Guide to
WORK SCHEDULING PILOT PROGRAM

Effective Fall 2022

ESF

State University of New York College of
Environmental Science and Forestry

ESF IS PILOTING A NEW WORK SCHEDULING PROGRAM:

- To support and reduce fuel costs for our employees
- To practice what we teach about sustainability
- To reduce our carbon footprint

This guide is designed to help managers and employees successfully navigate work-from-home and alternative work schedule processes so that they can maximize their productivity and the programs' effectiveness.

Table of Contents

WORK SCHEDULING PILOT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Remote Friday is exactly what it sounds like: Qualifying employees may work fully remote on Fridays. **The Alternate Work Schedule (AWS) is a** compressed four-day work week for qualifying employees.

We're rolling out this pilot program because we understand that flexible scheduling and the option to work remotely are important benefits to our people. These work scheduling options offer employees a greater degree of flexibility and financial wellness without sacrificing service and operational obligations. Not only does it help to lower the cost of fuel for employees, but it also reduces our energy use and carbon footprint.

Eligibility

To qualify, employees must be able to complete their full professional obligation remotely during their normal working hours or within a compressed schedule. Employees are encouraged to first have a discussion with their supervisor to evaluate their eligibility. They must have documented permission (steps on how to do this is in the next section) from their immediate supervisor, department head, and senior campus leader; permission will be granted based on the office's operational needs.

Please note that managers can revoke the approval at any time due to insufficient performance, operational needs of the unit or a handful of other business reasons. Managers can also specify a check-in/review period (i.e., every 14 or 30 days).

To assist managers with determining employees' eligibility, please use the following guidance: I**s the employee able to provide the essential functions of their job and accomplish items outlined in their Performance Plan remotely?**

By answering "Yes," you indicate that the operational needs of the office will be met and the following elements will be addressed:

- There will be coordinated scheduling with other staff to ensure in-office coverage when necessary
- There will be continuity of customer service needs
- Employees will complete a remote work activity form
- A plan/process and expectations for detailed communication and supervision of responsibilities when working remotely will be developed
- Remote work productivity of the employee will be assessed
- The employee will be able to provide communication to external entities to ensure seamless customer service
- Manager will be able to provide data on a remote work product in occasional audits

Please note that faculty, students and staff may be requested to be on-campus on select Fridays and weekends. As always, it is expected that departments/staff will be visible and supportive of these activities, as is appropriate and necessary

HR Process

Here are the steps employees should take to apply:

1. Employee must complete the appropriate applications and submit it to their supervisor. To access the files, you must use your ESF credentials.
2. Immediate Supervisor/Manager must review and finalize the application within 7 days of receipt, then forward it to the Division/Department Head.
3. Division/Department Head must review and finalize the application within 7 days of receipt, then forward it to a Senior Campus Leader.
4. Senior Campus Leader must review and finalize the application within 7 days of receipt, then submit it to HR.
5. Employee will be notified by the senior campus leader if application has been approved or denied.

If you are approved for Remote Friday, you must submit a bi-weekly progress report to your supervisor at the end of every other Friday spent working remotely. You can find the form here.

Remote work authorizations are for a specified period, so please check published dates on the Human Resources website and submit a new application at deadline. The first pilot of Remote Friday has been extended and will now expire on June 30, 2024.

IT Needs

To ensure employees' success working from home, it is imperative to have the proper IT equipment, tools, and security protocols in place.

Devices
Employees can choose one of the following computer options when working remotely:

- A SUNY-owned mobile device (laptop or tablet)
- Their own personal computer equipment
    - If you are using a personal device, you need to use the following protocol:
        - Your device must have the latest operating system updates applied.
        - You must have current anti-virus software installed.
        - You cannot store any personally identifying information or College/University data on your personal device. Please save data and files to your ESF provided Microsoft OneDrive, your department's network drive, or your personal H: drive.

Necessary Tools
CNS recommends becoming familiar with a combination of the following tools and their associated workflows so you can effectively work remotely:

- Email via the Microsoft Outlook app or the Outlook Web app via https://portal.office.com
- Campus phone system voicemail via email visual voicemail attachments or dialing in and checking voicemail directly when notified via email that a message is waiting.

- Communication (voice/video/text chat) via Microsoft Teams
- Information systems access via a virtual desktop in the campus Horizon system.
- File access on local device (I.e., laptop) at the remote site or remotely from the remote site via OneDrive (https://portal.office.com) or your individual H: drive while using the Horizon virtual desktop system.

CNS further recommends transferring any required work data/files to your H: drive or OneDrive before leaving campus prior to a remote workday.

