

Villanova, Graduate Program of Human Resource Development

Telecommuting Policy, version 1

Villanova considers telecommuting to be a viable alternative work arrangement in cases where individual, job and supervisor characteristics are best suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting allows an Graduate Assistant to work at home, on the road, or in a satellite location for all or part of their regular workweek. Telecommuting is a voluntary work alternative that may be appropriate for some Graduate Assistants and some jobs. It is not an entitlement; it is not a University-wide benefit; and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with Villanova.

Procedure

1. Either an Graduate Assistant or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.
2. Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project, or formal, as will be described below. Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for Graduate Assistants on family or medical leave, to the extent practical for the Graduate Assistant and the University, and with the consent of the Graduate Assistant's health care provider, if appropriate. All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case by case basis, focusing on the business needs of the University first. Such informal arrangements are not the focus of this policy.
3. Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must have been employed with Villanova for a minimum of 12 months of continuous, regular employment and must have exhibited above average performance, in accordance with the University's performance appraisal process.
4. Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first 3 months, and may be discontinued, at will, at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the Univeristy.
5. Villanova will determine, with information supplied by the Graduate Assistant and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, modems, phone and data lines, facsimile equipment or software, photocopiers, etc.) for each telecommuting arrangement on a case-by-case basis. The human resource and information system departments will serve as resources in this matter. Equipment supplied by the University will be maintained by the University. Equipment supplied by the Graduate Assistant, if deemed appropriate by the University, will be maintained by the Graduate Assistant. Villanova accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to Graduate Assistant-owned equipment. Villanova reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment supplied by the University is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter should sign an inventory of all office property and agrees to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment all University property will be returned to the University, unless other arrangements have been made.
6. Consistent with the University's expectations of information asset security for Graduate Assistants working at the office full-time, telecommuting Graduate Assistants will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary University information accessible from their home office. Steps include, but are not limited to, use of locked file cabinets, disk boxes and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other steps appropriate for the job and the environment.

7. The Graduate Assistant and professor will agree on the number of days of telecommuting allowed each week, the work schedule the Graduate Assistant will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication. The Graduate Assistant agrees to be accessible by phone or modem within a reasonable time period during the agreed upon work schedule.
8. Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the Graduate Assistant and professor, with the assistance of the human resource department, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement paying particular attention to the following areas:
 - Graduate Assistant Suitability - the Graduate Assistant and professor will assess the needs and work habits of the Graduate Assistant, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
 - Job Responsibilities - the Graduate Assistant and professor will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
 - Equipment needs, work space design considerations and scheduling issues.
9. Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include daily interaction by phone and e-mail between the Graduate Assistant and professor, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the conclusion of the trial period the Graduate Assistant and professor will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications. Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by Graduate Assistants working at the office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than time-based performance.
10. An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After conclusion of the trial period, the professor and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with Graduate Assistants working at the office or in a manner and frequency that seems appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.
11. Graduate Assistants entering into a telecommuting agreement may be required to forfeit use of a personal office or workstation in favor of a shared arrangement to maximize University office space needs.
12. The availability of telecommuting as a flexible work arrangement for Graduate Assistants of Villanova can be discontinued at any time at the discretion of the Villanova. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days notice of such a change to accommodate commuting, child care and other problems that may arise from such a change. There may be instances, however, where no notice is possible.