

Remote Work Arrangements Principles and Guidance

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the university introduced remote working arrangements (RWA) as an interim measure in March 2020.
- These RWA were guided by a common set of principles and resources tailored for the pandemic.
- As we prepare to **return to on-campus services, teaching and various activities**, employees will no longer be required to work remotely as it was in response to COVID-19. UNBC has a desire to increase the vibrancy of campus life and work by gradually and thoughtfully increasing opportunities for interaction.
- We have developed a principled approach to considering RWA requests for your unit during the transition period (July 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021). These arrangements continue to be temporary in nature.

2.0 PURPOSE

To support a gradual and thoughtful return to on-campus services, teaching and various activities.

3.0 PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 Prioritize the health and wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff.
- 3.2 Support the academic mission of UNBC.
- 3.3 Ensure excellence of student experience and outcomes.
- 3.4 Meet or exceed service, teaching, research and operational level for students, faculty, and staff.
- 3.5 Ensure decisions are aligned with existing policies, BC's Restart Plan, a student-centered learning environment, and in accordance with collective agreements.

4.0 GUIDELINES

- 4.1 RWA are **temporary in nature** and can be amended, extended, or withdrawn with appropriate notice. Permanent RWAs will *not* be considered at this time.
- 4.2 Consideration and implementation of RWAs will **be principle-based and unit-driven**.
 - Deans and Directors are responsible for decisions made in respect to RWA within their respective faculties and units, and will ensure work plans and check-ins are in place for maintaining service, teaching, research and operational levels.

4.3 RWAs are **voluntary, with shared responsibility**:

- RWAs can be initiated by employees or leaders and evaluated for consistency with these principles.
- Employees with approved RWAs are responsible for:
 - Maintaining a safe and productive work environment that includes, but is not limited to, having an ergonomic workspace, adequate internet connectivity, and access to information;
 - Protecting and securing private and/or confidential information;
 - Ensuring appropriate dependent care (i.e. child-care, elder-care) is in place, as RWAs are not a substitute for dependent care obligations. The focus of the RWA must remain on job performance and meeting service, teaching, research and operational requirements.

4.4 RWAs are **position specific** and not all positions are suitable for remote operation with the return to on-campus services, teaching, research and other activities.

- While every effort needs to be made to consider RWA requests in a fair and equitable manner, each decision must consider the unique circumstances of the role, individual, team and department. Consider equity with regards to the evaluation process, but not necessarily equality in the eventual outcomes due to each unique situation and position.
- Not all individuals (even those in the same role) may be equally suited to remote work. An objective assessment process will assist individuals and supervisors to assess suitability.
- Given the temporary nature of the arrangements, if there are additional costs to maintaining a proper equipment/furniture set up on campus and remote, consider using Professional Development allowance; or any surplus equipment available at UNBC.

4.5 RWAs are able to **maintain connection and collaboration**.

- RWAs must provide a positive service experience for our students, faculty and staff.
- Employees will effectively utilize collaboration technology.
- All employees engaged in RWA are expected to attend campus as required, at their expense, and will need to adjust the normal RWA schedule to do so. For this reason, out-of-province RWAs will not be considered at this time.

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4.7 RWAs **incorporate health and safety considerations.**

- Consideration of employee health, safety and well-being is equally important for those working on-campus as off-campus. Both supervisors and employees have a responsibility to stay connected, to identify issues and to access appropriate resources when needed.

5.0 SCOPE

The principles and guidance in this document apply to all units/departments and faculties.

6.0 DEFINITIONS

Remote Work Arrangements (RWA) – a work arrangement that allows employees to perform their usual job duties at an approved alternate location.

7.0 PROCEDURE

The employee and Chair/supervisor complete the Temporary Remote Work Arrangement Request. A completed, signed, copy of the request shall be retained by the Dean/Director, and Chair/supervisor and the employee.

TEMPORARY REMOTE WORK ARRANGMENT REQUEST

Step 1: Employee initiates the request

Employee confirms the following prior to initiating the request:

- I have considered my unit/department's operational requirements for remote work in making this request.
- I have read and understand the Remote Work Principles and Guidelines.

Step 2: Employee and chair/supervisor meet to discuss alignment:

The questions below can be used to establish alignment with unit/departmental criteria and the RWA principles and guidelines. These conversations will consider and determine what specific agreements will be necessary for the request to be successful in the context of the department, role and employee. Chairs and supervisors will act in accordance with the respective collective agreements and other employee agreements. The Deans, Directors, or the appropriate senior administrator will consider the recommendations of Chairs or supervisors and make a decision regarding the request and recommendations. Chairs or supervisors should consider the following types of questions:

- Do the service, teaching, research or other operational levels of the role require it to be on campus?
- Does the role require or benefit from in person interactions?
- Does the role require access to any facilities or equipment onsite?
- Will an RWA result in increased financial cost?
- Can the employee attest to the requirements for safe, secure and productive remote work?
- Does the role require shared on campus tasks, if so, how will those be distributed equitably among team members?
- How frequently should the arrangement be reviewed?
- What is the expectation for being on campus in person?

Describe the RWA by including key outcomes and how these outcomes will be reviewed monthly. Clearly state what times of outcomes would lead to the RWA being continued or withdrawn.

Step 3: Employee and supervisor confirm agreement:

Name of employee: _____

Name of Chair or supervisor: _____

have discussed this request, along with the RWA principles, guidelines, and appropriate collective agreement provisions. We have developed agreements to support the success of this request. The RWA will formally expire on December 31, 2021, or earlier if it is not successfully sustained.

Director or Dean approval signature: _____ Date: _____

A signed copy shall be retained by the Dean/Director, Chair/supervisor and the employee.