Accessing the Web-Based ESF/SUNY System
To use systems that require you to be connected to the ESF campus network, use the Horizon virtual desktop system. Open Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome Web browser.

- Go to: https://vss.esf.edu.
- Select HTML access.
- Log in with your ESFiD (includes DUO MFA).
- Select ESF-Staff6 from the list of available virtual desktops.
- Log in to the Windows desktop as you would while on campus.

From this virtual desktop, you will be able to work in any Banner, SUNY, or State systems that are only accessible while on the ESF campus.

Internet access at your remote work location is required to use the Horizon virtual desktop system. Horizon works on most PC/Mac/Android/iOS devices, though small screen devices with limited input options (phones) are often viewed as less functional when using Horizon.

To access any data/files that you use regularly on your primary work PC/Mac while using the Horizon virtual desktop system, you will need to be aware of where that data is stored. CNS recommends saving data/file that you will need in your H: drive or in Microsoft OneDrive while using your primary work PC/Mac on campus. This way, those files will be available via the H: drive or OneDrive remotely through the Horizon virtual desktop.

Microsoft Teams

To talk live with other ESF staff regardless of their location, use Microsoft Teams from a College-owned or personal device. Just log into Teams with your ESFiD. From here, you can make voice/video calls, or chat via text, with any ESF staff member also using Microsoft Teams.

For a tour of Microsoft Teams and some of its capabilities, please see:

- From SUNY CPD: Remote Work training resources
- From Microsoft: Get started with Microsoft Teams

If your campus PC/Mac does not have Microsoft Teams installed, please contact the CNS help desk at helpdesk@esf.edu for assistance.

If your home PC/Mac does not have Microsoft Teams installed, please see the following resource: Get started with Microsoft Teams.

Download Teams app on your phone.

Note: Internet service at your remote work location is required to use Microsoft Teams. Teams works on most PC/Mac/Android/iOS devices.

For the purpose of remote work at ESF, Microsoft Teams is a required element to facilitate communication between the Employee and the Supervisor.

Phone Calls

Calls to your ESF office phone will not be automatically forwarded to your remote work location. Instead, we recommend that you adjust your outgoing voicemail message to indicate a message should be left for you. You will then receive emails with the voicemail messages attached. If for some reason you cannot retrieve the voicemail from the email, call 315-470-4999, enter your voicemail code, and retrieve your messages.

For details about using the ESF voicemail system, please see: Instructions for Your Mitel Voice Mail (esf.edu).

Sample outgoing message:

Hello, you have reached <Insert Name> at ESF. I am either away from my desk or working remotely. Please leave me a message and I will get back to you at my earliest convenience. You may also send me an email at <first part of email> at E-S-F dot E-D-U.

Connecting to the Network

To use systems that require you to be connected to the ESF campus network, use the Horizon virtual desktop system.

- Open Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome Web browser.
- Go to: https://vss.esf.edu.
- Select HTML access.
- Log in with your ESFiD (includes DUO MFA).
- Select ESF-Staff6 from the list of available virtual desktops.
- Log in to the Windows desktop as you would while on campus.

Multi-Factor Authentication

ESF requires Multi-Factor authentication (MFA) to access many College services through a system called DUO MFA, which requires the use of a smart phone/device to receive authorization requests. If you are attempting to use a DUO-secured application through the college, please be sure to follow the setup process outlined below to receive 'MFA push notifications' to your mobile device. On some systems, 6-digit codes may also be allowed..

DUO MFA Enrollment Instructions

Step 1: From the App-Store for Apple Devices or Google Play Store for Android Devices, Search for 'Duo Mobile'. Then carefully select the correct DUO Mobile 'Security Made Simple' App in the App-Store or DUO Mobile 'Duo Security LLC' App in the Google Play Store. Tap "Get" then "Install" to download the app.

Step 2: Visit https://secure.esf.edu website on your computer and click "Setup DUO Two Factor Logins". Then use your ESFiD credentials to login on the Duo Setup Login page. Once submitted succesfully a QR Code will be displayed on the proceeding web page.

Step 3: Open the DUO App on your smartphone/device and tap "ADD ACCOUNT." The DUO mobile app may ask for permission to send you notifications and use your camera. You need to allow this to complete DUO mobile setup on your smart phone/device. Next ,point your smart phone's/device's camera at the QR code that is displayed on your computer screen. Once you see a 6-digit code displayed in the DUO Mobile app window on your smart phone/device, your DUO account is created and setup is complete.

You've successfully registered and can use push notifications to verify your sign-in to systems protected by DUO.

