



# Flexibility In the Workplace

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## POLICY STATEMENT

Cornell University provides flexible work arrangements, at the discretion of department heads or their designees, to enable staff and management to serve customers well, meet university goals, and balance personal and professional responsibilities.

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## REASON FOR POLICY

The university recognizes the growing demands on staff while at work and the increasing challenge of finding new and better ways to serve customers and meet university goals. Flexibility in the workplace can provide a way to manage people, time, space, and workload more effectively, efficiently, and responsively.

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## ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

- All units of the university, excluding the Weill Cornell Medical College

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## WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

- All regular staff members
- Deans, directors, and department heads
- Unit Human Resource representatives

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## WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR THIS POLICY\*

[www.dfa.cornell.edu/treasurer/policyoffice/policies/volumes/humanresources/flexibility.cfm](http://www.dfa.cornell.edu/treasurer/policyoffice/policies/volumes/humanresources/flexibility.cfm)

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*\*The University Policy Office Web pages house the most current versions of all standardized university policies at [www.policy.cornell.edu](http://www.policy.cornell.edu).*

## Policy 6.6.13

### Flexibility In the Workplace

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### RELATED DOCUMENTS

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#### University Documents

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[University Policy 6.9, Time Away From Work \(Excluding Academic and Bargaining Unit Staff\)](#)

[Flexible Work Arrangement Information](#)

[Human Resource Policy 6.7.9, Fair Labor Standards Act \(FLSA\)](#)

[Human Resource Policy 6.7.10, Standard Workweek and Pay Periods](#)

[Human Resource Policy 6.7.11, Time Collection](#)

[Human Resource Policy 6.7.12, Overtime](#)

[Telecommuting Guide for Cornell Faculty and Staff](#)

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### CONTACTS

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Direct any general questions about University Policy 6.6.13, Flexibility In the Workplace, to your unit's administrative office or Office of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion, at (607) 255-3976. If you have questions about specific issues, call the following offices:

Subject	Contact	Telephone	URL/E-mail
Flexplace	Your local human resources representative		<a href="http://www.hr.cornell.edu/about/hr_leaders.html">www.hr.cornell.edu/about/hr_leaders.html</a>
Flextime	Your local human resources representative		<a href="http://www.hr.cornell.edu/about/hr_leaders.html">www.hr.cornell.edu/about/hr_leaders.html</a>
Liability and Insurance	Risk Management and Insurance	(607) 254-1575	<a href="mailto:risk_mgmt@cornell.edu">risk_mgmt@cornell.edu</a> <a href="http://risk.cornell.edu">risk.cornell.edu</a>
Job Sharing	Your local human resources representative		<a href="http://www.hr.cornell.edu/about/hr_leaders.html">www.hr.cornell.edu/about/hr_leaders.html</a>
Safety Standards of Off-site Workplaces	Environmental Health and Safety	(607) 255-8200	<a href="mailto:dehs@cornell.edu">dehs@cornell.edu</a> <a href="http://www.ehs.cornell.edu">www.ehs.cornell.edu</a>

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## Policy 6.6.13 Flexibility In the Workplace

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### DEFINITIONS

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These definitions apply to these terms as they are used in this policy.

<b>Flexplace</b>	A Cornell University program that allows an employee to work at home or another off-site location, for a specified number of hours per week, and for a pre-set, limited duration.
<b>Flextime</b>	A flexible scheduling arrangement that permits variations in starting and departure times, but does not alter the total number of hours worked in a workweek.
<b>Job Sharing</b>	A form of regular part-time work in which two people share the responsibilities of one regular, full-time position.
<b>Local Human Resource Representative</b>	The individual in your unit with the responsibility to handle human resources matters.
<b>Supervisor</b>	The individual in a department, unit, office, or section with primary responsibility for the regular and customary supervision of individual positions. The supervisory duties generally include hiring, salary, discipline, performance evaluation, and work assignment decisions.

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## Policy 6.6.13 Flexibility In the Workplace

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### OVERVIEW

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#### General Comments

Cornell has established specific tools and guidelines, outlined in this document, for implementation of and legal compliance with three separate flexible work arrangement options: flextime, job sharing, and flexplace. The use of these guidelines should be the result of open and ongoing discussions within each department or unit.

