I. POLICY

A. Lamar University (LU) permits employees to work by telecommuting when, at the sole discretion of the University, this work arrangement will increase employee productivity that supports continued and effective University operations.

B. Telecommuting is an administrative option, not an employee right or benefit. Approval to telecommute does not change an employee's obligation to observe all applicable University rules, policies, and procedures. The terms and conditions of employment, including job duties, salary, benefits, vacation, leave, overtime, and other aspects of the position, remain the same as if the employee worked at the regularly assigned place of employment on the LU campus.

C. Telecommuting is regarded as a temporary work arrangement, is subject to review, and can be revoked at any time.

II. AUTHORITY TO APPROVE TELECOMMUTING

A. In non-emergency situations, the right to authorize an employee to telecommute is limited to Vice Presidents and the University President. Requests to telecommute are submitted to an employee’s Vice President, who decides to accept or reject the request. The request and Vice President’s decision are then reviewed by the President, with the President deciding to support or reject the Vice President’s decision.

B. Vice Presidents cannot authorize telecommuting for themselves but must submit their requests to the President, who will make the final decision.

C. If the President is not available, the President’s Designee may review and decide on telecommuting requests. If a Vice President is not available, the Vice President’s Designee may review and decide on telecommuting requests within that division.

III. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

A. This policy documents the policies and procedures under which employee telecommuting may take place at Lamar University in non-emergency situations. Telecommuting in emergency situations is covered in MAPP 02.04.12.
B. This policy falls under the authority of the Texas Government Code, § 658.010 and § 659.018, and the Texas State University System (TSUS) Rules and Regulations, Chapter V.

C. This policy applies to benefits-eligible staff employees of Lamar University. The policy does not apply to faculty positions or positions that require student status as a condition of employment.

D. Telecommuting at LU is not meant to benefit an individual employee but is a work arrangement that, first and foremost, should benefit the University and its operations. Employees in need of flexible work arrangements should consult with Human Resources (HR) to determine which LU programs may support employment flexibility.

E. Not all Lamar staff positions can accommodate telecommuting. Positions that require an employee's physical presence on campus cannot be changed to telecommuting. Employees in need of flexible work arrangements should consult with Human Resources to determine which LU programs may support employment flexibility.

IV. DEFINITIONS

A. Campus. All buildings and facilities under the control of the University, regardless of whether these are located on the main University campus or elsewhere.

B. Designee. An LU employee designated beforehand to perform the duties of his/her supervisor when that supervisor is not available (e.g., President's Designee, Vice President's Designee). In these situations, the Designee has the authority to make decisions on the supervisor’s behalf. These decisions may cover all operations normally under that supervisor or may be restricted to a defined subset of the supervisor’s duties.

C. Division. At Lamar, an organizational unit whose head reports directly to the President. A division has oversight for several related sub-units or, if there are no sub-units, performs a function deemed critical enough to have direct contact with the President.

D. Vice President. An LU administrator who leads a University division and reports directly to the President.

E. Regularly Assigned Place of Employment. Location on the University campus, including off-site University facilities, where an employee usually and customarily reports for work. The regularly assigned place of employment is considered an employee's workstation for all pay, leave, and travel purposes.

F. Telecommuting. Also known as Remote Work or Telework. To work one or more days per week at a location other than an employee’s regularly assigned place of employment under an agreement approved pursuant to this policy.

V. TELECOMMUTING: ACCEPTABLE CIRCUMSTANCES

A. The University considers telecommuting an alternate arrangement to an employee’s primary work location on campus. Requests to telecommute are decided on a case-by-case basis.
Telecommuting arrangements are not permanent, are subject to review, and can be revoked at any time.

B. An employee may be allowed to telecommute in circumstances that include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Situations in which telecommuting is determined to be more suitable for fulfilling the position’s requirements. These circumstances include hiring non-local candidates who have skills critical to Lamar, who cannot relocate to the Lamar area, and for whom an equivalent local candidate cannot be found after an LU employment search. These circumstances may also include retaining current employees who have skills critical to Lamar, who are leaving the Lamar area, and for whom an equivalent local candidate cannot be found. In these and other cases, telecommuting may be authorized as an employee’s work location. Approval to telecommute is granted, in writing, by the candidate or employee’s Vice President and the President (or their Designees) at the time of hire or after an employee has started work at LU. *The deciding factor in these cases is the benefit of telecommuting to the University and not to the employee.*

2. Situations in which a Vice President determines that permitting an employee to telecommute will increase this employee’s productivity in ways that support continued and effective University operations. In these cases, telecommuting may be authorized as an employee’s work location. The President will make the final decision in these situations. Telecommuting should not infringe on the employee’s ability to meet the requirements of the job, and the staff member should be in good standing as an LU employee. Approval to telecommute is granted, in writing, by the employee’s Vice President and the President, or their Designees. *The deciding factor in these cases is the benefit of telecommuting to the University and not to the employee.*

*Note.* This policy (MAPP 02.04.13) does not apply to employees covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, for whom telecommuting or another arrangement may be an approved ADA accommodation.

VI. PROCEDURES

*Note.* An employee, supervisor, or Vice President is encouraged to consult with LU’s Human Resources Office when requesting to telecommute or reviewing a request to telecommute.

