a telework location.

The employee is responsible for safely transporting the equipment between their telework location and their on-site office. University owned/provided equipment is for employee use only. Employees are required to report any problems with their University owned equipment to the UITS Help Desk.

Equipment will not be augmented to allow both an on-site office set-up and telework set-up. Exceptions for additional equipment where accommodations are needed must be approved by the Chief Human Resources Officer, or designee. In addition, all exceptions should be approved, funded, and tracked at the department level.

b. [Security Requirement](#)

Employees who telework must comply with all UMPO required security guidelines issued by UITS.
(Add link to UITS Security Guidelines)

Employees who telework must protect all University electronic and hard copy records and data against unauthorized disclosure, access, destruction, etc. Files and other information that are subject to confidentiality regulations must be secured from unauthorized access while at the telework worksite in accordance with any guidance that the UMPO issues regarding this matter.

Employees are required to follow instructions periodically issued by the UITS Help Desk to update both security and programs on UMPO laptops.