



# **Managing Staff during the COVID-19: Pandemic Guidance for Managers**

**Updated: April 14, 2020**

# Outline of Guidance

- 12 Common and Critical Questions Answered
- NSU HR Business Partners
- General Telework Guidance
- Technology Guidance and Support
- Additional Resources for Managers



# Question #1: Why are we instituting telework?

- During the COVID-19 health crisis, many organizations across the U.S. are mandating social distancing and other health precautions
- Gov. Northam has issued an executive order to Stay at Home
- To encourage social distancing, NSU implemented an interim telecommuting/alternative work policy and sign-off form (effective March 20, 2020) Click [here](#) to access the policy.
- The general guidance is that no more than 10 people should congregate in any area, including workplaces
- NSU leadership has asked that managers move as all employees to a work-from-home arrangement unless employees have been designated as essential



## Question #2: Is NSU still open for business?

- NSU is officially open - Critical functions must take place, such as instruction and support service for students, staff, and faculty still on campus
- Business is not as usual because many employees are now performing functions at home
- Local, state or federal mandates may change our status at any point in time. Stay informed by accessing the [NSU COVID-19 page](#)
- Some departments may alter hours, stagger staff, or change usual operations and procedures depending on the function of the department



# Question #3: Is the campus safe?

- Measures have been implemented to ensure safety for those who must come on the campus
- Work-related travel has been eliminated and employees have been advised to self-quarantine for 14 days if they have traveled overseas
- Facilities personnel has enhanced cleaning and sanitization practices
- Guests/patrons have limited access to campus
- All employees can help!
  - Email or call departments to conduct business instead of going to the department.
  - Adhere to social distancing
  - Wash your hands frequently
  - Use alcohol-based sanitizer when washing is impossible
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve
  - Stay home if you're not feeling well



# Question #4: How long will the teleworking last?

- NSU leadership is monitoring local, state, and federal mandates/guidelines daily to ensure the university makes necessary changes to any plans
- All eligible employees should be teleworking if possible
- NSU will continue to follow all mandates and guidelines
- Teleworking is a limited and temporary arrangement to address this health crisis and does not imply a permanent work situation
- Please be patient and understanding with each other as we are all figuring out a new way to work and communicate





# Question #5: Do all employees need to sign the telework policy?

- Yes, we are asking that all employees read the [Interim Telecommuting and Alternative Work policy](#) and complete the form, have a manager sign it, and scan it and send it to [tdjeffery@nsu.edu](mailto:tdjeffery@nsu.edu) or the forms can be sent to the Office of Human Resources via interoffice mail – **NOTE:** Please do not bring the forms to the Office of Human Resources in person.
- The Telecommuting and Alternative Work policy is temporary and is only intended during the coronavirus pandemic – employees will be notified employees when it is safe to return to your campus office
- If anyone has a question about the policy, contact your area manager or VP, or call the Office of Human Resources at 757-823-8160.



# Question #6: I have hourly/wage and contract employees. Do they continue working with us?

- VPs, Directors, and managers should determine if hourly, wage and contract employees need to continue to work – the Office of Human Resources can cannot make these decisions but can advise
- Managers may ask wage/hourly/contract employees to do other work assignments and may ask employees to cover other areas or tasks
- All wage, hourly and contract employees must keep a log of every hour worked with a work description – It is best to monitor these logs weekly
- Hourly/wage/contract employees may be separated or furloughed if there is not reasonable work available. **Contact your area VP before separating/furloughing any of these employees**





# Question #7: What is the criteria for determining which wage/hourly/contract staff should be retained?

- Criteria for deciding includes (but not limited to):
  - Does the employee have specific work tasks that are essential to operations for the employee?
  - Is there a skillset the employee possesses that can be used in other areas or for projects?
  - Can the employee be supervised?
  - Does the employee have excellent performance and work ethic so that I can trust the employee to complete tasks at home?
  - Has the employee been consistently employed since January 6<sup>th</sup>?
  - Can the employee accurately and independently record tasks and hours?



## Question #8: How do I track hours and leave for non-exempt, full-time employees?

- Non-exempt employees (overtime eligible, classified employees) should continue to track and submit hours as usual, including overtime and leave
- If working remotely, non-exempt employees must track all work hours (onsite or offsite)
- All employees should still submit appropriate leave if not working (sick, taking time off, etc.) following the process outlined in the [email](#) from HR on March 30
- If an employee is sick or cannot work from home, there are state and federal provisions for making the pay of an employee pay whole due to the pandemic
- Managers can use email to approve and verify timesheets



# Question #9: How does my department remain open for business when my staff is at home working?

- A department can still be open for business without the physical presence of employees – Some departments may need to have one person go physically to the department on occasion to accept/collect paperwork, open mail, etc.
- Forward your phone to your home or cell phone (preferred). Answer the phone as you would if you were in the NSU office
- **Do not** change your email to **OUT OF OFFICE** unless you are sick or taking time off
- Place signs/instructions on your door to direct any visitors, and make drop-off folders for non-urgent paperwork or provide information on where to electronically send documents
- Staff must answer emails and phone during standard published office hours (i.e. 8 a.m. – 5 p.m)