A. SUBMITTING REQUESTS TO TELECOMMUTE

1. A request to telecommute may come from several sources: an employee, employee’s supervisor, or Vice President. Employees can request telecommuting for themselves, or their supervisor or Vice President may nominate them for this work option if the supervisor or Vice President believes telecommuting would best support the University’s operations.
2. The request must be in writing and submitted, in proper order, through administrative channels: Employee → Supervisor(s) → Vice President → President.

3. An employee’s supervisor makes a written recommendation (not a decision) on the telecommuting request and forwards the request and recommendation to the Vice President.

B. REVIEWING TELECOMMUTING REQUESTS

1. Once a supervisor submits an employee request and his/her recommendation, the Vice President or Designee reviews the request.

2. When reviewing a request to work remotely, the Vice President or Designee considers factors that include, but are not limited to, the following:

   • The job position should be suited to telecommuting. Suitable positions have duties that can be performed remotely without reducing productivity or work quality. These positions should not require an employee’s physical presence on campus and should have minimal or flexible need for specialized materials, equipment, or supervision available only on campus.

   • The remote arrangement’s benefit to the University. To be approved, a request to telecommute should increase an employee’s productivity so that the University’s operations are enhanced.

   • The employee should have a demonstrated ability to manage time well and work independently with minimal supervision. The employee should have received satisfactory or higher performance reviews or job recommendations.

   • The remote worksite should be safe, free from interruptions, and equipped with technology that makes it possible to complete the job at a distance. The worksite should provide the security, including technical/online security, necessary to protect any University equipment, resources, data, and information at the remote location.

   Note. Before being allowed to telecommute, an employee must meet with Lamar’s Division for Information Technology (IT) to review the University’s requirements for robust technical/online security. The employee must verify, in writing, that his/her remote workstation meets these requirements.

3. Once the review is complete, the Vice President or Designee approves or rejects, in writing, the request to telecommute and then forwards the request and decision to the President.

4. The President or Designee reviews the request to telecommute and Vice President’s decision and decides to support or reject the decision. The outcome is then communicated, in writing, to the employee, supervisor, and Vice President.
5. If remote work is approved, the Vice President’s office prepares a letter detailing the arrangement (duration of time, work days and hours, location of remote worksite, etc.). The letter is signed by the employee and Vice President or Designee. An original, signed copy of the letter is kept in HR’s files, with a copy kept in the Division’s files.

C. WORKING REMOTELY

1. Employees approved to telecommute are expected to work the same schedule (days, hours, etc.) as they would if they were on campus, unless there is a compelling reason to adjust their schedule (e.g., different time zones).

2. Telecommuting employees are required to submit the same work hour, sick leave, vacation, and other reports as their on-campus peers.

3. Remote employees must obtain their supervisor’s approval before taking leave.

4. Under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), non-exempt employees will be compensated for overtime approved in advance by the supervisor, in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

5. During their scheduled work time, remote employees must be available by phone, email, and other means of communication commonly used in Lamar offices.

6. All employees, including remote employees, are required to have an annual performance evaluation. Remote employees are held to the same standards as their on-campus peers.

7. The University is not required to provide a fully equipped remote workstation for the employee. However, the University may allow the employee to use University equipment at the remote location. University equipment at the remote site is subject to all policies related to the use of state-owned property. Inventory should reflect that the equipment is being used off-campus by permission of the Vice President or Designee.

8. A telecommuting employee is required to check in regularly with Lamar IT to determine whether the remote workstation still meets the University’s technical/online security requirements.

9. The University is not responsible for operating costs, building maintenance, or other incidental costs (e.g., utilities, telephone, insurance) associated with the use of the off-campus work location, unless specifically provided for in advance in the written authorization to work remotely.

10. The University assumes no liability for injuries at remote worksites to any person who would not be in the work area if the duties were being performed at the regular place of employment.
11. Injured remote employees must notify their supervisors immediately and complete all requested documents regarding the injury, including workers' compensation documentation, if applicable.

12. The University is not liable for damages that result from telecommuting to employee-owned equipment or other property.

D. ENDING A TELECOMMUTING ARRANGEMENT

1. A remote employee can end a telecommuting arrangement. The employee terminates the arrangement, in writing, in a document sent to his/her immediate supervisor. The supervisor forwards the document to the Vice President. This document is kept on file in HR and the Division.

2. The President, Vice President, or their Designees can end an employee’s telecommuting arrangement. The President, Vice President, or Designee terminates the arrangement, in writing, in a document sent to the employee and immediate supervisor. This document is kept on file in HR and the Division.

3. When a telecommuting arrangement ends, an employee has 10 business days to return all University equipment used at the remote site, unless arrangements with the Vice President or Designee have been made, in writing, that the employee can continue using the equipment off site.

4. An employee who returns from telecommuting is provided with a workstation on campus. This workstation may not be the same space provided before telecommuting began.

VII. REFERENCES

Texas Government Code, § 658.010 and § 659.018

Texas State University System (TSUS) Rules and Regulations, Chapter V

VIII. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party:  Associate Vice President for Human Resources

Vice President for Finance and Operations

Review:  Every three years on or before May 1
IX. APPROVAL

_________________________________________
Vice President for Finance and Operations Date

_________________________________________
President Date

REVISION LOG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Initial version completed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>