The determination of whether a staff member will be allowed to participate in flextime, job sharing, or flexplace, will be made on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the needs, requirements, and constraints of both the unit and the staff member. If an employee has a dispute regarding a decision under this policy, it should be brought, as soon as possible, to the attention of the supervisor, who will discuss the matter with the employee in order to resolve it. For more assistance, contact the college, department, or unit's human resource representative. Final approval and arrangements for situations covered by this policy are at the discretion of management, and are not grievable.

◆**Note:** The criteria for flexible work arrangements set forth in this document are general guidelines; departments and units may choose to uphold criteria that are more restrictive.

This policy provides procedures for staff and administrators when considering, initiating, and maintaining flexible arrangements.

Exempt employees are not covered by the overtime and record keeping (i.e., time card) requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Therefore, there is inherent flexibility in work scheduling for them. Even though the law allows this latitude, exempt staff members still need to discuss specific scheduling arrangements with their supervisors and obtain their approval.

◆**Caution:** In certain instances, Family and Medical Leave is a more appropriate option than flextime, job sharing, or flexplace. For more information on Family and Medical Leave, contact Benefit Services in the Office of Human Resources.

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### FLEXTIME

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#### Introduction

Consistent with the university's strategy of accommodation, and in keeping with business needs, Cornell's flextime option is available in certain instances. Flextime allows for flexible scheduling arrangements that permit variations in starting and departure times, but does not alter the total number of hours worked in a workweek. Flextime can be used to improve coverage, enhance recruitment, extend service hours, enhance staff morale, and reduce tardiness.

All flextime arrangements must conform to the overtime, record keeping, and meal break provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and the New York State Labor Law, respectively, for staff covered by those provisions. Final approval and arrangements for flextime situations are at the discretion of management.

#### Flextime Arrangements

There are a variety of options in flexible scheduling that may be workable for staff and supervisors. It is recommended that agreed-upon flextime arrangements be implemented on a trial basis. A trial period will give everyone the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the flextime schedule. Flextime schedules can be modified as needed.

◆**Note:** To ensure that management and staff have a mutual understanding of the specifics of the flextime schedule, it should be put in writing. Any modifications in the schedule may be made only with the prior consent of management.

The following are some of the possible variations in the use of flextime:

- Fixed starting and departure times that are selected periodically. Agreed-upon starting and departure times continue for a specified period with the same number of hours worked each day.
- Starting and departure times that can vary daily. With such a personalized work schedule, a staff member may arrive at work and leave at a different time each day, provided the same number of hours are worked each day. The arrival/ departure window may be a variable period of time, from hours to minutes on either end of the day, for example.
- Variations in the length of the workday (e.g., a seven-hour day followed by a ten-hour day). This type of schedule may result in a "compressed workweek" whereby the total number of standard weekly hours is

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### FLEXTIME, CONTINUED

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completed in fewer than five workdays. Such a schedule may involve the need for staff to be present or accessible during a certain core number of hours each day (see the "*Core Time*" segment of this document).

Regardless of the variations chosen, a staff member must work the total standard number of hours each workweek.

◆ **Caution:** For nonexempt staff, supervisors must preapprove all hours to be worked in excess of the regularly scheduled 40 in any workweek.

#### Core Time

Unit business needs may require that staff be present or accessible during a certain core period of hours each work day or peak workload periods, e.g., those surrounding the noon period. Core time may also include the requirement for staff to be present during a particular day of the week. Core time may be necessary in any of the above flextime arrangements.

#### Leave Time Usage

A staff member on a flextime schedule who is granted paid leave time, such as vacation or sick leave, will deduct the number of hours scheduled to work on the day(s) off. For example, 10 hours of vacation would be deducted if a staff member uses vacation on a day with 10 scheduled work hours. This method of using paid leave time applies to all paid leave time as specified in the Human Resources Policy Manual, except for holidays as described below.

#### Holiday Pay

Any regular staff member will receive prorated pay equal to 1/5 of his or her standard workweek for a university holiday.

