

Guide to Working Remotely

Are You Prepared to Work Remotely?

- Make sure your device is in good working condition and securely connected to the internet.
- Make sure you have a strong internet connection. For best results, plug your computer directly into your router or move closer to your router for a stronger WiFi signal.
- Ensure that your computer is updated and secure. Download the latest updates and patches to ensure your security software is up to date.
- Locate the equipment you'll need to be productive. Think about calling into meetings or video conferencing. Does your computer have a built-in microphone and speaker?

Communication and Collaboration

- The most challenging part of working from home will probably be how you communicate and collaborate with your colleagues and peers. How do you make and answer phone calls when you aren't at your desk? How do you have meetings when your coworkers aren't in the same room?

Email

- You can access your MSU email at any time, from any device, at <https://webmail.mwsu.edu/>
- Learn More about accessing your email here: <https://msutexas.edu/it/email/index.php>

Phones and Voicemail

- If you need your voicemails to be forwarded to your email, please contact the IT Help Desk: helpdesk@mwsu.edu

Virtual Meetings

- Consult the Information Technology [Online Transition webpage](#)

Ten Tips to Effectively Work from Home

- Set designated work hours.
- Have a designated work space.
- Structure your day as if at the office.
- Have a list of daily tasks and priorities.
- Be organized.
- Turn off any distractions.
- Advise others in the home of your scheduled calls.
- Wear headphones to eliminate background noise.
- Take regular breaks; stretch your legs.
- Have a definitive finish time.

Working in Remote Teams: A Framework

Overview: Working remotely is simply a change in environment. When working remotely, it is important for all team members to operate consistently and in support of any challenges that may emerge. The following framework provides fundamentals that all team members should leverage when temporarily working remotely.

1. **Tools:** Employees should work with their supervisor to identify platforms that will be used for communication (Skype, Zoom, WebEx, etc.). It will be expected that team members ensure they have access to those identified platforms and if there are any issues with access, to notify their supervisor. Please reference the Information Technology page: [Online Transition](#) for guidance on usage and how to manage technology-related issues.
2. **Structure:** Working remotely passes the responsibility of effective and clear communication to all team members. In remote teams, it is encouraged that all team members over-communicate with their supervisor and peers to ensure alignment on tasks assigned to the team. The following recommendations should be considered when working remotely:
 - a. **Meetings:** Team members should expect to and are encouraged to meet on a regular basis with their peers and supervisors via their identified communication platform. Additionally, if available, webcams should be used to support and enhance team communication. If using webcams, please dress according to policy or department guidelines.
 - b. **Standards of Work:** To ensure all team members are on the same page, discussion should be facilitated within a team to identify the expectations on communication, collaboration, work hours, working through any challenges, and any additional topics a team may find beneficial for their overall understanding of remote work. In remote teams, it is important to address any questions and concerns as a team to ensure consistent understanding of practices and procedures.
 - c. **Task Completion:** Remote work maintains the same level of expectation around task completion. All team members are encouraged to be proactive in communicating the task they are working on, deliverables for identified task, and outcome of that task (percentage of completion, ongoing, etc.). Additionally, all team members are strongly encouraged to access their University Learning Management system to complete all mandatory online training that has yet to be completed.
3. **Expectations:** The following expectations should be adhered to when working remotely:
 - a. **Availability:** All team members are expected to be available via phone and email at a minimum during agreed upon work hours. It is encouraged that all team members who use Skype, Zoom, or any other communication platform, maintain an accurate indicator as to whether or not they are available, busy, or away from their computer.
 - b. **Work Hours:** All team members must maintain their current minimum hours worked during the week. Should a team member select to use leave time that time must be approved and documented through their supervisor. It is the responsibility of the team member to communicate any changes in their agreed upon work schedule and to use leave according to university guidelines.

Questions: All team members are encouraged to be proactive in seeking guidance for their questions. For all related IT questions, please contact your university IT Help Desk. For HR questions, please contact your university HR Department. For payroll related questions, please contact your university Payroll Department. During this temporary remote work period, all University values, policies and procedures will remain the foundation.

Leading Remote Teams: A Framework

Overview: When leading remote teams, clarity in expectations is essential for teams to be effective in the environment in which they are working. The following framework provides fundamentals that all supervisors should leverage when leading temporary remote teams.

1. **Tools:** As each University has different platforms available for technology-based communication, it will be the responsibility of the supervisor to identify the communication pathway that will be leveraged for their team. It is also recommended that supervisors clarify how they will collaborate and share documents.
2. **Structure:** It is encouraged that supervisors incorporate daily check-in meetings with their teams. There are several formats that can be used:
 - a. 10-20 minute team check-ins at the beginning **and** end of the day to provide guidance on the tasks needing to be completed. This should be completed via Zoom / Skype / phone
 - b. 1:1 check-in meetings with individual team members, both those working remotely and those on Emergency or Sick Leave. Supervisors should be available during designated work hours to answer and address team member questions and concerns. Additionally, supervisors should identify the frequency in which they will check in with team members.
 - c. Team Meetings at the end of the week to recap the work that has been completed and discussion around areas where team members may need assistance, to highlight successes or encourage collaboration.
3. **Expectations:** The following expectations should be considered when leading a remote team:
 - a. **Communication:** Supervisors and team members need to be available via phone and email at a minimum. Supervisors will identify the communication platform to be used by team members. Supervisors will obtain and keep current contact information for all of their team members, so they can be contacted when needed. In the case of a webcam meeting, supervisors should encourage team members be professional in appearance.
 - b. **Tasks:** Supervisors should communicate with their teams regarding tasks to be completed. Work may be normal as assigned. However, in the event a team member cannot perform the normal functions of their position at home, supervisors should help to identify other projects that can be done either independently or collaboratively with other team members. Cross-training to balance work-load should be considered as an option when possible. This time should also be used to identify projects that will add benefit or improve the processes of the team. Supervisors should have realistic discussions with their team members about what is reasonable for completion in a remote setting.
 - c. **Work Hours:** Supervisors should clarify work hours team members are expected to be available. Variations from this should be agreed upon between the team member and supervisor. Leave time must be used for team members not working their required hours for the week. For Non-Exempt team members, please contact your university Payroll Department for guidance on documentation of hours worked.
 - d. **Accountability:** In order to hold remote team members accountable, it is necessary first to establish clear expectations. When clarifying expectations for team members – identify the task, deliverables for the task, timeline for completion, and how communication with the team member will be maintained. If a supervisor feels a team member is not completing their assigned tasks in a timely manner, it will be the responsibility of the supervisor to initiate a conversation with the employee to re-communicate what was expected, what they are observing, and to create a pathway for success.