MICA Provisional Telework Policy
Pilot Year: FY22 / AY21-22

Section 1: Narrative & Rationale

A Culture of Creativity and Innovation

Creativity and innovation are at the core of MICA's mission and vision and serve to guide and align the College's institutional priorities. From our approach to teaching and learning to our business processes, MICA strives to foster a culture of intellectual curiosity and innovation—for our students and our employees—that challenges the status quo and seeks better ways of doing things.

It is this same creative spirit that continues to drive us forward as an institution, using the disruption of the pandemic to reassess existing practices and integrate the lessons and innovations from last year to reimagine the way we work, teach, and learn as a community.

As MICA reopens in an expanded Operational Mode 4 on August 1, we welcome students and employees back to campus as a transforming institution, with new perspectives, understanding, and approaches to our employees and our work. We understand that reopening will pose many challenges for those returning to the campus. Managers and employees may continue to use flextime or flex-scheduling arrangements on an as-needed basis to help employees integrate work and life obligations day-to-day. Flex-time is currently available and managed on an ad hoc basis. *The development and formalization of an Institutional telework policy is an important and foundational next step in this institutional metamorphosis.*

A Culture of Community and Gathering

As we work to define this Policy, however, it is critical to acknowledge that MICA is, in its present state, a primarily residential College: an institution of higher education that prioritizes in-person community and the learning that takes place in the context of social gathering and the shared work and experience that physical co-presence affords. There are many MICA employees—both faculty and staff—whose presence on campus is essential to supporting this core, in-person and residential experience. *MICA's telework policy must therefore be aligned with this foundational priority.*

During the pandemic, the College's successful pivot to remote teaching, learning, and remote operations demonstrated that defined alternative work modalities can support students, employees, and the College. This experience also broadened our imagination of the nature of work and future possibilities in educational delivery. As we innovate and seek to maintain our identity as a residential college, we will need to strike a careful balance between flexibility and

our service needs in order to achieve MICA's short and long term strategic and operational goals. We anticipate multiple stages of adaptation as we continue to develop and refine this provisional Policy, and we welcome input from the MICA community as we work throughout AY21-22 to strike the right balance between MICA's priorities and those of its employees.

The Goals of MICA's Provisional Telework Policy
Because the post-pandemic new order is still emergent, MICA's *provisiona*l Telework Policy is being established as a pilot for AY21-22. The goal is to provide immediate flexibility, learn as we adapt, and harvest lessons to inform long-term strategic goals.

Specifically, this Policy aims to:

- Align operational practices with MICA's mission and vision

- Recruit and retain talent

- Recognize the unique situations of individual employees

- Develop a more diverse and global workforce

- Strengthen the College's operational agility and capacity for operational innovation

- Gain efficiencies in operations and resource allocation through better support of seasonal, cyclical, or project-based work

- Enhance MICA's competitive perception in the marketplace

- Promote better facility for and acceptance of technology within the work culture

- Enhance MICA's unique culture and residential community through more inclusive channels of participation, interaction, and congregation

Defining Telework at MICA
Due to the diverse array of positions and associated position responsibilities, *it is not possible to establish "one size fits all" remote and telework agreements for all employees*. Some positions may necessitate a fully in-person and on-campus engagement and some may be best structured as fully remote, while others' job responsibilities may be fulfilled in a hybrid manner, with some days in-person and on-campus and some days teleworking.

Section 2: Provisional Policy

Purpose:
This provisional Policy applies to all MICA employees, except certain categories as defined below, and serves as the definitive resource for determinations on remote work and telework at the College. *Supplemental policies or processes may be developed for specific purposes or areas but should not contradict the provisions of this Policy.* This Policy explains how the College and supervisors will approach decisions about remote work and telework and also provides guidance on responsibilities, limitations, and expectations of employees who are candidates for remote work or telework arrangements.

Definitions:

Telework: Telework allows an employee to work from both the MICA campus and from home or another off-site location for a pre-approved length of time or on a predetermined schedule on a consistent or occasional basis. The expectation is that the employee will report to a campus location with some regularity.

Positions eligible for telework: A position that has been identified as able to fulfill the duties of the position with off-site and on-site responsibilities and presence. Both the MICA campus and an off-site location are used for a pre-approved length of time or on a predetermined schedule on a consistent or occasional basis. These positions are expected to report to a campus location physically with some regularity. Eligibility for telework will be noted in the job description.

Remote work: Remote work allows an employee to work from anywhere with little or no expectation that the employee will report to a campus location, MICA has few remote work opportunities when in normal operational mode. Remote positions will be identified as such in the job description.