◆ **Caution:** For information on situations where this prorated pay will put an employee into overtime, see the section on "Holiday Pay" in [University Policy 6.9, Time Away from Work](#).

#### Discontinuation

If the flextime arrangement becomes unfeasible at any time, it may be discontinued at the discretion of either the staff member or management, with reasonable notice thereof.

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### JOB SHARING

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#### Introduction

Consistent with the university's strategy of accommodation, and in keeping with business needs, Cornell's job sharing option, in which two individuals share the responsibilities of one regular full-time position, is available to staff members in certain instances. By enhancing flexibility within the workplace, job sharing can provide many benefits, including reduced absenteeism; improved recruitment and retention of valued staff; improved scheduling and continuity; increased breadth of skills and experience; allowance for unusual schedule needs of staff; and experience in working as a successful team. Final approval and arrangements for job sharing situations are at the discretion of management.

#### Time Commitment

Job sharing positions are regular part-time, and as such, must involve at least a 50 percent commitment. Therefore, the time commitment of each of the two individuals participating must be at least 20 hours per workweek.

◆**Note:** The university encourages other various time commitment arrangements, at the discretion of management, which may not be considered job sharing. Certain individuals participating in such arrangements may not be eligible for university benefits.

#### Compensation

Since job-sharing positions are regular and part-time, the university's wage and salary policies for regular positions apply in job-share arrangements. Benefits eligibility for those participating in job sharing will be the same as for all regular part-time staff.

#### Procedures for Supervisors

Either a staff member or a supervisor may recognize the need for job sharing; and either may introduce the option. Below are procedures for supervisors.

##### Option A

*When the supervisor recognizes the need for job sharing*

If a situation arises in which job sharing may be appropriate for a position under your supervision, use the procedures outlined below:

1. Consider, at a minimum, the following factors:
  - The advantages of a job sharing situation

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### JOB SHARING, CONTINUED

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- The ability to restructure the position for clear division of responsibilities
  - The availability of space and equipment (will members of the team need to work at the same time?)
  - Training and other indirect administrative overhead
  - Schedule/continuity (will the team need to overlap/substitute?)
2. If you have determined that job sharing may be appropriate, discuss the job-sharing arrangement in detail with the individual(s) who will be involved, to help in your final decision of whether to establish the job-sharing arrangement.
  3. If you and the individual(s) involved determine that job sharing is appropriate and acceptable for this position, follow the standard university procedures for filling a vacancy. Contact your local human resource representative for assistance.

◆**Note:** The search for an individual to fill a job-share position must comply with university policies.

4. Provide a copy of the Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement form to the staff member involved in the job sharing before beginning the arrangement, and to the prospective employee before offering the job-sharing employment. Discuss these expectations with each of these individuals (see the "Forms" section of this document).

◆**Note:** If the job-share position is one that is being created at the request of the current full-time incumbent, it is strongly recommended that the incumbent participate in the interview process for the vacant half of the position.

#### **Option B**

*When the staff member proposes the job sharing arrangement*

1. Consider, at a minimum, the following factors:
  - The advantages of a job sharing situation
  - The ability to restructure the position for clear division of responsibilities

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### JOB SHARING, CONTINUED

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- The availability of space and equipment (will members of the team need to work at the same time?)
  - Training and other indirect administrative overhead
  - Schedule/continuity (will the team need to overlap/substitute)
2. Meet with the individual in a timely manner to discuss the proposal in detail. This discussion may include ways in which the proposal may be modified to meet business needs.
  3. If you determine that job sharing is appropriate and acceptable for this position, follow the standard university procedures for filling a vacancy. Contact your local human resource representative for assistance.
  4. If you determine that job sharing is **not** appropriate for this position, provide the involved staff member(s) with a brief explanation.

#### Procedures for Staff Members

If you are a staff member interested in requesting that your current, full-time position be modified to that of a job share, do the following:

1. Submit a written proposal to the appropriate supervisor. The proposal must include the following:
  - Reason for the request (e.g., schedule flexibility)
  - Advantage to the unit (e.g., retention of valued staff)
  - Proposed work plan (e.g., how tasks/duties will be divided?)
  - Proposed schedule (e.g., how work hours will be divided?)
  - Plan for communication/cooperation (how the team members will communicate with each other, with management, and with co-workers?)
  - Plan for continuity (e.g., will the team members be willing to fill in for each other or want to be able to trade work schedules?)
  - Other (e.g., when does the staff member want to start?)