Notes: If you do not have a mobile device connected to the ESF wireless network, a number-generating token (one-time password token) can be obtained at the CNS helpdesk in 317 Baker Labs.

VMWare Horizon View (VSS) remote access users: DUO push notifications are the only MFA method that works with the Horizon remote access system. Please have your smartphone handy when you log in to this system, as there will be no warning that a push has been sent.

Security
In order to maintain the security and integrity of College data and information, please do NOT:

- Allow others to use your campus-managed computer, tablet, or phone.
- Use personal email addresses for official college business.
- Connect to free/public/unsecured Wi-Fi. Unsecured Wi-Fi includes networks using WEP or WPA, those with no password, or those whose password is posted in public view.
- Install anything not approved by CNS. Now is not the time to experiment with a new, unvetted software application or browser extension.

Need IT Help?
Please submit helpdesk tickets by emailing HelpDesk@esf.edu or calling 315-470-6861. DO NOT email individuals directly seeking assistance as they may be tied up resolving issues of other employees and another technician may be able to assist you sooner than the individual you emailed.

Manager Success

It is up to managers to ensure the success of their staff working remotely. Communication and connection is key. Devise a plan that works for your office and lead by example. Here are some tips:

Establish Regular Check-Ins: Create consistency by checking in with your staff at the start of the day and/or at the end of the day.

Create Rules of Engagement: Establish and share with your team the following:

- Your office's new scheduling/appointment structure
- Communication expectations
- What performance and accountability look like
- How employee productivity will be assessed

Be Available: Your team may need support or to have questions answered, so ensure you are available to assist them as needed.

Employee Success

By now, many of us have experience working remotely, but there are always opportunities to improve clarity, collaboration, and accessibility. The following tips can help you be a more effective remote team worker:

Proactively Communicate: Proactively communicate with your supervisor, teammates, and others with whom you work through Teams, email, and any other mutually agreed-upon preferred mode (phone or text). Check in with your supervisor at the start and end of your workday so they know you're online and available. Let your colleagues know where you are and how you can be reached on Fridays. If you're stepping away for lunch, make sure to let others who may be looking for you know. Communcation should not be put on hold until the next business day you return to work; you are expected to be accessible just as though you are in the office.

Create a Dedicated Workspace: You are expected to have a space dedicated to completing your work effectively and without distractions. Set up a desk or other area in your home that is similar to the one on campus and creates an environment that will help you stay focused and reduce distractions. Be mindful of the setting you choose and how it may appear to others on video calls. For example, it is not appropriate to participate in a remote meeting from your bed.

Availability: Employees are expected to be available remotely during the same time period as they do in the office. You should have your Outlook open and you should be signed into Teams. This will help ensure you don't miss important communications and Teams will let people know your status (Available, Away, Be Right Back, In a Meeting, Do Not Disturb, Signed Off).

Responsiveness: Working remotely on Friday does not mean you can put off certain tasks until you are physically back in the office. Employees are expected to respond in a timely manner, and we have the tools in place to make it feasible, whether working on campus or at home.

Use Microsoft Teams: This app should be installed on your devices: Your availability should be specified and related notifications should be turned on. You should be available for a Teams chat if you are not in a meeting or on a lunch break. For a tour of Microsoft Teams and some of its capabilities, please see:
- From SUNY CPD/ESF CNS: Remote Work training resources
- From Microsoft: Get started with Microsoft Teams

Productivity: It can be easy to become distracted by tasks at home when you are working remotely. Create a work task list and stick to it. Do not let personal tasks interfere with your work, as they will impair your productivity and ultimately prolong your workday.

Video Meeting Tips: There are several easy ways to ensure your virtual meeting etiquette is top notch.

- Always turn on your video camera.
- Mute yourself when you are not speaking to help reduce distracting background noise.
- Be mindful of your background. This goes back to choosing your office space. If the background is unprofessional, then consider moving to a virtual-meeting-friendly space, blur your background, or use a virtual ESF-branded background that you can upload manually. Request one by emailing communications@esf.edu.

Office Success

Team Communications: Create an office chat in Teams so you can let each other know who is working remotely or if someone on campus is looking for one of your teammates who is working remotely.

Display Your Whereabouts: : Download this sign template and customize it for your office. Be sure it is prominently displayed on your office door so it's clear how your team can be reached.

Know ESF's HR Policies: Familiarize yourself with our remote work policies to ensure clarity. If you have questions, please speak with your supervisor and/or HR..

FAQs: Below are answers to common questions. If you still need help, please talk with your supervisor and/or HR.