Remote employee: A MICA employee who is approved to work from anywhere with little or no expectation that the employee will report to a campus location with any regularity.

Applicability:

This provisional Policy does not apply to employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement. All terms and conditions of employment for union represented employees are determined in negotiations between the College and the union.

Additionally, the provisional Policy does not apply to student employees.

Determining Appropriate Telework Agreements for Areas:

Because of the diversity in on-campus staffing needs between departments, during the pilot phase of the provisional Telework Policy implementation, vice presidents (VPs) will define an overall approach for their areas, ensuring that the critical services, in-person presence, and telework adoption is designed to achieve the outcomes for which that area is accountable. VPs will collaborate with their departmental associate vice presidents (AVPs), directors, and other relevant leadership to develop a set of telework eligibility recommendations to be discussed and refined with departmental staff whose input is essential.

While remote work and telework may be appropriate for some employees and some positions, these alternative work arrangements are not considered a campus-wide benefit, and they do not change the terms and conditions of employment. Decisions to permit or require remote or teleworking arrangements must take into account the essential duties of the position, area priorities, and institutional obligations including the need to be present for any college-wide assignments or planning activities that cannot be accomplished remotely.

Positions Classified as Eligible for Remote or Telework

Remote and telework eligibility for staff positions will be determined in the classification process and noted in the position descriptions. The primary factor to be considered in making telework eligibility decisions at the position classification level is whether the duties may be performed remotely without negatively impacting service quality or operations. Other factors include the following:

- Does the job require the daily use of special equipment, facilities or other systems or tools that are not easily accessible or are not available at an offsite location?

- Does the job require face-to-face engagement with faculty, staff or students on a regular basis to provide daily services that cannot be provided virtually?

The VPs will make the remote work or telework classification decision after consultation with their managers, supervisors and People, Belonging & Culture (PB&C). It is important to note that the classification of a position as one eligible for telework is not a guarantee that the incumbent of that position will be approved for a remote or telework arrangement.

Employee Eligibility for Remote or Telework

Once the classification decision is made and the position is deemed eligible for telework, the VPs and PB&C, in consultation with the area manager and employee, may determine whether the individual employee is eligible for a telework arrangement. The primary factor to be considered in that case is the employee's ability to work independently, while meeting organizational and service goals. Circumstances that might limit an employee's ability to telework include, but are not limited to the following:

- New employee training or other performance development needs are better managed if the employee and the supervisor or trainer are physically co-located.

- The employee has demonstrated a higher level of productivity when working onsite rather than in an alternate work location.

Once defined, individual telework agreements between employees and their departmental AVPs, directors, or other relevant leadership will be formalized by a telework agreement. VPs and PB&C will conduct the final review and approval.

General Expectations and Conditions:

- Remote work and telework employees will be subject to the same policies as other employees and must comply with College rules, policies, practices and instructions and understand that violation of such may result in the discontinuation of the remote work/telecommuting arrangement and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- Employee performance, quality of work outcomes and department needs are factors in the successful continuation of telework arrangements. Telework arrangements may be discontinued by the VPs or AVPs/deans/director as employee performance and department needs are continually assessed.
- Telework employees are expected to work their normal work schedule unless they receive their supervisor's prior approval to adjust their schedule. Employees need to ensure assigned duties are completed and remain productive and responsive during their scheduled work hours.
- Telework is not intended as a solution for dependent care. It may provide the flexibility needed to manage work productivity and dependent care needs more efficiently. Any employee teleworking with dependents onsite must agree generally to have arranged dependent care during normal work hours. Flex-time arrangements remain as a potential tool for managing work and dependent care responsibilities for teleworking employees.
- Employees cannot use remote work or telework in place of sick leave, Family and Medical Leave, Workers' Compensation leave, or other types of leave. Workers' compensation coverage is limited to designated work areas in employees' homes or alternate work locations. Employees agree to practice the same safety habits they would use in the College and to maintain safe conditions in their Primary Work Location,

whether that is at home or an alternate work location. Employees must follow normal procedures for reporting illness or injury and any remote work-related injury will be investigated by MICA's workers compensation provider using the same protocols utilized for an on-campus work-related injury.

- The College is not responsible for operating costs of any personal equipment (including, but not limited to, personal computers, personal devices, cell phones, furniture), home maintenance of personal equipment. Employees are responsible for costs for reliable internet/Wi-Fi and other incidental costs associated with the use of an employee's remote work or telecommuting arrangement. Employees using MICA computing equipment are bound to Technology policies regarding damage and replacement costs.