◆**Note:** It is your responsibility to research the implications to your salary and benefits before accepting a job-sharing position.

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### JOB SHARING, CONTINUED

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2. The supervisor will review the written proposal and meet with you in a timely manner to discuss it in detail. This discussion may include ways in which the proposal may be modified to meet business needs.
3. If a job-share arrangement is approved, you will be provided with a Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement form. You must review it before starting the arrangement. (See the "Forms" Section of this document).
4. If a job share arrangement is not approved, management will provide you with a brief explanation. A negative decision is not a grievable action.

#### **Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement Form**

The Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement form will assist in specifying the particular details of a job-share arrangement, to ensure that the staff member and management have a mutual understanding of the terms of the arrangement. This document must be reviewed by the parties to finalize details of the job share before the final offer of a job share is made. The following are examples of some of the specifics that are addressed on this form:

- Work schedule (hours, days, commitment)
- Start date of the job share
- Whether the staff members will be expected to fill in for each other during absences and, if so, if there is a time limit
- Expectations of management in the event that one person leaves a job-sharing arrangement indefinitely (e.g., resigns)
- Whether the job-share team members will be permitted to trade schedules and, if so, under what conditions and with what advanced notice to the supervisor
- Particular methods in which the parties agree to communicate with one another
- Schedule of how often the job-share arrangement will be reviewed to see if it is meeting the needs of the unit, the faculty, and the staff members
- A complete position description that clearly defines the division of duties between the job-share participants

## Policy 6.6.13 Flexibility In the Workplace

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### **JOB SHARING, CONTINUED**

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#### **Leave Time Usage**

A staff member working in a job-sharing arrangement who is granted paid leave time, such as vacation or sick leave, will deduct the number of hours scheduled to work on the day(s) the time off is taken. For example, four hours of vacation would be deducted if a staff member uses vacation on the day he or she was scheduled to work four hours. This method of using paid leave time applies to all paid leave situations provided for in the [Human Resources Policy Manual](#) except for holidays, as described below.

#### **Holiday Pay**

All regular staff members will receive prorated pay equal to 1/5 of their standard workweeks for university holidays.

#### **If One Party Leaves**

If one of the participants in a job-sharing arrangement leaves the position, it may be necessary, if the search for a replacement has failed, for the unit head to require that the remaining employee choose between taking on the full-time responsibilities of the position and leaving it.

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### FLEXPLACE

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#### **Introduction**

Cornell flexplace, an arrangement that allows an employee to work at home or another off-site location for a specified number of hours per week, is available in certain instances. It may be for a pre-set, limited duration, and is not intended to be used as a substitute for ongoing childcare or elder care. The segments that follow explain the features of this program and present a framework for implementation.

Either a staff member or a supervisor may recognize the need for flexplace; and either one may introduce the option. Once presented, it is up to the supervisor to determine whether flexplace is appropriate, and if so, to arrange it. Final approval and arrangements for flexplace situations are at the discretion of management.

For technical information on setting up work conditions during a flexplace arrangement, see the university's [Telecommuting Guide for Cornell Faculty and Staff](#).

#### **Determining Whether Flexplace Is Appropriate: What To Consider**

To assess whether a particular flexplace arrangement can be an effective tool in your unit, it is useful to consider the position, the staff member, and the management. Not all positions are suited for flexplace. And, even if the position is suitable, not every staff member can work productively off-site, as flexplace requires certain special skills. Finally, managers should reflect upon their own management style (or ask for feedback and guidance) to assess whether the management techniques that are in place are supportive of flexplace objectives and conducive to successful outcomes.

#### **Considering the Position**

Ask yourself the following questions regarding the position. If the answers indicate so, then flexplace may provide a viable work option.

1. Does the position have clearly defined tasks? If so, what are the tasks that can be accomplished off-site?
2. For those position requirements that cannot be met from an off-site location, can they be reassigned easily and fairly?
3. Can results/productivity be measured effectively without frequent and regular supervision?

