

Policy on Remote Work

Policy Title	Policy on Remote Work
Policy #	02.116.3
Policy Owner	Vice President for Human Resources
Contact Information	Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Office of the Vice President for Human Resources at (401) 874-2414
Approved By	President of the University of Rhode Island
Effective Date	March 18, 2026
Next Review Date	No later than March 31, 2031
Who Needs to Know About this Policy	All non-faculty employees of the University of Rhode Island
Definitions Defined terms and shorthand references are capitalized throughout.	<p>IT Endpoint Protection. The practice of safeguarding data and systems with respect to the use all IT devices (laptops, phones, tablets, etc.) though the installation and maintenance of anti-virus, anti-malware, and similar software as well as the maintenance of system patches and updates on endpoint devices, and the use of VPN for accessing University IT systems.</p> <p>HR Business Partner. Professionals assigned to each college and unit at URI who partner on strategic initiatives and HR matters.</p> <p>Remote Work. Work activities regularly undertaken off the University campus, generally at an employee’s home or an alternative location, that are similar in character and output to work undertaken while at a University location. Remote Work arrangements may be full-week or partial-week arrangements.</p> <p>Remote Work Agreement. An agreement between the employee and the University outlining the terms of a Remote Work arrangement.</p> <p>Unit Manager. For the purposes of this policy, an Academic Dean in any of the colleges, or if outside of the colleges, a direct report to a direct report of the President.</p>

Statutes, Regulations, and Policies Governing or Necessitating This Policy	University of Rhode Island Policy on IT Endpoint Protection
Reason for Policy / Purpose	This policy provides guidance and principles for Remote Work for all non-faculty employees of the University of Rhode Island.
Forms Related to this Policy	Remote Work Agreement

Policy Statement

This policy applies to all University employees other than faculty (as defined by the University Manual § 4.11.10).

The University of Rhode Island (“University” or “URI”) prides itself on providing an immersive educational environment for both its resident and non-resident students and easy access to all related services. To best serve URI students and ensure seamless operations, employees are generally required to be physically present during work hours at a University-controlled location. However, URI also recognizes there may be situations when Remote Work arrangements are appropriate to improve productivity as well as promote administrative efficiencies, reduce traffic congestion and the associated pollution and transportation costs, support continuity of operations plans, sustain the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified workforce by enhancing work/life balance, and for other personal reasons.

Requests for voluntary Remote Work arrangements may be made by individual employees, who must first discuss the option with their supervisor and Unit Manager. Remote Work arrangements may also be implemented by the University in the case of emergencies, for business operational needs, or for other reasons. In addition, Unit Managers may assign Remote Work, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, as well as employment contracts or existing bargaining unit agreements, to meet the immediate needs of the business unit or the University more broadly.

Remote Work arrangements may be implemented to best serve the University, the business unit, or the employee. These arrangements may cover entire units, specific job titles, multiple employees, or individuals. Remote Work arrangements may be ended at any time, for any reason, by a Unit Manager. Remote Work arrangements may be appropriate for some positions but not all positions. No URI employee is entitled to or guaranteed the opportunity for Remote Work. Specific schedules, an in-person presence, or other business needs may present essential responsibilities that cannot be provided for via this work structure. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Unit Manager. Employees with Remote Work arrangements, like all employees, are expected to be cooperative and willing to adapt to meet the unit’s needs, including management’s and colleagues’ work schedules. As such, employees may need to adjust their scheduled remote days to meet the unit’s needs as determined by the Unit Manager.

Remote Work approval is tied to the requirements of an employee’s current position. If an employee transitions to a new role, experiences a change in job responsibilities, or moves to a different department, the remote work arrangement is no longer valid. Continuation of remote work must be reviewed and approved based on the expectations of the new position.

This policy sets forth the circumstances under which voluntary Remote Work arrangements for employees may be approved. In the instance where any Remote Work arrangement, be it a voluntary request by an employee or an assignment by a Unit Manager, conflicts with the terms of a current collective bargaining agreement or other employment contract for that employee, that contract shall prevail over the arrangement.

