



REMOTE WORK POLICY

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POLICY STATEMENT:

This policy is intended to provide guidance and good practice to enable employees to work from home effectively, professionally and safely. This policy will be reviewed as required and should be considered alongside the application of the College's other policies, existing legislation and provisions of the relevant collective agreements, as these will continue to apply in any remote work arrangement.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Conestoga College employees with jobs suitable for remote work. Remote work is position dependent as determined by the College. This policy is meant to ensure that consistent work practices are followed so that employees working remotely continue to provide a professional level of service to meet the operational needs of the department and the College.

DEFINITIONS:

Employee

All Conestoga College employees including Administrative, Academic and Support Staff.

Manager

An employee's direct supervisor.

Remote work

Work performed at an alternative location other than Conestoga College (i.e. work from home).

Professionalism

Commitment to treating others with respect, being timely and punctual, well organized, maintaining a professional appearance, maintaining and developing skills required to perform the job, being solutions oriented and effectively performing and completing one's duties.

Device/Equipment

Any technology required to fulfil assigned duties. Examples of a device/equipment would include (but not limited to) laptop, desktop, monitor, keyboard, mouse, headset, webcam.

SECTION 1 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EMPLOYEE:

- Abides by all terms and conditions of their employment while working remotely, including relevant collective agreements, College policies, and all other legal and regulatory requirements.
- Maintains a normal work load and works in accordance with the established and approved work hours that align with the standard business hours of the College and do not deviate from the total number of daily or weekly workhours.
- Records and reports all deviations from the established work arrangement to the Manager.
- Maintains regular contact with the manager and the team by attending meetings, regular check-points and other required activities to ensure participation and collaboration in the workplace.
- Maintains a safe and healthy workplace while working remotely, and reports any concerns to their Manager.

MANAGER:

- Engages in discussions and make recommendations to Human Resources about the positions in their areas that are appropriate for remote work.
- Ensures the employee has the sufficient knowledge, skills, resources and supports to work remotely.
- Ensures that employees are able to maintain the expected quantity and quality of work while working remotely and that the quality of service provided by the department is not negatively impacted.
- Attends mandatory training and professional development as required in order to effectively perform remote management functions.
- Establishes and communicates a process for reporting sick time and time away from work.
- Evaluates the remote work arrangement through regular check-ins with employees and maintains regular contact to ensure participation and collaboration in the workplace. Evaluation criteria may include the following items:
 - Ability to meet agreed-upon deadlines
 - Overall and/or employee productivity
 - Progress of individual or team assignments
 - Availability to receive and return calls, emails, etc.
 - Impacts on the employee at home as well as other staff in the office or working remotely

- Customer service delivery
- The ability to attend meetings, even on a short notice
- Other indicators as determined by the Manager in consultation with the employee
- Responds to and addresses employee concerns regarding health and safety issues in the remote workplace.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- Approves all positions considered appropriate for remote work.
- Reviews and ensures equity in opportunities or in decisions made around remote work.
- Reviews and responds to employee concerns regarding health, safety and ergonomic issues.

SECTION 2 – EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY WHILE WORKING REMOTELY

Conestoga College is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for its employees. While working remotely, employees and the College are jointly responsible for ensuring that their remote worksite is safe, ergonomically sound, and provides the same level of security as the on-site work location.

All workplace parties have the duty to take every reasonable precaution to promote a healthy and safe work environment which includes regularly reviewing health and safety policies and best practices. In addition, all employees working remotely should take steps to ensure that their physical and mental wellbeing is maintained.