## Policy 6.6.13 Flexibility In the Workplace

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### **FLEXPLACE, CONTINUED**

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4. Can the present level of customer service be maintained without undue hardship on customers, where “customers” may be internal or external to the department/unit?
5. Can technology (e.g., computers, FAX, voice mail, etc.) be applied to help facilitate successful outcomes?
6. How are assignments to be communicated to the staff member?
7. Are there sufficient resources available from the employee's unit to support requests by staff members to participate in flexplace?
8. How and when does the staff member need to be on-site to meet with the supervisor, co-workers, and customers?
9. How will this flexplace arrangement affect cross-training initiatives, team-based approaches, and other such strategies?
10. Will this flexplace arrangement have a positive affect on the unit's morale?

#### **Considering the Staff Member**

Certain attributes will help ensure a successful flexplace arrangement. To be eligible to initiate a request for flexplace, the staff member must have been employed in the current unit or unit for at least six months. To be approved for flexplace that individual should have excellent time-management skills and a demonstrated history of satisfactory, independent work performance.

#### **Management Responsibilities**

Managers who are entering into flexplace arrangements with people under their supervision are responsible to review work and progress with participants regularly, and provide effective and supportive feedback (such review should include communicating with on-site co-workers of the staff member participating in flexplace).

In addition, all flexplace arrangements must conform to the overtime, record keeping, and meal break provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and New York State labor law, respectively, for staff members covered by those provisions. Therefore, although nonexempt employees may be managed by results, supervisors must ensure accurate recording of hours worked.

## Policy 6.6.13 Flexibility In the Workplace

### FLEXPLACE, CONTINUED

#### Procedures

The table below outlines the procedures for all individuals involved in the establishment and maintenance of a flexplace arrangement:

**Table 1**  
*Flexplace Procedures*

	PROCEDURE	PERFORMED BY
<b>Initiation</b>	1 <b>Identify</b> need or opportunity for flexplace	Staff member or management
<b>Determination</b>	2 <b>Assess</b> whether work can be performed via flexplace (see the " <i>Determining Whether Flexplace Is Appropriate: What to Consider</i> " segment of this document).	Staff member and management
	3 <b>Determine</b> whether flexplace is appropriate and will be pursued.	Management
<b>Preparation</b>	4 <b>Outline</b> an initial draft of the Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement form and discuss details and implications (such as for department/unit resources, direct customer contacts, etc.) with the department/unit head and/or the unit's human resource (HR) manager.	Staff member and management
	5 <b>Review</b> "Flexplace Safety Checklist" to consider whether the proposed off-site work setting is conducive and appropriate to work requirements and meets accepted health and safety standards. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety is available to help departments/units or faculty and staff members with such questions or concerns.	Staff member
	6 <b>Finalize</b> the review and approval of the Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement form.	Supervisor, dept./unit head, dean, director, and/or local HR representative
<b>Implementation</b>	7 <b>Review</b> implementation and performance on a regular and appropriate schedule. Introduce modifications to the arrangement, if needed, to ensure that the arrangement supports both Cornell and staff member objectives. Work continuously to resolve conflicts that arise.	Staff member and management
	8 <b>Inform</b> department/unit managers regularly of status and issues as they pertain to the flexplace arrangement. Keep regular lines of communication open with the <u>on-site</u> co-workers of the staff member. Work continuously to resolve conflicts that arise.	Supervisor
<b>Continuation or Discontinuation</b>	9 <b>Discuss</b> continuation or discontinuation near the end of the arrangement's term. An extension of the arrangement must be approved and documented by all involved parties. Discontinuation may be elected by staff or management at any time during the arrangement, with reasonable notice.	Staff member and management
	10 <b>Finalize</b> review and approval regarding the continuation of the flexplace arrangement, or confirm discontinuation.	Management and/or local HR representative

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### FLEXPLACE, CONTINUED

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#### Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement Form

Use the Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement form to guide you in specifying the particular details of a flexplace arrangement and to ensure that the staff member and management have a mutual understanding of its terms (see the "Forms" Section of this document). It is suggested that it be reviewed and agreed to by the parties to finalize the flexplace arrangement.

