

Norms and Expectations for Remote Work

Telecommuting Norms

Due to UCA employees being in an extended telecommuting environment, it is important to set norms and expectations to ensure fairness across departments and give employees parameters for their work. Norms also allow UCA to continue to provide a high level of customer service, to both students and our colleagues on campus, despite the fact that most face-to-face interaction has now become virtual.

Below are a list of norms that should be considered for all offices and their employees:

- Turn off the automatic email replies that are generated each time an email is received. Employees are not “away from work” because we all continue to work remotely. If someone sends an email communication, they should expect to receive a response in a timely manner. Consider placing a statement on your department website that explains that the office is working remotely, and the best ways for an individual to receive assistance from your office (phone, email, submit a meeting request, etc.)
- All offices should have a plan in place to respond to phone calls. Customers and others that want or need to speak by phone should have the opportunity to do so. Email-only communication is not sufficient. Models for managing phone calls include:
 - Forward work phones to employee cell phones. If there is a concern about sharing your personal phone number with individuals when you return their call, you can always block your number by dialing *67. Additionally, most cell phones allow you to block your number in the phone settings. Advise individuals that when you return their call it may say “restricted number” or “No Caller ID” and that they should answer the phone when they see that.
 - Set a voicemail message asking an individual to leave a message and their call will be returned within 24 hours (or some other shorter time period). Voice mails can be transcribed and automatically emailed to individuals in your office. See [the voicemail guide](#) for instructions on how to access your voicemail remotely and set-up voicemails to go directly to your email address.
- Though there may be times when no employees are physically in your respective departmental office, it may be necessary for an employee(s) to report to the office for a period of time each week to check the mail, handle paperwork, or complete some other essential task. Social distancing should continue to be a priority and maintained to the extent that it is possible.
- UCA is not closed and all employees are still working unless they have taken time off for FMLA, sick leave, or vacation leave. This means that all communication by email and phone should be prompt and predictable, as if employees were physically in their normal office setting. Due to child care needs and other circumstances precipitated by the

existing public health emergency, it may be necessary for some employees to set “office hours” when individuals on and off-campus can contact the employee by Google Chat, Google Hangouts, Zoom, email or phone and get an immediate response. Employees should discuss expectations regarding communication with their supervisor. *Consider posting your “office hours” in your email signature line, along with a statement that you are working remotely.*

Supervisor Recommendations

The following list includes recommendations that Supervisors should implement while employees are telecommuting:

- Schedule regular conference calls or video conference meetings with employees that are under your direct supervision. For some areas, this may require a daily touch base at the beginning or end of the work day. For others, 2-3 weekly meetings may suffice.
- Ensure that all of your employees have an established work plan and goals. Discuss how you will evaluate employee’s work during this time. If your employees are finding it difficult to complete their regular responsibilities at home, this is a great time for them to complete the following types of activities:
 - Complete all required university training.
 - Review your department website to ensure that links are still active and that all information is up-to-date.
 - Review the current draft of the UCA Strategic Plan to have a better understanding of UCA’s plans and priorities for the future.
 - Double check departmental policies and handbooks to verify that all information is updated.
 - Research other institutions with comparable programs or activities to identify potential opportunities for your department to improve or innovate.
 - Complete a literature review of the current trends, challenges, and opportunities that exist in your field or specialization.
 - Complete all required employee evaluations. Annual evaluations for non classified staff should be submitted to the Office of Human Resources and Risk Management no later than May 31, 2020.
- Set expectations with employees regarding their availability and responsiveness during normal working hours.
- For employees that may not be comfortable using collaborative work tools such as Google Suite (Sheets, Docs, Forms, etc.) or video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, schedule opportunities for training and begin to incorporate these tools into your office operations.