Remote Working Policy

We have included a sample Remote Working Policy that can be adapted to your workplace. This policy is especially important for women who are the primary caregivers in their family. A clear policy outlining remote working and flexible working schedules can greatly support women in their careers and it is a policy we recommend implementing.

Policy Review

A policy review will be conducted from time to time to ensure its effectiveness. Remote Working and Flexible Schedules (including Policy)

Our interviews and survey also confirm that lack of flexibility is a barrier to attracting and retaining women and talent from diverse groups. One of our WIL Champions, IGM Wealth, has implemented remote working and flexible schedules as part of their DEIB strategy to support female talent as well as employees from diverse groups.

The most common workplace trend following the pandemic was employees requesting to maintain a flexible schedule and remote working privileges. While remote work does pose challenges in the workplace such as collaboration, communication, building relationships and maintaining organizational culture, it's at the top of employees' list of requests in the workplace. It's an especially important prerequisite to women in the workplace as millions of women have left their job or the workforce due to lack of flexibility and access to remote working to help them manage caregiving responsibilities.

It is an even more of a prerequisite for BIPOC and other diverse peoples. The pandemic provided a mental break to employees who are Black, Indigenous or people of colour who are used to dealing with daily microaggressions in an office environment. With many employers requiring employees to return to work in person over this past year, that feeling of safety has been threatened. In addition to dealing with micro inequities and micro aggressions, many employees do not want to have to resume code switching, or changing their mannerisms, appearance or behaviour to fit what is appropriate for a mostly white office setting. While isolated microaggressions won't cause extreme mental distress, they can contribute to trauma responses to ongoing experiences of racism. A remote working environment, even part time, provides BIPOC and other diverse individuals the necessary space to not have to code switch, pretend to be ok, harassed, be triggered or traumatized, etc. in their work environment. They are free to just be themselves, and work well, while feeling safe and secure.

In addition, many people are introverted (in some cases, highly introverted) and require a quiet at home work environment to be their best selves. Increasing employee productivity because they are not being overstimulated, having 'to be on' a majority of the time while at work. Introverts thrive on quiet spaces with minimal distraction (sound, people, technologies, lights, etc.). Introverted employees can set up their own home offices to their specific needs for an optimum working environment for them. The same can be said for employees with disabilities (seen or unseen). Once again, allowing disabled employees to create the functionality they need in their own home office creates a working environment of success for them.

Allowing many employees the opportunity and the flexibility to work from home, as often as they need to, for whichever reason, provides any company the opportunity to thrive in so many ways, while increasing retention, promoting a healthy working environment to recruits, and a sustainable work environment for all.

Tips:

Prior to implementing Remote Work and Flexible Schedules Policy, consider the following:
- Evaluate the roles within your organization and determine what percentage of those roles would qualify for flexible schedules and/ remote working. If only a small percentage would qualify, it may cause much dissatisfaction within your organization;
- Consider a trial period before finalizing your policy. It's ok to have a trial period to determine what works best within your organization. For example, starting with 1 or 2 days per week to evaluate any technology challenges, communication or productivity levels;
- Obtain feedback from leaders and employees to learn about their preferences (i.e. number of days per week, flexibility requirements) and ideas on how it can work;
- Consider having 1 or 2 set days in the week where it is mandatory for all employees to be in the office. This can help significantly with coordinating meetings, collaborating on projects and maintaining a healthy organizational culture;
- On the following page you will find a sample Remote Working Policy that you can adapt to your organization.
- Remote Working and Flexible Schedules Policy
- Providing our employees with flexibility to best achieve work-life balance is an important part of our workplace culture. Our goal is to provide flexibility to our employees where possible.
- This policy applies to eligible employees and sets out the principles by which employees can request remote working and flexible schedules and perform their job safely and effectively from a remote location.

Flexible Schedules

Our office hours are from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm (37.5 hours per week, excluding one hour lunch break) from Monday to Friday. Our core hours are from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm which means that all employees must work during our core hours. Our flex time is from 8:00 am to 10:00 am and from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm which means that you can request an earlier or later start with your manager and together you will determine if the request can be accommodated. It is important to note that some roles may not be eligible for a flexible schedule (example: assistant who has a client facing role). Once the request is approved, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure adherence to the schedule and keep it consistent. All employees must complete the 37.5 hours per week. The working hours agreed apply to remote working as well.

Remote Work

Employees are required to work in the office a minimum of 3 days each week, the remainder of the week from their remote work location. It is mandatory that all employees work at the office on Wednesdays. All requests for remote working must be made directly to your manager. The manager will have to determine the level of collaboration with colleagues required in your role, whether or not you deal directly with stakeholders or clients, etc. before a decision is made. In order to qualify for remote working, you must:
- Have a role that has been approved as suitable for hybrid working;

- Have successfully completed your probation period;
- Not be on a disciplinary warning or performance improvement plan; and
- Have a role that qualifies for remote working.

Ad Hoc Remote Work

On occasion an employee may request to work remotely on a day that is outside of the hybrid working arrangement, these requests are subject to the approval of the manager.

Remote Work Location

The remote location must allow the employee to perform their work safely, have network connectivity and maintain the confidentiality and security of (insert company name)'s information appropriate to the work performed. Locations that offer public wi-fi are unsecured (malls, coffee shops, libraries) and are not appropriate nor approved for remote work. Due to security reasons, remote work performed out of the country is not recommended and is subject to manager approval.

Employment Terms and Conditions

Remote, hybrid work and flexible schedules are not an employee right or term or condition of employment. These are privileges and can be re-evaluated, denied or revoked at any time by the manager.
Employees must comply with all policies, procedures and safety standards affecting their employment while remote working. Hybrid work arrangements and locations must comply with local labour laws as well as health and safety regulations.

Regardless of the work location, employees are expected to work their hours, complete their work and meet all performance expectations. Employees are to continue to perform their work as assigned, collaborate with the team, attend meetings and report progress to your manager in order to maintain hybrid working and flexible schedule privileges.