Examples of some of the specifics that are addressed on this form are:

- The staff member's flexplace work schedule, including the start-date and end-date of the flexplace arrangement
- Any equipment that will be provided
- Responsibility for repairs and replacement, if applicable
- Any additional phone lines or other electronic communications resources that will be provided
- Any special furniture or other supplies or expenses, if applicable
- Frequency and scheduling of on-site visits to review work and progress

In addition to the Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement form, the following details must be discussed and agreed to before a flexplace arrangement begins:

- The method and criteria regarding performance evaluations
- Other university or participant responsibilities unique to the specific arrangement
- A description of care-giving arrangements, if applicable

◆**Note:** All above records must be retained for a period of three years, by the applicable administrative unit.

#### The Flexplace Work Area

A separate work area must be designated in the off-site setting for flexplace. This area must be conducive to working productively, and must meet accepted health safety standards. Review the "Appendix" Section of this document for guidance. If you have any questions or would like more information on safety considerations and site inspections, contact the Department of Environmental Health and Safety.

◆**Caution:** The staff member's use of equipment, software, furniture, and all other resources provided by Cornell is limited to the purposes of flexplace

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### **FLEXPLACE, CONTINUED**

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and is not intended for the staff member's personal use. The decision to remove or discontinue use of the resources listed above shall rest entirely with Cornell. In the event that the staff member ceases employment with Cornell, or the flexplace arrangement is discontinued for any reason, the staff member must return all Cornell property within 48 hours.

#### **Benefits**

Benefit status will not be affected by participation in flexplace. If hours per week are reduced, some benefits such as retirement contributions and the accrual of vacation and sick leave will be reduced proportionally, just as they would if the staff member were working on-site.

#### **Workers' Compensation**

Workers' compensation will apply only to injuries arising out of and in the course of employment as defined by the New York State Workers' Compensation Law.

◆**Caution:** Cornell is not responsible for injuries unrelated to such work activities that might occur in the defined flexplace setting or elsewhere.

#### **Property Insurance**

The university has an Insurance Program to insure its property. This insurance will not cover any personal property that is used at home, and will only cover university equipment brought to a defined flexplace work site if it has been listed with the Department of Risk Management and Insurance. Additional premiums that are required for such equipment insurance will be paid by the requesting units. For more information, or to insure university property that will be used during a flexplace arrangement, contact the Department of Risk Management and Insurance.

#### **Discontinuation**

If the flexplace arrangement becomes unfeasible at any time, it may be discontinued at the discretion of either the staff member or Cornell, with reasonable notice thereof. Such reasonable notice may include, on the part of either party, time necessary for phasing out the flexplace setting and/or phasing back into the on-site workplace.

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### RESPONSIBILITIES

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The major responsibilities each party has in connection with University Policy 6.6.13, Flexibility In the Workplace, are as follows:

<b>Department of Environmental Health and Safety</b>	Consult with staff members and management requesting information about safety guidelines in the off-site workplace. Conduct flexplace site inspections, when necessary.
<b>Staff Member</b>	Request and participate in flexible work situations according to the procedures outlined in this document.
<b>Management</b>	Recognize the need for and think creatively about flexible work situations. Determine when flexible work situations are appropriate. Consult with staff members who request flexible work situations.
<b>University</b>	Support an environment that allows workplace flexibility.
<b>Office of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion</b>	Consult with individuals and management requesting information about flexible work situations.
<b>Department of Risk Management and Insurance</b>	When requested, provide means for insuring university property that is used at off-site workplaces.

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### FORMS

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When using this policy, you may use one or more of the documents listed in the table below.

<b>Form</b>	<b>Use</b>
<a href="#">Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement Form</a>	Assists in specifying the particular details of a flexible work arrangement, to ensure that the staff member and management have a mutual understanding of the terms of the arrangement.

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### APPENDIX

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#### Safety First

When setting up a flexplace arrangement, safety should be a primary concern. This section provides the basic workspace information, including checklists to enable you to set up a safe off-campus workspace. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety is available to answer questions you may have and offer additional information as necessary.