Remote Work is not intended to serve as a reasonable accommodation outside of a formal process between the employee and URI, governed by separate and distinct procedures. Please refer to URI HR's Workplace Accommodations procedures for any questions regarding workplace accommodations.

Remote Work arrangements may be short-term (duration of 30 or fewer calendar days, and generally non-recurring) or long-term (duration of greater than 30 calendar days). Initial short-term Remote Work arrangements require approval only at the Unit Manager level. Long-term Remote Work arrangements (and renewals of short-term arrangements) must be memorialized in a Remote Work Agreement and must be approved by the Unit Manager and the Office of Human Resources.

Remote Work includes work activities undertaken off the URI campus, generally at an employee's home or an alternate location, that are similar in character and output to work undertaken while at a University location. Remote Work arrangements may be full-week or partial-week arrangements; however, employees are expected to be available to participate in in-person work activities at a University location as needed.

I. Assigned Remote Work

The University, or any Unit Manager, may determine that employees are required to work off campus for a short period of time due to unusual circumstances, such as a brief office closing for renovations, a temporary assignment in a remote location, or for other business operations reasons. In addition, the University may establish Remote Work as a condition of offered employment, or mandate Remote Work due to emergencies or other circumstances as determined by the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees or the University President (or their designee).

II. Voluntary Remote Work

Voluntary Remote Work is not an employee right, but an option that may be requested by the employee in discussion with the employee's supervisor and Unit Manager.

A. Eligibility: The following criteria will be used to determine an employee's eligibility for voluntary Remote Work:

1. The nature of the work is suitable for Remote Work, does not require extensive in-person interactions to complete tasks, and requires minimal or limited need for specialized equipment or material; and
2. The employee has demonstrated self-motivation, self-discipline in work activities, and an ability to work independently in an efficient and productive manner; and
3. The arrangement will not reduce the quality of services to the University, the URI business unit, students, or other employees.

Jobs that require heavy use of specialized equipment or information available only at University locations, jobs that are primarily student-facing, and jobs that incorporate the in-person delivery of services to the University community or the general public, are generally not eligible for Remote Work.

Remote Work options are generally not available for employees in their first three(3) months of employment during their initial onboarding period upon hire at the University, unless this arrangement is specified in their

position description, offer letter, or employment contract, or under other circumstances with prior written approval by the Unit Manager and the Unit's HR Business Partner.

- B. Approval:** Short-term Remote Work arrangements must be approved by the employee's Unit Manager. Long-term Remote Work arrangements must be approved by 1) the employee's Unit Manager, 2) the employee's direct supervisor and 3) the Office of Human Resources. Long-term Remote Work arrangements that involve residency outside of Rhode Island must additionally be approved by the Vice President for Administration and Finance (or their designee) (see also Section VI). No employee may approve their own Remote Work Agreement.
- C. Duration:** Remote Work arrangements may be made for a duration of one (1) year, with potential for automatic renewal, re-evaluation for changes, or discontinuation.
- D. Renewal:** Remote Work arrangements shall be regularly assessed and then renewed, changed, or discontinued when no longer appropriate. All renewals of Remote Work Arrangements must be reviewed and approved by 1) the Unit Manager, 2) the Office of Human Resources if there are significant changes, and, 3) for out of state arrangements, the Vice President for Administration and Finance (or their designee). The Unit Manager will first conduct an informal review with the employee. If there is any relevant information to update – including but not limited to location, schedule, or technology – an updated Remote Work Agreement form must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Human Resources. If a remote work arrangement does not need to be changed or discontinued, it will automatically renew each year.
- E. Revocation:** A Remote Work arrangement may be revoked at any time by the Unit Manager due to 1) a change in business operations that requires the employee to return to a University location (with four weeks' notice), 2) if the employee's work performance falls below expected levels, or 3) if the employee fails to meet any of the terms of the Remote Work Agreement or this policy.

