MICHIGAN TECH FUND
FLEXIBLE WORK OPTIONS GUIDELINES

Introduction
Goal 1 of Michigan Tech’s Strategic Plan is to attract, retain, and support a world-class and diverse faculty, staff, and student population.

Goal 1.1 – Provide an outstanding professional and cultural environment for all members of the Michigan Tech community, including the Michigan Tech Fund (Tech Fund).

Flexible work options (FWO) can provide a way to provide excellent customer service while managing people, time, space and workload in an effective and efficient manner. The Michigan Tech Fund recognizes the importance of flexibility and quality of life to staff and the value that employees provide to the organization.

Potential Benefits

- Increased employee initiative
- Increased productivity
- Increased loyalty and morale
- Increased employee satisfaction
- Expanded number of hours office is open to customers
- Continuous time for getting work done without impacting customer service
- Reduced absence and tardiness
- Reduced turnover
- Reduced overtime
- Decrease in workplace stress
- Better balance between work and personal responsibilities
- Greater commitment to the organization

FWO can be used to enhance job satisfaction and quality of life for Tech Fund employees. FWO enable staff and management to serve customers well, meet the Tech Fund’s goals and balance personal and professional responsibilities. The Tech Fund supports flexible work options when they meet the needs of both the organization and the individual. FWO are adjustments to an employee’s regular work schedule on a recurring basis. Flexible work options may be revised or revoked by management as needed.

Because of the Tech Fund’s diverse work environment, flexible work arrangements may not be available or successful in for some positions. A supervisor may choose to develop standards by which decisions regarding flexible work arrangements are made for his or her supervisees. The University’s Work Life Connections office is available to assist a department with creating specific flexible work standards.

NOTE: Flexible work options are meant to be adjustments to an employee’s regular work schedule on a recurring basis. FWO are not temporary changes in order to adjust for an unplanned, short-notice or sporadic event. If a temporary change is required in an employee’s schedule, it is not subject to these guidelines.

Use of these guidelines should be the result of open and ongoing discussions within each department and/or unit. The determination of whether a staff member will be allowed to participate in a flexible work option will be made on a case-by-case basis by an employee’s supervisor and in accordance with the needs, requirements, and constraints of both the Tech Fund and staff member. Final approval and arrangements for situations covered by these guidelines are at the discretion of management. (Note: The criteria for FWO in this document are general guidelines; supervisors may choose to uphold criteria that are more restrictive.) All FWO must conform to overtime, record keeping, and meal break provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and Michigan labor law for staff covered by those provisions.
Examples of some Flexible Work Options:

- An employee carpool with others from a long distance and the other employees must be at work at 7:00 am. The employee requests to work from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm.
- An employee lives quite a distance from the Tech Fund and would like to reduce the number of trips made to work each week. The employee requests to work from 6:45 am to 5:15 pm four days per week and takes ½ hour off for lunch.
- An employee is taking a class that meets once a week at a school that is two hours away. The employee requests to work nine hours per day for four days and one four-hour day.

Typical flexible work options are flextime (flexible start, stop, and lunch times), compressed work schedules (compressing standard work week hours into fewer days), flexplace (work away from the office, typically at home), and part-time (less than full-time work).

**Managing Flexible Work Options**

Supervisors are responsible for setting work schedules and assignments based on the needs and resources of the Tech Fund. Supervisors are encouraged to be as flexible as possible in accommodating flexible work options requests, but the decision to allow and/or adjust changes in work schedules is made by management. Supervisors are encouraged to allow flexible work options when possible and to apply work arrangements fairly and as equitably as possible.

**Definitions**

**Core time** – Staff are required to be present or accessible during a certain core period of hours each work day or during peak workload periods; they may also be required to be present during a particular day of the week.

**Flextime** – This arrangement allows a full-time exempt or non-exempt staff member to, with his or her supervisor, set the starting and ending times of the work day. A flextime arrangement may require that an employee work core hours identified by the Tech Fund. For non-exempt employees, this arrangement must include a bona fide meal period. Flextime arrangements do not reduce the number of hours or total effort worked in a given week by an employee.

Examples of flextime arrangements:

- Individualized start and quit times that remain constant each work day (7:30 am to 4:30 pm)
- Individualized start and quit times that vary daily; however, the same number of hours are worked every day (7:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 9:00 am to 6:00 pm Tuesday and Thursday)
- Individualized start and quit times with varied daily hours but consistency in the total number of hours worked every week
- Extended lunch times offset by additional hours at the beginning and end of the day (7:30 am to 5:00 pm with 1½ hours off for lunch daily)
- Mandatory core-time with individualized start and end times with varied daily hours but consistency in the total number of hours worked every week

**Compressed workweek** – This arrangement enables a full-time employee to complete 40 hours of work in fewer than five full days.

Examples of compressed workweek arrangements:

- Four 10-hour days per week
- Four 9-hour days and one 4-hour day per week

The Fair Labor Standards Act requires that non-exempt (hourly) employees receive time and a half for working more than 40 hours in a week.
**Flexplace/Telework** – This option allows for a portion of the job to be performed off-site, on a regular, recurring basis, usually at the worker’s home. Flexplace/Telework arrangements are most appropriate for work that has clearly defined tasks, measurable work activity, and does not require the individual’s presence in the workplace. Typically a Flexplace/Telework arrangement will specify the number of hours to be worked at home and the specific time in which this will occur. In cases where the Tech Fund agrees to support some or all of the costs of an off-site office, management and staff should discuss all applicable costs, including that of additional telephone lines, telephone use charges, and Internet Service Provider charges, as appropriate. Flexplace/Telework is usually reserved for exempt employees since non-exempt positions require careful tracking of time worked to ensure that overtime policies are properly observed.

