TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION IMPACT RATINGS

SDG 11.4.3

Allow remote working



The University of Sharjah supports flexible work arrangements as part of its employment practices, including the option for remote work and alternative working schedules under defined conditions. These provisions support employee well-being and ensure continuity of operations when on-site presence is not required. Remote working and adjusted duty schedules are formally outlined in the administrative employment policies, ensuring that such arrangements are implemented in a structured, transparent, and equitable manner.
The relevant policy from the Administrative Staff Handbook is provided below.

13. Remote Working

Remote Working is a temporary work arrangement in which an employee works from home or an alternative / off-campus location. The objectives for implementing a Remote Working are:

1) Adhering to the government guidelines in addressing public health challenges presented by pandemic situation or any other national crises, by managing business continuity while ensuring the health and safety of UoS's employees.
2) Building UoS's readiness to face and respond to challenges through implementing agile working procedures and workforce management practices.
3) Enhancing employee engagement by supporting work-life balance and promoting employee wellbeing.
4) Addressing office space shortage when applicable and reducing the related cost.
5) Enabling automation and the wider use of technology solutions thus upgrading work practices and upskilling employee.

Eligibility

1) In the instance where a national, international or global crisis is declared and has a potential impact on health and safety, all employees of UoS are required to apply the remote working policy where possible, or other guidelines as issued by the concerned authorities. In other situations, remote working arrangements are appropriate where it is in the best interest of UoS and the employee.
2) The workplace culture at UoS is one that is rooted in collaboration, team work, and excellence. With appropriate use of technology and managerial oversight, employees - whose roles allow for work to be performed away from their regular work locations - may be eligible for remote working. Employees whose work cannot be performed at a location away from their regular locations are not eligible to remote working.
3) Though remote working might be a viable option for many employees, it is not a right; it is an option that can be modified or revoked by UoS at any time. Final decisions about the suitability and feasibility of remote working are discretionary and made by the Senior Management based on recommendations made by line managers.
4) Criteria and standards for evaluating, approving or denying remote working eligibility are determined by Senior Management. The following factors should be assessed prior to considering a remote working arrangement:

Job Role

Positions that may be considered for remote working are those that:

a. Utilize technology and automated solutions to a large extent.
b. Have an emphasis on the electronic and digital production and/or exchange of information.
c. Do not require an employee's presence at the regular work location on a daily or routine basis.
d. Do not require regular face-to-face contact with line managers, team members, colleagues, students, suppliers or other stakeholders.

e. Have job functions that can be performed remotely without diminishing the work quality or disrupting the productivity of the department /team.
f. Allow for an employee to be as effectively supervised as they would be if the job was performed at the regular work location.
g. Involve measurable or quantifiable work product.
h. Have minimal or flexible need for specialized materials or equipment available only at the regular work location.

Employee's Readiness

Remote employees should meet the following criteria:

a. Have been employed by UoS for at least (1) year and have completed the probation period successfully – except in situations where remote working is mandated by the authorities.
b. Have a satisfactory work performance history.
c. Have a sound attendance records.
d. Have not received a disciplinary action within the preceding twelve months.
e. Have the ability to successfully organize, manage time, and work independently and productively with minimal supervision.
f. Have a thorough knowledge and understanding of their job functions and the utilization of the equipment required.
g. Have access to a remote work location that is safe and free from distractions.
h. Are able to provide the security necessary to adequately protect the information and equipment used remotely.

Team Work

Line managers should carry out the following:

a. Evaluate and consider how remote working will impact the work of other team members and concerned stakeholders.
b. Assess the level of required interaction with team members and determine if it can be maintained while working remotely.
c. Determine if the available tools and technology can enable the required level of coordination among team members.
d. Assess the impact of remote working on the overall team morale and dynamics.

Availability of Equipment / Resources

Line managers should carry out the following:

a. Review the required equipment and tools.
b. Identify the availability of required equipment and tools.
c. Assess the suitability of operating the required equipment / tools remotely.
d. Assess the risks associated with approving the remote access to equipment and resources.