

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

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SRSU Policy: Alternate Work Program

SRSU Policy ID: APM 5.28

Policy Reviewed by: Executive Cabinet

Approval Authority: Vice President for Finance and Operations

Approval Date: October 14, 2025

Next Review Date: October 14, 2030

I. Scope

This policy applies to all Sul Ross State University campuses and other locations where individuals are employed by the university. It applies to all full-time and part-time eligible employees of the university. This policy does not apply to student employment positions.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to allow employees to work at alternate work locations or receive flexible work schedules for all or part of their workweek in accordance with the provisions of Texas Government Code [§ 658.010](#) and [§ 659.018 and SB2615](#). Remote work and flexible work schedules may improve work performance, administrative efficiency and effectiveness, reduce vehicle congestion and related costs, and improve the recruitment and retention of highly qualified individuals by enhancing work options and work/life balance.

III. Definitions

Alternative Work Program refers to remote work, telecommuting work, or flexible work schedules.

Alternate work locations – Approved places where employees conduct official university business outside of their central workplace locations.

Central workplace – The primary location where the employee conducts university business. Most commonly on Sul Ross State University campuses or property.

Flexible Work Schedules – Approved work schedule outside of the regular 8:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday – Friday business hours, primarily for full or part-time administrative staff.

Remote working – An occasional or short-term arrangement whereby the university and the employee enter into a formal agreement to perform job duties in an alternate work location.

Telecommuting – A long term assignment for an employee to perform duties at an alternate work location the terms of which are defined in writing in a formal agreement between the employee and university.

IV. Policy

To participate in these programs, a faculty or staff employee must, in the judgment of the employee's supervisor, Dean and their Vice President be capable of performing all of their duties and responsibilities remotely. Further, the employee must hold a position that does not require the employee's physical presence or in-person interaction with students, the administration, or other employees, and may be performed from a remote location with appropriate physical and information security controls as described in the University Policies. No university faculty or staff employee is entitled to or guaranteed the opportunity to participate in this program.

Decisions on whether an employee may participate in the program is made on a case-by-case basis and must be based on the best interests of the University. Supervisors will be responsible for evaluating the arrangement and recommending continuation of the agreement after the initial agreed upon timeframe expires.

Employees who are approved for the Alternative Work Program must sign an Alternative Work Program Agreement with the university consistent with this policy.

All Alternative Work Program participants will be required to perform essentially the same work as would be performed at the central workplace and be held to the same performance evaluation standards and other agreed upon terms.

An employee's classification, compensation, and benefits will not change unless otherwise noted as a negotiated term at the onset of the formal agreement.

The university may establish flexible work schedules, remote work or telecommuting as a condition of employment, based on the university's needs. In such cases, the conditions will be included when the position as advertised and in correspondence offering employment.

A. Eligible Positions and Employees

Supervisors will determine when employees or positions are eligible for the Alternative Work Program by considering a variety of factors:

- adequate supervision;
- equipment usage;
- the need for face-to-face interactions and teamwork with other employees;
- ability to access necessary information or documents located at the central workplace;
- the alternate work location is in the State of Texas;
- the position allows independent work with minimal need for support and little

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need for in-person interactions; and,

- performance can be measured through quantitative and qualitative results- oriented standards and not time spent on the job.

Generally, before an employee is eligible for the program, the following conditions must be met for conditional approval:

- The employee must be in the position for twelve months, if the position did not originate as part of the Alternative Work Program as a condition of employment;
- not have any disciplinary actions on file for the current or immediately preceding review period;
- demonstrated ability to work productively on his/her own with self-motivation and flexibility; and
- received a superior or greater rating in the previous assessment cycle.

B. General Conditions and Expectations

1. **Compliance with University policies.** Employees are expected to comply with University policies, Texas State University System Rules and Regulations, and State and Federal Laws. Any violation may result in termination of the Alternative Work Program and/or disciplinary action, up to and include termination.
2. **Work hours.** Regular work hours for the State of Texas includes forty (40) hour work weeks regardless of work location. The university expects the same level of productivity from Alternative Work Program employees. Hourly employees (non-exempt) will be required to record all hours worked in accordance with university policy. Overtime must be approved in writing in advance of hours worked.