Flexplace/Telework is not provided to an employee to allow for childcare or dependent care while working at home. In order for an employee with children to work at home, appropriate childcare or dependent care must be arranged so care does not distract from work duties.

Flexplace/Telework does not connote the professional or management practice of working at home after hours to work on reports or presentations or to catch up on reading.

Additional requirements for on-going Flexplace/Telework need to be completed prior to finalizing the arrangements. These include equipment arrangements, dedicated space, health and safety liability, and data security. Information can be found in the Flexplace/Telework Guidelines, Flexplace/Telework Tool Kit and Flexplace/Telework Agreement Form.

**Leave time use** – A staff member on a flextime or compressed workweek schedule will deduct the number of hours scheduled to work on the day(s) off for vacation and/or sick time. For example, 10 hours of vacation would be deducted if a staff member uses vacation on a day with 10 scheduled work hours. This applies to all paid leave time except for holidays as described below.

**Holiday pay** – Tech Fund holidays are based on an 8-hour day. Any regular employee will receive pro-rated pay based on regular hours worked during the pay period with the maximum being 8 hours of holiday pay. During weeks where paid holidays occur, the employee’s schedule may need to be adjusted so that holiday pay does not increase or decrease the total hours scheduled in the workweek or result in an overtime situation.

**Eligibility for participating in flexible work options**

Eligibility depends on an assessment by the department supervisor that the employee’s proposed work schedule will enable the employee to fully meet job responsibilities and performance expectations. FWO are to be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be reviewed on the basis of feasibility and assurance that the Tech Fund’s efficient and effective services will not be interrupted. It is important to understand that not every employee may be able to accommodate this type of scheduling. Typically an employee will not be granted flexibility unless his or her prior performance has demonstrated the skills and qualities necessary to succeed in the proposed flexible work arrangement. Employees eligible for FWO will need to have demonstrated satisfactory performance.

**Guidelines**

- FWO include flextime, compressed work week, part-time, and flexplace.
- FWO may include required core time days or hours during which an employee must be present.
- Working hours must be balanced to meet operating needs of the Tech Fund and, if possible, an employee’s own preference as to hours worked.
- The supervisor has responsibility to establish and adjust work schedules in order to accomplish objectives and requirements of the Tech Fund. Schedules should not cause a non-exempt employee to work overtime.
- The supervisor must pre-approve an FWO prior to implementation. The supervisor is responsible for verifying and overseeing performance of employees with FWO.
- FWO can be altered or terminated at any time according to the business needs of the Tech Fund.
- All flexible work options are subject to ongoing review and may be terminated at any time, given cause, or when business needs dictate.
• The approval of an FWO does not mean that any employee who later may fill that position would automatically be authorized to have the same arrangement.

Roles and Responsibilities

WorkLife Connections Office/Human Resources – monitors FWO campus-wide to ensure they are administered in a consistent and equitable manner throughout the University and the Tech Fund. Human Resources also ensures that flextime schedules conform to appropriate state and federal laws and University and Tech Fund policies, but does not approve or deny requests.

Tech Fund Management – ensures that FWO are administered in a consistent and equitable manner within the Tech Fund and that FWO conform to Tech Fund policy. Also ensures that staffing is available at all times to meet the operational requirements of the Tech Fund.

Supervisor – maximizes resources and utilizes staff talents and approval of FWO. Supervisors are also responsible for managing the work under the conditions of the arrangement.

Employee – plans and organizes his/her time to meet the job requirements as established by the supervisor.

The Tech Fund expects supervisors to make reasonable efforts to accommodate employee requests for FWO. If an employee requests an FWO, supervisors are urged to consider the options and examine the feasibility of implementing an FWO.

Reporting hours away from the office is the same for employees working under an FWO as for those working a standard schedule. Normal hours will no longer apply – they will vary depending upon the FWO agreement.

These guidelines are not intended to serve as policy, nor is this a legal document. The Tech Fund reserves the right to change, amend, or terminate any or all of these guidelines at any time for any reason.

The Tech Fund expects and requires no reduction in service, loss of customer service, or decrease in the quality of work or productivity due to implementation of FWO. It is the employee’s responsibility to make the flexible work arrangement a success. If an employee fails to comply with the requirements of the position, he or she will be returned to the standard work schedule and may be subject to disciplinary action. Supervisors may need to make adjustment to an employee’s flexible work schedule. The supervisor should provide the employee with reasonable notice of the change whenever possible.

Work hours, overtime, compensation, and vacation schedules will conform to applicable policies. Requests to work overtime, and to use sick leave, vacation time, or other leave, must be approved by the eligible staff member’s supervisor in the same manner as when working at the primary work site. Requests for changes in the work schedule should be approved by the eligible staff member’s supervisor.

The information contained in this document is based on policies and practices at the Tech Fund. If there is a conflict between the information presented here and the information contained in the Policies and Procedures Manual of the Tech Fund, the Tech Fund policies always govern and are the controlling legal documents.

Information in this document does not represent terms or conditions of employment, nor is the language intended to establish a contract between the Tech Fund and its staff members. All positions may qualify for a flexible work arrangement if the proper conditions exist, as described herein, and management approves the arrangement.

All Michigan Tech Fund flexible work options forms and guidelines have been adapted from the forms developed by Michigan Technological University, with thanks to Cleveland State University, George Washington University, Cornell University, Lehigh University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Kentucky, University of Arizona, and MIT whose WorkLife websites were especially helpful and are quoted in these forms and guidelines.