Alternate/Compressed Work Schedule FAQs

What is an Alternate/Compressed Work Schedule (ACWS) or a Compressed Work week? Employees on a 40-hour per week schedule will consist of 10 hours per day/ 4 days per week including mealtimes.

For employees on a 37.5 hour per week schedule, the schedule would consist of 9 – 9.5 hours per day/ 4 days per week totaling 37.5 hours per week.

What is a considered a work week? State Employees: Thursday – Wednesday, Research Employees: Saturday – Friday.

Who determines work schedules? Management decides the schedules that are necessary to meet agency operating needs. Once they are established, the provisions of these contract articles that affect how employees select or are selected for the various schedules become operable.

What is a Pass Day? Pass Days are the employee's regular scheduled days of (for example, Saturday and Sunday).

How do we determine who gets what pass day? This depends on Bargaining unit. In general, it is based on seniority.

What is a normal workday? A normal workday is 8 hours, plus mealtime, for employees working 40 hours per week, and 7 1/2 hours, plus mealtime, for employees working 37 1/2 hours per week. Usually, the workday consists of one period per day (e.g., 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) including mealtimes.

Who needs to be notified of pass day changes and updates? Human Resources needs to know the pass day of each employee. The Time and Attendance system must be updated by the supervisor for classified employees.

What is the maximum holiday accrued, observed, or earned? The hours that correspond to their regular work schedule up to a maximum of 7 1/2 or 8 hours.

What is an Observed Holiday? The phrase "a holiday observed by the State as an employer" means a holiday on which eligible employees may absent themselves from work with pay without charge to credits.

How will Holidays work? The employee who works four, 10-hour days, receives eight hours of holiday compensatory time when a holiday falls on one of their pass days and eight hours of holiday time off with pay when absent on a holiday.

The employee who works four, 9 - 9.5-hour days, receives 7.5 hours of holiday compensatory time when a holiday falls on one of their pass days and 7.5 hours of holiday time off with pay when absent on a holiday.

Remote Friday FAQs

How do I factor the 5 out of 10 remote eligible workdays into working remote Friday's option? As per the SUNY telecommuting policy (current expiration date is June 30, 2024), based upon supervisory approval, you would be eligible for 3 additional telecommuting days beyond the 2 Fridays that will be worked remotely.

Does the remote day have to be Friday? Are employees able to telecommute on other days of the week so the office can still be open Monday through Friday? This is structured for employees to work remotely on Friday.

Will I have to fill out a telecommuting application if I am just working from home on Fridays? Yes, please fill out the application as you will need supervisor approval. Telecommuting application and work plan

Am I still required to document what work I completed while working remotely if I just work remotely on Fridays? Yes. You must complete the required biweekly progress report. Telecommuting Program Progress Report

How do I request a remote working arrangement from my supervisor? First, have a conversation with your supervisor about the desire to work remotely some of the time. Explain your reasons for the request and the set schedule desired. After a conversation has taken place, submit the application form for review. Please note, approval is not guaranteed despite the previous conversation, as each manager must review the requests of the entire team and their division head before approving individual requests to ensure business and operational needs are covered (i.e. – service expectations, office hours, phone coverage, student expectations, etc.). Communication should be seamless to students and others served. Customer service guidelines, tip sheets and expectations will be distributed.

Aside from a remote Friday, what should I write in the reason box on the telecommuting form? Keep the reasons brief and concise. Examples include increased productivity when I complete these tasks (name tasks) at home, improved time management, or enjoy increased flexibility.

What are the reasons a request may be denied? This pilot leaves the decision to each individual manager to determine the practicality of each request. This decision may be based on many factors, some of which include business and operational needs, service expectations from the customer and the performance of each employee in remote situations. Employees of good standing who have proven their ability to work independently are more likely to be approved if the request does not interfere with normal operational functions and services of the unit. Taking care of family members that would normally constitute taking of personal/family/sick leave are not approved reasons for working remotely.

Once approved, how long does my remote work arrangement last? Remote work authorizations are for a specified period. Please note: Managers can revoke the approval at any time due to insufficient performance, operational needs of the unit or a handful of other business reasons. Managers can also specify a check-in/review period (i.e. – every 14 or 30 days).

Does this initiative apply only to UUP, CSEA and Research Foundation employees? Does this apply to staff only or also to faculty who have obligations other than teaching? This policy applies to all staff, bargaining units and funding sources, however, a faculty member typically already has flexibility built into their work schedule. This policy does not apply to any student employees (TA/GA/RAs, etc.).

What if I have a medical need to continue to work remotely? If you believe that you need a medical accommodation under the ADA, then reach out to Human Resources for additional information at 315-470-6611 or hr@esf.edu.

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