



Executive Summary of Feedback Received from the Policy Portal

Thirteen (13) individuals submitted comments in the policy portal during the Flexible Work Policy and Procedure comment period. Their comments/questions are addressed below.

1. Remote work performed out of state

One commenter suggested a revision to expressly prohibit remote work outside New York State to avoid potential College exposure to liability under other states' labor and employment laws. The commenter noted that remote work performed outside New York State on an infrequent or occasional basis does not raise the same level of concern.

a. Administrative Response:

The following language appears in subsection E., paragraph 12, of the procedure:

Prohibition of Remote Work Outside New York State:

Remote work locations outside New York State are generally prohibited due to out-of-state tax and regulatory implications. In limited circumstances prompted by business or operational needs, the College may approve requests to work remotely outside New York State. Prior to approval, the divisional Vice President must consult with Human Resources and the Controller's Office to evaluate tax and regulatory requirements and costs.

The commenter's point is well taken. It is suggested that the above language be incorporated into the policy language, in addition to the implementing procedure.

2. Typographical error

One commenter pointed out that on page 2 of the Policy, it says "...to compress a normal work week into few than five (5) working days." The commenter suggested replacing "few" with "fewer."

a. Administrative Response:

The suggested correction has been made.

3. Positive feedback

Multiple commenters praised MCC for creating a hybrid work option that allows employees to complete their job duties through a combination of in person and remote work without disrupting college operations.

Multiple commenters stated that the Flexible Work Policy positively supports employee recruitment and retention and helps MCC remain competitive in the job market.

One commenter noted that the policy supports management discretion, ensuring that department-level needs are met.

a. **Administrative Response:**

Duly noted. The goal is to offer flexibility to employees without compromising student success.

4. Policy application

One person commented that the limit to five (5) remote work days per pay period is unfair as applied to non-teaching employees, noting that some teaching faculty are 100% remote, i.e. beyond five (5) days per pay period. This person also commented that rewriting job descriptions to indicate a remote work option seems overly cumbersome, suggesting instead that the decision to allow an employee to work remotely should be based upon an agreement between the individual supervisor and individual employee, subject to supervisor approval, handled on a case-by-case basis.

Another commenter inquired about how language prohibiting remote work outside New York State applies to teaching faculty.

a. **Administrative Response:**

Additional language may be useful to distinguish between teaching faculty hired to or assigned to teach 100% online or remotely vs. employees hired into positions with in person responsibilities who may seek approval to work remotely. It is not the intent to require teaching faculty hired or assigned to teach 100% online or remotely to work in person five (5) days per pay period.

The intent is to offer flexible work options to employees, based upon their individual job duties and departmental functions. Available flexible work options will vary depending on the employee's position and department. Management input and discretion is critical to ensure that departmental operations are met.

That being said, leaving remote work arrangements exclusively to individual supervisors and individual employees to be approved or denied on a case-by-case basis is not feasible for an organization of our size. Inconsistent criteria, application, and monitoring negatively impact departmental operations, student access to resources and services, and employee morale, and may expose the College to liability.

5. Access to remote workers

One commenter stated that employees working remotely are not consistently reachable across departments, stating it is easier to reach people who are in person. Another commenter stated that the lack of in person workers makes the campus feel impersonal to students and visitors, akin to a "ghost town."

a. **Administrative Response:**

This is not acceptable. For the flexible work policy to be successful and sustainable, we must work to eliminate access and communication issues.

Another commenter made the following suggestion, which is responsive to the above concern: Each department should post their remote work schedules in a publicly accessible location so that everyone knows who is working remotely and when.

6. Effect on paid time off

One commenter requested further clarification about the following policy language: “Accrual and use of paid time off benefits may be affected by a flexible work arrangement. Please consult with your supervisor/department head or Human Resources if you have questions.”

a. **Administrative Response:**

This statement is intentionally broad because the answer depends on the individual’s position, applicable collective bargaining agreement, and their approved flexible work arrangement. For example, if someone works a compressed schedule (e.g., four (4) 10-hour shifts/week), when they take a vacation day or sick day, their accrued banks will be charged 10 hours, instead of the normal seven (7) or eight (8) hours (depending on their position).

7. Inadequate or inconsistent monitoring of remote work arrangements

One commenter expressed concern that some employees appear to be in person on campus only once per week – i.e., beyond the five (5) day remote work limit.

a. **Administrative Response:**

This is not acceptable. Inadequate monitoring or inconsistent application of the remote work option negatively impacts departmental operations, student access to resources and services, and employee morale.

For the flexible work policy to be successful and sustainable, it is incumbent upon supervisors to regularly and consistently monitor application of the remote work option or other flexible work arrangements. Further, it is incumbent upon employees to hold one another accountable and raise concerns they observe with their supervisor or Human Resources.

8. Access to on-demand in person service on a walk-in basis

One commenter expressed dismay about observing notes on department doors encouraging visitors to contact employees working remotely via email. This commenter believes that each department should have a staff member working in person, available to accept walk-ins during business hours. They encouraged the College to survey students and employees to determine whether the current on campus presence is meeting needs.

a. **Administrative Response:**

Duly noted. The goal is to offer flexibility to employees without compromising student success, and a survey may help us evaluate whether current in person and remote staffing levels are meeting, exceeding, or falling short of needs and expectations.

9. Need for flexible work options

One commenter questioned the need and purpose of remote work, noting that a hybrid workforce does not save the College money on energy bills or wear and tear on equipment and suggesting that some remote workers are not actually working. This commenter stated that remote work was implemented to limit exposure to/spread of COVID-19, and indicated that it’s time for workers to return to in person work.

a. **Administrative Response:**

As stated previously, inadequate monitoring or inconsistent application of the remote work option is unacceptable because it negatively impacts departmental

operations, student access to resources and services, and employee morale. It is incumbent upon supervisors to regularly and consistently monitor application of the remote work option or other flexible work arrangements, and it is incumbent upon employees to hold one another accountable and raise concerns they observe with their supervisor or Human Resources.

This commenter provides an excellent reminder that we must ground our personal views of flexible work options by asking the following question of ourselves and our departments: *How does this impact student success?* The viability of a particular flexible work option depends upon how it meets student need and supports student success. Their success depends upon our collective efforts as employees working together to meet their needs, whether in person, remote, or hybrid.