The Alternative Work Program is not intended to serve as substitute for child or adult care. If children or adults are in need of supervision, the university expects the remote work or telecommuting employee to provide additional support for the needed care.

Supervisors will at times and when appropriate require Alternative Work Program employees to report to the central workplace for meetings, events, or training. Supervisors may also request to meet at the alternate work location as needed to discuss work progress or other work-related issues.

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3. **Use of Leave.** Employees cannot use telecommuting in place of sick, vacation, Workers' Compensation, or other types of leave. However, the university may determine whether it is appropriate to offer Alternative Work Program as an opportunity to return to full or partial hours based on the university's return-to-work policies following an injury or illness.

Employees are required to submit leave requests for time off as a normal business procedure and subject to the Employee Leave Policy (APM 5.04).

4. **Liability.** The University assumes no responsibility for injuries occurring in the employee's alternate work location outside the agreed upon work hours or for injuries that occur during working hours but do not arise out of and in the course of employment. The University also does not assume responsibility for damages to the employees real or personal property resulting from participation in the remote work program.

Workers' compensation coverage is limited to the designated work areas in the employees' alternate work location. Employees approved for Alternative Work Program agree to practice safe work habits and maintain safe conditions in their alternate work locations. Employees must follow normal procedures for reporting illness or injury.

5. **Equipment and Materials.** The university provides equipment, technology, and materials at the central workplace location, however the university will not generally duplicate resources at the approved alternate work location. Alternative Work Program employees may use university-owned equipment and hardware for legitimate university business purposes only. Only university provided computer equipment is permitted to connect to the university network for Virtual Private Network (VPN).

University employees are responsible for protecting university property from theft, damage, and unauthorized use. The university will maintain, service, and repair university equipment used in the normal course of employment. The university will require signature of employees checking out university property. Alternative Work Program employees are responsible for transporting and installing equipment at the approved alternate work location and for returning state-issued or owned equipment to the central workplace for repairs, service or updates.

The Alternative Work Program agreement permits employees to use their personal equipment to utilize cloud-based drives and the email system. If personal equipment is used, the university is not responsible for the cost, repair, or service of the employee's personal equipment unless approved by the supervisor.

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6. **Costs.** The university is under no obligation to pay for operating costs, home maintenance, or other costs incurred by the employee in the use of their homes or other alternate work locations.
7. **Employee Training.** The university will provide training for best practices related to working remotely and supervision of Alternative Work Program employees.

C. Alternative Work Program Agreement

Alternative Work Program must be documented as approved through the university Alternative Work Program Agreement (“Agreement”) form housed in the Human Resources Office. The Agreement must be approved by the employee’s supervisor, and University Vice President. The Agreement is accessible at <https://www.sulross.edu/finance-operations/human-resources/>

Agreements will be in place for no more than six months. Renewal is not guaranteed and will be evaluated by the supervisor, and division head.

Procedures for Requesting Alternative Work Program

An Alternative Work Program Agreement must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee’s supervisor. Requests must be approved through the employee’s administrative reporting line up to the appropriate Vice President.

The agreement should address all aspects of the remote working or telecommuting arrangement, including but not limited to the following:

- the duration of the agreement;
- the work schedule and how it may be changed;
- leave request procedures;
- the plan for routine communication between the employee, supervisor, co-workers, and customers;
- the employee’s performance goals and expectations;
- the equipment and supplies provided;
- applicable data and university resources security procedures;
- applicable safety requirements; and,

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- a requirement that employees permit their supervisor access to the alternate work location during normal work hours as defined by the agreement.

Modification or Termination of Agreement.

The supervisor, in consultation with Human Resources, may modify or terminate the Agreement early for performance concerns, or to address changing department or operational needs. The employee may also terminate the agreement at any time, unless it is a condition of employment. Any termination of the agreement requires two weeks advance notice except termination arising from performance issues which may occur immediately.