Michigan Tech Fund departments may choose to create internal flexible work options that are more restrictive than those maintained by the Tech Fund in general or the WorkLife Connections office at the University. Internal department options must be reviewed to ensure they meet all federal and state laws and Tech Fund policy.

**Employees**
- The required number of work hours will not change due to the use of a flexible work option.
- Employees are responsible for reporting time worked, leave used, and for complying with Tech Fund policies.
- Leave requests must be approved by the supervisor prior to use.
- Supervisors must pre-approve overtime.

**Staying in the loop**
- Keep in contact with co-workers on a regular basis.
- Be prepared to reschedule your flexplace day(s) if necessary. Meetings may not be able to be planned around your schedule.
- Attend meetings in person as often as possible. Arrange to participate via conference call if you can’t be there in person.
- Make sure that everyone knows how to contact you, especially if it’s an urgent request.
- Talk with your supervisor, in advance, about how contingencies will be handled.
- Face-to-face meetings should take place on Tech Fund property, not at the flexplace/telework site.
- Understand that flexplace/telework is not a substitute for dependent care. Appropriate arrangements must be made so that care does not interfere with the work to be done.
- Michigan Tech and the Tech Fund do not assume responsibility for injury to anyone other than the employee for injuries arising out of and in the course of performing official duties at the flexplace/telework site during the established work hours. The Tech Fund’s Human Resource Coordinator and the University’s Benefits Office must be notified immediately of any injury sustained at a flexplace/telework site.
- Employees who travel as part of their regular work are not considered to be using a flexible work option.
- Make sure that your off-site office area is appropriate for the work you need to do.
- Be aware of tax implications of using Tech Fund-owned equipment for personal use. Seek professional advice.
- Tax deductions (i.e., home office deductions) are not applicable if the flexplace arrangement is for the convenience of the employee. The employee should seek professional advice for any questions or concerns regarding tax issues.

**Supervisors**
- Use flexplace as a way to enhance performance, retention, work/life balance, and productivity.
- Make sure there is a clear understanding of expectations, both for the supervisor and the employee.
- Set clear performance and quality goals. Track progress and results on a regular basis.
- Provide regular constructive feedback. Address any concerns when they come up to ensure a smooth working relationship.
- Talk with the employee, in advance, about how contingencies will be handled.
• Make sure the employee understands that flexplace/telework is not a substitute for dependent care. Appropriate arrangements must be made so that care does not interfere with the work to be done.
• Have regular in-person meetings with the employee to stay connected.
• Review the flexplace/telework agreement on a regular basis.
• Consider the resources needed for a flexplace arrangement. What will the department pay for and what are the employee’s responsibilities?
• Make sure that the employee’s off-site office area is appropriate for the work to be done. (Flexplace/Telework Work Space Checklist available from the HR Coordinator)
• Make sure that others in the area have all relevant information (flexplace schedule, contact information, etc.).
• Keep an open mind when considering a flexplace/telework arrangement.
• If possible, pilot the arrangement to see if it can be successful.
• Make sure that appropriate arrangements have been made if the employee works with sensitive or confidential data to ensure security.
• In conjunction with the employee, set a flexplace schedule that balances the needs of the office with the needs of the employee. You may choose to have “core hours” that match some of the standard work day.
• Be prepared for the possibility that others in the office could be resistant or resentful toward the flexplace employees. Emphasize the work that is to be done and how it benefits the area.
• Consider whether or not flexplace could also be used for other employees to make the best use of resources.
• Be aware that different employees may need different levels of supervision. Work to develop appropriate levels of trust on both sides.
• If issues arise around the schedule, be prepared to adjust the agreement.
• Include flexplace employees in office events (birthday celebrations, holiday parties, etc.)
• Check in with others in the office and customers to see how the arrangement is working out. Be sensitive to the impact that a flexplace arrangement may have on those in the office.
• Provide opportunities for professional development.
• Include flexplace employees on committees and task forces as appropriate.
• Subject to supervisor approval, flexplace/telework may be used as an opportunity for partial or full return to work from short-term leave (if appropriate). Flexplace/telework is not intended to be used in place of leave taken for reasons of short-term disability, workers’ compensation, family and medical leave, and illness.

**Supplies and Furniture**

Authorization for any additional supplies and/or furniture must be approved by the supervisor prior to purchase. All purchases must be approved by the supervisor and the Tech Fund’s Director of Finance. The Tech Fund will provide standard office supplies as needed.

Unless otherwise specified in the Flexplace/Telework Agreement, the employee will be responsible for providing furniture at the flexplace/telework site. The Tech Fund is not responsible for loss, damage, or wear of the employee’s privately owned flexplace/telework equipment and furniture. Repair and/or replacement costs and liability for privately owned equipment and furniture used for flexplace/telework is the responsibility of the employee.

**Property and Equipment**

Home worksite equipment shall generally be provided by the employee. In the event that equipment is provided by the Tech Fund, such equipment shall be used by the employee exclusively for Tech Fund business.

Prior to physical transfer of property off-campus, the employee will gain approval from the supervisor and the Director of Finance.

The employee agrees to take reasonable steps to protect any Tech Fund property from theft, damage, or misuse. This includes maintaining data security and record confidentiality. The employee will comply with all copyrights and licensing agreements for all software owned by the Tech Fund or the University. Depending on the
circumstances, the employee may be responsible for any damage or loss of Tech Fund or University property based on the discretion of the Tech Fund.

The employee is responsible for maintenance and repair of these items unless other arrangements have been made in advance and in writing with the supervisor/manager’s approval. The Tech Fund assumes no responsibility for any damage to, depreciation of, or loss of the employee’s personal property that may be used at home (or another flexplace site) for Tech Fund business. The Tech Fund may pursue recovery from an employee for Tech Fund property that is deliberately or through negligence damaged or destroyed while in the employee’s care.

The employee will return Tech Fund equipment, records, and materials upon request and/or termination of the flexible work agreement. The employee may be responsible for any costs necessary to return, repair, or replace Tech Fund property. If the property is not returned upon request at the end of a flexplace/telework situation or upon termination, the employee (or former employee) is responsible for all costs to replace any unreturned equipment.

If the employee is unable to meet work obligations due to equipment issues, the employee will notify his or her supervisor and may be required to travel to the workplace to perform the job functions until the issues are resolved.

The employee agrees to report to his or her supervisor/manager instances of loss or damage to Tech Fund property, or known unauthorized use or access to Tech Fund or University systems or data.

**Data Security**

Employees may find the need to take Tech Fund or University confidential information off-site to flexplace in either paper or electronic form. In order to ensure the security and confidentiality of sensitive information, employees must take appropriate safeguards to protect the integrity of data and prevent unauthorized disclosure by not sharing passwords with others, implementing screensavers, etc. [How about requiring a locked storage space/drawer for securing hard copies?]

External computers that are used to administer Tech Fund or University resources or access sensitive information must be properly configured and secured. Employees are required to connect to the University’s network through the Virtual Private Network (VPN), have personal firewall software installed, and be running current virus protection software. Contact the Tech Fund’s computing support staff to ensure proper configuration and security.

When accessing sensitive data remotely, it is prohibited to store sensitive data (such as Social Security numbers, M numbers, student records, credit card numbers) onto local hard drives, floppy disks, or other external media (including laptops and smartphones). Employees should periodically save files to a server that is maintained by the University.


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.