The following resources are available to all employees:

Conestoga College Health and Safety Policies and Procedures	Health and Safety Policies located in the “Safety Policies and Procedures” folder	https://myconestoga.ca/group/occupational-safety
Occupational Safety at Conestoga	Incident reporting and contact information for the Occupational Safety Team	https://www.conestogac.on.ca/occupational-safety/index

Ergonomics Information	General information related to ergonomics and prevention of injuries Video prepared by Occupational Safety demonstrating proper ergonomic set up	https://myconestoga.ca/group/occupational-safety/ergonomics https://stuconestogacon-my.sharepoint.com/personal/geller_conestogac_on_ca/Documents/Microsoft%20Teams%20Chat%20Files/Work%20Ergo%20Video%20(May%2011).mp4
Employee Wellness	Employee Assistance Program provider Homewood provides online resources and telephone counselling	https://homeweb.ca/ 1-800-663-1142
Employee Development	Professional and Personal Development	https://www.conestogac.on.ca/professional-development/index

Campus Access: during the period of time associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, or any other time while access to campus is restricted the following will apply:

Anyone seeking essential access to any Conestoga College buildings requires advance approval from Safety & Security. This provision applies to all employees, visitors, contractors and students.

A “Request to Access” form must be filled out and sent for approval to the Director of Security at accessrequest@conestogac.on.ca. Individual requests may take up to 48 hours to process.

The form is available on myConestoga in the Form Quick Links section: <https://myconestoga.ca/group/landing-employee> .

Employees working on campus will be required to read the Pandemic Working Policy: https://myconestoga.ca/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=2241db83-ff88-4cc0-b08c-63ab66044761&groupId=380341

SECTION 3 – ACCOUNTABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY WHILE WORKING REMOTELY

Working remotely should not affect an employee’s ability to complete day-to-day functions, including communicating with colleagues, management, students and others as required.

Communication

Employees must stay updated on department and work events and be reasonably accessible by online/video communication platforms (such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams), phone, or email during working hours. Communication must be maintained to the same standards as are normally maintained in the office.

Employees must keep their Manager informed on the progress of work assignments and reach out for support if needed. Workload and deliverables should be regularly reviewed.

Lunch and Breaks

Employees are expected to utilize the same lunch break as they do on-site. Employees are required to abide by rest/meal breaks and must accurately report work hours.

Hours of Work

Employees working remotely are expected to have established and approved work hours that align with the standard business hours of the College and do not deviate from the total number of daily or weekly work hours. Employees are expected to work remotely for the number of hours and during times as agreed upon with their Manager.

Academic employees are expected to adhere to the hours indicated on their SWF and/or contracted hours, according to their timetables.

Overtime

Overtime remains a pre-scheduled activity requiring both employee and Manager agreement.

SECTION 4 – ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

Employees must be reasonably accessible by phone or email during working hours. If they expect to be unavailable for a period of time, employees must inform their manager by email prior to such absence. Employees unable to work due to illness or those wishing to book vacation days, must inform their manager and update attendance through the usual process in the portal.

Personal Interruptions

If there are personal matters (medical appointments, family obligations) that occur during the work day, they should be reported to the manager with as much notice as possible. Where interruptions are significant, employees and managers should discuss options for the missed time.

Personal Illness

Employees unable to work due to illness should report absences following normal procedures.

Please review the Attendance Management and Accommodation and Return to Work procedures available on <https://myconestoga.ca/group/human-resources> in the “Policies Procedures Practices” folder.

SECTION 5 – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT

All Conestoga resources, whether accessed on-site, from a remote location, or by using personal and/or individual equipment, must comply with all College guidelines and policies.

Acceptable Use of Technology

Employees should review the IT Acceptable Use of Technology Policy, Practice and Procedure documents available online which define what is deemed to be acceptable and appropriate use of the Information Technology resources of the College: <https://it.conestogac.on.ca/Governance>.

All equipment and software provided to employees by the college is intended to be used primarily for Conestoga College related purposes. Any illegal and/or offensive use of Conestoga College computer equipment and software in contravention of the policy will not be tolerated and may be grounds for termination.

All such equipment including data and software on such equipment will remain the property of Conestoga College. The College reserves the right to enforce data governance and cyber integrity regulations.