III. Equipment, Connectivity, and Space

Employees conducting Remote Work must use University-owned and configured computers and peripheral equipment to do their University work unless specifically authorized to do otherwise in the Remote Work Agreement. An inventory of this equipment shall be a component of the Remote Work Agreement.

The use of Virtual Private Network software is mandatory for accessing the University network and systems, and all work conducted as part of these arrangements must be done while the system is active.

All URI policies and practices related to IT endpoint security must be adhered to as a component of all Remote Work arrangements. Unit IT specialists and the IT Service Desk are available to support employee requests relative to IT security. See in particular the University's policy on *IT Endpoint Protection* for requirements related to IT security on personally-owned devices. Personally-owned devices must meet the same IT security requirements as University-owned devices and employees with Remote Work arrangements who use personally-owned devices to conduct University business agree to the installation and maintenance of any device monitoring, device maintenance, security, or similar software, as well as appropriate patches and updates, to ensure that the personally-owned device is equal to any University-owned device in terms of IT security and endpoint protection.

Under a Remote Work arrangement all Internet connectivity, including necessary software and hardware and the related maintenance and associated costs, are the responsibility of the employee, unless specified otherwise by contract or the Remote Work Agreement.

Any equipment provided by URI must be safeguarded by the employee and returned at the end of the Remote Work arrangement to the Unit Manager in good condition, absent normal wear and tear. Except as required by state law

in the employee's state of residence, URI will typically not provide additional equipment for Remote Work apart from a necessary computer and that which is required by IT. URI equipment is to be used only for University Business and may not be used for personal business or by non-University personnel, except as allowed by URI's Acceptable Use policy or other policies related to personal use of University Resources. URI-owned equipment will be maintained, serviced, and repaired by URI or its dedicated vendors.

If the use of personal equipment is specifically allowed under the terms of a Remote Work Agreement, that equipment, its maintenance, servicing, and repair, excepting endpoint protection systems noted above, are the responsibility of the employee.

To provide for remote work, the University will prioritize flexible, shared, and reservable workspaces over permanently assigned offices for employees who are not regularly on campus. Those who regularly work remotely three (3) or more days per week may not have permanently assigned office space. Departments shall assess space needs based on actual in-person presence and make shared resources like meeting rooms and hoteling spaces available to support collaboration.

IV. Work Environment

Employees are expected to work in a safe and ergonomically appropriate environment. Such an environment shall include appropriate ventilation, lighting, and furniture for the tasks to be performed. Employees are expected to work only from their approved work location, which may be a private residence, University-owned location, or similar office / professional environment and not a public or retail setting or over any public network. This location shall be a component of the Remote Work Agreement.

When a Remote Work arrangement occurs at the request of an employee, the University is under no obligation to supply a remote location or any of its associated support services. Unless otherwise stipulated by state law in the employee's state of residence, the employee is responsible for all aspects of the Remote Work environment including necessary utilities, insurance, and furnishings. No University business involving the physical presence of other persons may be conducted in a remote location, but must instead be conducted at a University location.

Office supplies reasonably necessary to complete the assigned work may be picked up from a University location by the employee. Employee out of pocket expenses for office supplies relative to Remote Work will not be reimbursed except in special circumstances with prior written approval from the employee's Unit Manager.

The employee assumes all tax consequences that may arise as a result of their working from their home or other approved remote location.

V. Expectations and Conduct

A Remote Work arrangement changes the location at which an employee performs their work function, but it does not change the quality, quantity, or any other aspect of the expected work product, tasks, or essential duties of a position. Employees engaged in Remote Work are expected to work the same business hours as if working at a University location. Employees may not use a Remote Work arrangement to conduct personal business during business hours. Additionally, employees are expected to conduct themselves as they would while at a University location in terms of professionalism and their responsibilities to the University.

All University or state rules, regulations, or policies that reference activities or workplace behavior undertaken on University property will be extended to cover these same activities or workplace behavior at a Remote Work location as if the employee was physically present on University property.

