

COVID-19 Special, Temporary Telework Requests Policy for Berea College Faculty and Staff

Berea College's response to the current national and state public health emergencies declared regarding the COVID-19 pandemic is designed to sustain the College's educational mission, outreach and supporting services while maintaining the health and safety of our faculty, staff and students. This policy supplements other College policies regarding workplace accommodations.

Under terms of the Faculty Manual, all faculty are expected to be on campus during the academic year, except for vacation periods and sabbatical leaves. Pursuant to the Employee Handbook, most staff members are expected to perform their work on campus, while others serve at various locations in the College's regional outreach and service programs. It is recognized that there are many advantages to the synergies created by faculty, students and staff working within the College's integrated environment of learning, labor and service.

During the state health emergency declared by the Commonwealth of Kentucky in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and under "Healthy at Work" guidelines issued by the governor, employers are encouraged to permit telework where this is feasible. "Telework" includes phone conferences, video conferences, and internet-based work solutions. For obvious reasons, not all work at Berea College can be performed remotely. This includes, without limitation, the teaching of certain classes, supervision of labor students, public-facing positions, employees working at the College Farm, Facilities Management, Forestry, Student Life, Public Safety, and certain auxiliary programs.

It is the policy of Berea College to support telework for its employees in accord with Kentucky's Healthy at Work guidelines insofar as this is feasible. This policy is a temporary measure and will be revisited by the College in accord with the general easing of workplace restrictions under the Healthy at Work guidelines and as conditions change. Requests tied to a health-related issues for the employee or the employee's household arising in relation to COVID-19 should be addressed under other College policies.

In general, it is the employee's responsibility to inform their supervisor of a request to telework. The employee is responsible to develop a plan for telework that satisfies all of the requirements of their work responsibilities (for faculty, this includes their teaching assignments and all other obligations of faculty under the Faculty Manual; for staff, this includes duties described in appointment letters, position descriptions and other responsibilities as assigned). In some cases, supervisors may inquire whether certain employees are willing and able to telework.

Telework requests are not granted as a matter of right; rather, the decision on whether a request is feasible will involve a collaborative process involving the employee, supervisor or responsible academic administrator(s), and the Dean of Faculty's office and/or Human Resources office, as appropriate. Unlike workplace accommodation provisions under other College policies, the guiding principles for these telework requests will be whether the employee's request and plan:

(i) fulfill the employee's employment obligations to the College and its stakeholders, and (ii) are consistent with the College's primary purpose as a residential learning community that integrates teaching/learning, labor and service.

For the 2020 Fall Term, additional telework requests should be submitted not later than July 10, 2020. Decisions regarding telework requests will be made as follows. For faculty, decisions will be made by the Dean of Faculty, with a right of appeal to the Provost. For staff, decisions will be made by the employee's supervisor, with a right of appeal to the head of the division (Provost, Dean of Faculty, or Vice President).

Telework arrangements may be reviewed at any time for effectiveness on request of either of the employee or supervisor. Subsequent adjustment or decisions on telework assignments can be made as provided in the preceding paragraph.

For questions or more information, please contact Steve Lawson.