# Question #10: Should I still apply disciplinary actions during this pandemic?

- Employees may be under stress, have anxiety, or need time to adjust to the changes, so be patient, compassionate and give everyone time and grace to get settled
- All managers should bring only critical, serious performance issues to Lisa Little (757) 823-8138
- Be clear about expectations, priorities, required documentation, and communication requirements, so that confusion and miscommunication is reduced
- Please refrain from contacting HR with issues that not are serious in nature, or are general work issues  
– Use your leadership skills to manage mild to moderate issues
- Do not distribute any formal discipline (Written Notice) or other written memos without contacting Lisa Little (757) 823-8138



# Question #11: Should I still post my job openings and hire new staff?

- There is a statewide budget freeze, which includes hiring (**effective April 3, 2020**)
- Agencies will have to go through a process to justify any new hires for the remainder of 2020
- Review all of your openings with your VP, and consider if any positions should be requested for an exception
- For candidates you've already interviewed, contact your HR Business Partner to discuss communication with these candidates
- Stay tuned to future NSU communications and Commonwealth guidelines, for updates on the freeze



# Question #12: How do I handle illnesses?

- If any employee has tested positive due to Coronavirus, is sick or impacted by Coronavirus, call your HR Business Partner to determine the best use of leave
- **Any** employee who has been in contact with someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 must quarantine for at least 14 days and call HR immediately
- Encourage all of your employees to stay healthy and follow all federal Center for Disease Control [CDC](#) and state guidelines at the Virginia Department of Health [VDH](#)
- If any essential employee on campus feels ill, believes they have cold/flu symptoms, fever, coughing, body aches, or other concerning symptoms **send the employee home - Do not question or ask employees to prove he/she is sick. Contact your HR Business Partner** (See the following slide for the HR Business Partner assigned to a respective department)



# HR BUSINESS PARTNERS

**Sarita Jordan**

**823-8160**

[smjordan@nsu.edu](mailto:smjordan@nsu.edu)

- Athletics
- Career Services
- College of Science, Eng., & Tech
- Counseling
- Enrollment Management
- Facilities Management
- Finance and Administration
- Military Services/Veterans Affairs
- School of Nursing
- Student Advocacy
- Student Center

**Tyesha Murray**

**823-8160**

[tmmurray@nsu.edu](mailto:tmmurray@nsu.edu)

- Academic Affairs/Provost
- Audit
- College Of Liberal Arts
- Dean of Students
- Housing and Residence Life
- Office of Information Technology
- School of Social Work
- Student Support Services
- Student Activities and Leadership
- University Counsel
- University Police

**Joann Jones**

**823-8160**

[jmjoness@nsu.edu](mailto:jmjoness@nsu.edu)

- Graduate Studies and Research
- Honors College
- Human Resources
- Marketing and Communications
- OASIS
- President's Office
- School of Business
- School of Education
- University Advancement





# General Telework Guidance: Who should telework?

- Effective April 2, 2020, eligible staff/administrators should telework, with the exception of essential staff
- If you your employees need to stay on campus or physically come in, discuss with your VP first and then HR
- Review the general guidelines in the Interim Telework Policy. [Click here](#)
- Employees who have tasks that can be performed at home and can use a computer should telework
- Ensure your employees have everything they need to move to a work-at-home set up
- Review priorities/workload – Remind employees of the departmental communication and check-in plan
- Make a plan for how to stay engaged and have meetings virtually



# General Telework Guidance: Essential Staff

- Essential personnel, such as police and residence services will stay on campus and receive direct assignments are given
- Hourly/wage and contract employees must be deemed essential to stay on campus. All hours and work must be logged by the employee
- All on campus essential employees must practice social distancing, wearing gloves, masks or other protective measures, and follow all other safe practices as outlined by the [CDC](#)



# General Telework Guidance: Communication with telework staff

- Give your team a sense of order, and accomplishment
- Have all employees check-in regularly by email, phone, or teleconference about questions, priorities, and check-ins
- *Do not over-manage or “monitor” employees.* Employees should be trusted to work as usual
- If an employee is struggling with working from home, call him/her to discuss the concerns, and create suggestions/solutions together
- Think of fun, team-building activities that can be done on Skype or phone, on the same day of the week to give everyone something to look forward to
- Assign new duties/priorities at least once a week and put in writing/email to avoid confusion
- Share tips and ideas daily on an email blast on how to stay motivated, focused and healthy



# Technology Guidance and Support

- Discuss technology plan before or shortly after the employee begins teleworking
- If an employee does not have an NSU computer to use at home, call OIT for guidance and protocols on using other technology
- See OIT's updated email on March 27, 2020. This gives guidance on how to get connected, connect phones, and other technology
- Use Skype to stay in touch with employees, and give a sense teamwork. Continue with regular team meetings, and keep communication going virtually. Everyone can practice using Skype!
- If there are any technical issues while your employees are teleworking, email the Help Desk at [clientservices@nsu.edu](mailto:clientservices@nsu.edu) or call (757) 823-8678
- Check email regularly for updates



# Additional Resources for Managers

Below are additional resources for managers to review:

- From Department of Human Resources Management: [DHRM Coronavirus](#)
- Norfolk State Updates: [NSU Coronavirus](#)
- Employee Assistance Program: [EAP Information](#)

This Guidance Document will be updated periodically.

