Tips for Supervisors Supporting Remote Work

Review technology needs and resources

Identify technology tools employees use in their daily work and determine whether the resources will be accessible when working from home. It's also a good idea to ensure employees know how to access technical support should they need assistance.

For workstation or remote login issues, contact COD Information Technology at 402-472-2558, or email codis@unmc.edu, or UNMC IT Help Desk at 402-559-7700 (option 1)

For Canvas or class recording support, or general instructional support, contact Calvin Hughes or Ann Alexander at 402-472-2558.

Review work schedules

Working remotely sometimes may get confused with flex work. Be clear about your expectations regarding whether employees maintain their current work schedule or if you are open to flexible scheduling based on employee needs.

In general, try to adhere to regular office hours but communicate to employees that deviations from their normal work schedule requires your approval.

Draft a work plan

Review the following questions and work through answers together:

- What routine responsibilities/tasks cannot be fulfilled while working remotely and how will it impact operations or other people? What are ways to reduce the impacts?
- What routine responsibilities/tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Proactively contact each person to confirm how you will communicate while everyone is working remotely.
- With fewer meeting and interruptions, more time may be freed up during the day. Are there any special projects or tasks that can be advanced while working remotely?
- What events or meetings are scheduled during the time in which the temporary arrangement is in place? Will they be postponed or canceled, or will they take place using technology? What follow-up needs to occur due to postponements or cancellations?

Make a communication and accountability plan

Supervisors should tell employees how often they should send updates on work plan progress and what those updates should include. Supervisors should also communicate how quickly they expect the employee to respond while teleworking and the best ways for the employee to contact the supervisor while working remotely.

- If you have normal check-in times, calls can be arranged during this period. Maintain team meetings and one-to-one check-ins, altering the schedule if needed to accommodate any alternative schedules that have been approved.
- Consider conducting regular check-ins by starting each workday with a phone, video or instant message chat. Your employees will be eager for connection and information during the disruption and the structure will help everyone create a positive routine. Every other day or weekly check-in may work best for your team. Determine frequency of contact to keep your employees connected and in touch with you and/or with one another.
Be positive

A positive attitude toward telecommuting and a willingness to trust employees to work remotely effectively is key to making such arrangements successful and productive. Telecommuting presents an opportunity for managers to become better supervisors. Instead of focusing on how many hours your employees are working, re-emphasize a focus on measuring results and reaching objectives—regardless of work arrangement. By focusing on employees successfully completing their work, supervisors will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing through goal setting and objectives.

Debrief after normal operations resume

Employees and supervisors should review work plans when work returns to normal, assess progress on each employee’s work plan and prioritize any unresolved or new work that resulted from temporary operational disruption.

1 Adapted from University of Florida website https://hr.ufl.edu/covid-19/supervisor-checklist-for-supporting-remote-work/