All equipment provided must be used in accordance with instructions, safe methods, and systems of working and must be returned at the end of employment, or at the end of remote work arrangements.

When not using a Conestoga owned device or if employees require alternative arrangements to conduct work, employees should consult with their Managers to ensure policy and procedure compliance.

Home Office Setup

Full time employees who are required to work remotely for the majority of the time will be eligible for a College issued device to complete their work. Employees should direct any questions about extenuating circumstances to their Manager and/or to hrinfo@conestogac.on.ca.

Additional office furniture and other technology costs will generally be the responsibility of the employee. In certain circumstances, employees may be able to borrow items from the College for a predetermined period of time. These items remain the property of the College and arrangements will need to be made for their return.

Employees approved to access equipment from campus must use the Furniture and Equipment Request Form available on MyConestoga in the “Form Quick links” section: <https://myconestoga.ca/group/landing-employee>.

Employees are responsible for arranging, paying for and ensuring the stability of a high-speed internet connection to their homes. Employees who are unable to obtain reliable internet service should speak with their managers. Employees are also responsible for ensuring adequate home insurance to cover the home office work space.

The College will not provide reimbursements for general office supplies used by employees working remotely. Employees requiring college-issued supplies to perform their duties remotely must have these purchases pre-approved and follow their department's regular purchasing procedures.

Employees should direct any questions about extenuating circumstances to their Manager and/or to hrinfo@conestogac.on.ca. All inquiries about accommodations should be directed to hrinfo@conestogac.on.ca.

Special Considerations during the Pandemic

In normal times, Conestoga College employees do not qualify to claim employment expenses because the College provides the workspace, necessary equipment and supplies to perform their duties. However, expenses incurred by employees during the 2020 "stay home" directive may be eligible when filing a tax return for the 2020 calendar year required by April 30, 2021.

While the CRA has not announced any special tax provisions due to the pandemic, we expect that this will be addressed by the Canadian government in the coming months leading up to the end of the 2020 calendar year.

In the meantime, Conestoga College employees should retain receipts for all purchases necessary to perform their duties remotely. They should also note the square footage of the office area used and the total square footage of their residence, keeping track of home costs such as heating, hydro and water. These will be required if the tax rules allow employees to claim expenses incurred during the 2020 pandemic "stay home" directive.

Technology Support

Employees with specific technology related needs or who encounter technology related problems can contact the IT Service Desk for assistance: ITSDesk@conestogac.on.ca or 519-748-5220 x3444.

SECTION 6 – CONFIDENTIALITY OF COLLEGE INFORMATION

All materials used by employees in their work for Conestoga College should be treated as proprietary and confidential. Accordingly, these materials must be kept in a secure work area and must not be accessible to others. Unauthorized individuals are not to be permitted access to any files, equipment or documents.

Employees should take the necessary steps to ensure that all Conestoga College electronic and physical data is properly secured, locked and protected and not accessible to others whether

employees are physically in or out of the remote work location.

Employees should refrain from working in public places such as coffee shops, using public wireless access connections and leaving passwords/unlocked computers readily visible. Employees should also refrain from working in communal open areas shared by other individuals that are not entitled to access information related to the College and areas where confidentiality cannot be maintained. A separate, enclosed working area should be used to accommodate private conversations with colleagues, students, and others.

While working remotely, employees are expected to comply with all relevant College policies including those related to privacy and confidentiality, while safeguarding personal and College information.

TRAINING AND POLICY COMMUNICATION

All employees will be made aware of the Policy and have access to it on myConestoga.

Human Resources will ensure general communication regarding updates to the Policy, when necessary, and will continue to promote the benefits of the Policy and work collaboratively to ensure a successful implementation.

REFERENCES:

Attendance Management Procedure
Accommodation and Return to Work Procedure
Acceptable Use of Technology Policy

REVISION LOG:

Revision Date	Summary of Changes
June 1 2020	Policy drafted
August 27 2020	Academic Forum