Employees must be available by phone, email, or other means of electronic communication as determined by their supervisor during regular work hours. Regular work hours shall reflect the typical business hours of the department, unless an exception has been indicated in the agreement. If an employee is unable to work their typically scheduled work hours while remote – for any reason – they are required to discharge appropriate time off for the time not worked. In all cases, employee reachability shall be substantially equivalent to on-campus working conditions, and the employee is expected to continue to respond to all message channels in a timely and professional manner. For assistance transferring traditional on-campus communication channels such as telephones to a remote environment, please contact IT Services.

Employees are expected to be available for in-person trainings, meetings, etc. at a University location with reasonable notification, such notification being similar in timing to peer employees working at a University location. A remote Work Arrangement does not relieve an employee from participation in on-campus trainings, meetings, etc., though specific arrangements may be made at the discretion of the Unit Manager.

When a Remote Work arrangement occurs at the request of an employee, any costs for travel to the University for these events are the responsibility of the employee and are not reimbursable travel costs unless otherwise arranged in an offer letter or contract, or approved in advance in writing for a specific event by the Unit Manager of the remote employee's work unit.

VI. Long-Term Remote Work in a U.S. State Outside of Rhode Island

All requests for an employee to work remotely in a U.S. state outside of Rhode Island are subject to a rigorous approval process, beginning with the respective HR Business Partner, and final approval by the Vice President of Human Resources or their designee. Such approval will depend on several factors, including applicable tax, payroll, benefits, immigration, and insurance requirements; and other local laws and regulations.

Employees engaged in long-term Remote Work arrangements must ensure that their home address is correctly listed in the University's Human Resources database at all times. Employees working outside of Rhode Island must be aware that local regulations may differ from those regulations governing work in Rhode Island and employees should consult their financial advisors or accountants to ensure that they are compliant with any local regulations.

As noted above, long-term Remote Work arrangements that involve residency in a U.S. state outside of Rhode Island must additionally be approved by the Vice President for Administration and Finance (or their designee).

URI complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and will provide benefits beyond those outlined in this policy when legally required for employees working in jurisdictions with specific mandates.

VII. Remote Work in International Locations or in U.S. Territories

While the University generally prohibits Remote Work conducted from locations outside the United States (or in U.S. territories), an approval process is available to provide exceptions as appropriate for bona fide URI (or URI-sanctioned) programs or activities (e.g. international programs, sponsored research). Exceptions for reasons not otherwise specified require prior approval from the Vice President of Human Resources or their designee. See the accompanying procedures for details. International Remote Work presents compliance requirements that can vary by location for legal, tax, employment, payroll, immigration, data privacy, and/or related matters. Remote Work of any duration outside the United States (or in U.S. territories) without prior approval is not permitted and may result in disciplinary action.

VIII. Remote Work as a Component of Employment

In certain instances, Remote Work may be included as a component of an employee's position at the University. In these instances, the specifics of a Remote Work arrangement will be set forth in the appointment letter, and the use of a Remote Work Agreement is not necessary unless the terms of any proposed arrangement differ from those in the appointment letter.

IX. Remote Work Agreement

All Remote Work arrangements — except as substituted by an appointment letter (see Section VII), or for the initial term of a short-term arrangement as noted previously — must be memorialized in a Remote Work Agreement that shall include:

1. The details and duration of the arrangement
2. The location at which the Remote Work will be completed
3. Equipment provided by the University
4. Specifics as to the use of any personal equipment, if any
5. Any special circumstances, terms, or conditions

The Remote Work Agreement must be signed by the employee and the employee's Unit Manager and filed with the Office of Human Resources (Attn: VP of Human Resources).

Exceptions

None

Policy Review and Revisions

(Versions earlier than the first policy number may be paper only)

Policy #	Effective Date	Reason for Change	Changes to Policy
02.116.1	June 2, 2021	n/a	n/a
02.116.2	June 7, 2022	IT security needs	Additional language regarding IT security and the use of personally-owned devices
02.116.3	March 18, 2026	Updates to remote work practices	Extend the maximum duration of remote work arrangements and streamline renewals.