#### Flexplace Safety Checklist

As a flexplace employee you are responsible to ensure that the off-campus workspace you have selected complies with certain safety guidelines. Use this checklist for guidance.

##### Workspace Location

- \_\_\_ Workspace is away from noise, distractions, and is devoted to your work needs.
- \_\_\_ Workspace area accommodates all workstation, equipment, and related materials.

##### Electrical

- \_\_\_ Sufficient electrical outlets are accessible.
- \_\_\_ All outlets are covered and in working order.
- ◆ **Caution:** Do not overload outlets; make sure they can handle the load. If necessary, call your electrician to verify outlet electrical circuit capacity.
- \_\_\_ Equipment is fitted with grounding adapters, surge protectors and overload fuses.
- \_\_\_ All grounding adapters and power strips/surge protectors that are being used are Underwriters Laboratory approved.
- \_\_\_ Equipment is placed close to electrical outlets.
- \_\_\_ Electrical cords/wires are placed so that there are no tripping hazards.

##### Fire Safety

- \_\_\_ There is a working smoke detector in the workspace.
- \_\_\_ A home multipurpose fire extinguisher, which you know how to use, is readily available.
- \_\_\_ You have an evacuation plan so you know what to do in the event of a fire.

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#### **The Selected Workspace**

The flexplace workspace you select must be capable of safely supporting and accommodating your electronic office and supporting equipment needs. Natural or mechanical ventilation, temperature control, lighting, and properly selected workspace ergonomic parameters are necessary to maintain a comfortable working environment. Once set up, your new workspace should be maintained free from hazards and in a safe condition at all times.

#### **Workspace Ergonomics**

An improperly set up computer workspace can be a source of physical discomfort during prolonged use. Symptoms of eye fatigue and irritation, headaches, blurred vision, and pain or stiffness in the neck, shoulders, back, arms, wrists, and hands have been reported. These potential problems can be minimized or eliminated by learning more about flexplace workspace safety, participating in the Department of Environmental Health and Safety's safety training program, and using the workspace set up safety checklist below.

#### **Workspace Checklist**

Use this checklist as a guide to help you understand and set up your flexplace workspace.

##### **Standard Computer Desk**

- \_\_\_ Computer desk height is 26 inches above the floor. Keyboard is at the same height and chair is adjusted during use to ensure that your arms are at a 90-degree angle to the keyboard.
- \_\_\_ Desk is able to support weight of computer equipment and related support materials.
- \_\_\_ Space under desk is sufficient for lateral movement.

##### **Component Desk**

- \_\_\_ Desk work surface is 29 inches from floor.
- \_\_\_ Desk has adjustable keyboard support tray (adjustments of 25 to 27 inches from floor are standard).
- \_\_\_ Desk is able to support weight of computer equipment and related support materials.

##### **Keyboard**

- \_\_\_ Keyboard height is adjustable (25 to 27 inches above the floor).

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- User's wrists are straight, and a wrist pad is used.

#### Chair

- Chair is fully adjustable, allowing change in height and angle of backrest to provide support to the inward curve of operator's back and waist.

◆**Note:** If necessary, use a pillow, towel, or cushion for lower back support.

- Chair is adjusted so that knees are at a 90-degree angle, feet are flat on floor or footrest, and elbows are at same height as keyboard.

#### Computer Screen

- Screen is about an arm's length from the eyes and tilted back 10 to 20 degrees from the user's eyes.
- Top of viewing screen is at or below the user's eye level.
- Images on screen are sharp, easy to read, and there is no glare on the screen face.
- Screen contrast and brightness are adjusted for best reading of typed characters on the screen.

#### Workspace Illumination

- Lighting is not so bright that it causes glare on the screen.
- Lighting is not so dim that it causes the user to strain when reading the screen or documents in use.
- Screen is located away from the window and/or is perpendicular to window and its plane.
- There are no reflections on the screen from windows or overhead lights.
- There is no light shining directly into the user's eyes.
- Task lights are used for source documents and are positioned to avoid glare on screen.

#### Training

- As a flexplace participant, you are urged to attend a computer use safety training seminar. Please call the Department of Environmental Health and Safety to schedule your training.

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