- Employees are expected to maintain a presence with their department/division while teleworking. Presence may be maintained by using appropriate technology including but not limited to email, messaging applications, video conferencing, instant messaging, Google Apps, and/or chat/text messaging using computers and mobile phones. The employee is expected to maintain the same response times as if they were on campus and make themselves available to attend scheduled work meetings as required and/or requested.

- Employees need to have a working telephone or mobile phone at their Primary Work Location or any remote location, whether cell phone or land line.
  - Teleworking employees with a direct desk phone on campus should ensure that incoming calls to their office phone are forwarded to their Primary Work Location phone.

- Non-exempt employees must report all worked hours, including overtime, and take lunch breaks as required by law.

- Teleworking employees or remote workers with an established schedule of work must adhere to that schedule. Personal tasks and errands should only be performed during the employee's scheduled breaks.

- Remote work or telework arrangements that enhance the College's ability to meet its basic functions without compromising these larger goals will receive positive consideration. Proposed alternative work arrangements that either hinder or conflict with the College's priorities or obligations will be denied. Likewise, approved arrangements that no longer facilitate the College's mission or are inconsistent with the College's priorities may be revoked at the sole discretion of the College.

- The College may require remote work or telework if it determines that the alternative work arrangement is in the best interest of the College, permitting it to achieve goals that may not be achievable onsite or if the College is better served offsite or is able to use its resources more efficiently. Examples of circumstances that might lead the College to assign remote work, telework or on-campus presence include staffing for cyclical, project or seasonal work; or the need to accomplish work with limited space.

- Requests for telework or remote work arrangements due to a disability do not fall under the purview of this Policy. Employee disability accommodation requests are subject to an individual assessment in accordance with the College's regular practice for making such requests under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Employees with questions about

submitting disability accommodation requests should contact People, Belonging & Culture.
- Managers may permit occasional telework as is appropriate for employees in positions that are not regularly deemed appropriate for teleworking.

Employee Appeals

Remote work and telecommuting decisions will be made based on fair and equitable criteria established by each division in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of this policy and the College's policies prohibiting discrimination. Individual employees may appeal a teleworking decision in the manner described below.

Remote or Telework Classification Decisions

Any employee who disagrees with a department's decision that their position is ineligible for remote or telework, may petition their VP for reconsideration. The petition must include the reasons for the disagreement and an explanation of how the duties of the job may be performed remotely while meeting the department's service and organizational needs.

The VP's refusal to reconsider or denial of the petition may be appealed to the VP for PB&C. The VP for PB&C makes the final decision.

Denial of an Employee's Request to Telework

An employee who disagrees with a department/division's denial of a request to telework or work remotely or any other action relating to this Policy is encouraged to discuss the concern with their department director or AVP. An employee may appeal the department/division's decision to People, Belonging & Culture only if alleging that the decision violates the College's antidiscrimination policies.

Nothing in this appeals process is intended to restrict an employee's access to PB&C. Any employee with concerns or seeking advice about any term or condition of employment is encouraged to contact the PB&C services director or a member of that team.

Addenda: A and B, Guidance for supervisors and employees, respectively

Related documents and forms in development:
- A feedback form to facilitate community input regarding the policy
- Telework agreement template

July 1, 2021

ADDENDUM A: Guidelines for Supervisors

Note: These are general guidelines to be used by vice presidents in the development of area-specific parameters for the implementation of the provisional Telework Policy.

Determining Position Eligibility for Remote Work or Telework

Remote Work

- Identify positions that are conducive to working from a remote location with little or no expectation that the employee will report to a campus location. Positions that can be regularly performed remotely are those that:

  o Don't require a traditional office or clinical space to interact with internal or external customers.
  o Have access to required systems and software associated with the position responsibilities from a remote location.
  o Have remote access to files.
  o Have essential duties that can all be performed remotely.

- Remote work arrangements should be based on current job descriptions and should not result in changes to job descriptions or to the essential functions of any position. In addition, they should not be solely based on the employee's personal situation.

Telework

- Identify positions that contain at least some essential duties that can be performed remotely, with other duties requiring a presence on campus. Positions that can be performed in a hybrid mode (at onsite and offsite locations) are those that:

  o Don't always require a traditional office or clinical space to interact with internal or external customers.
  o Have access to required systems and software associated with the position responsibilities from a remote location.
  o Have remote access to files.

Determining an Employee's Eligibility for Remote or Telework

- Employees who are suitable for remote work typically exhibit the following traits customarily recognized in successful telecommuters:
  - Self-motivated
  - Technical skill set to work with telecommuting tools (or can be trained quickly)
  - Strong time management skills
  - Highly organized
  - Adaptability
  - Attention to detail
  - Trust
  - Focus
  - Collaborative attitude

- Employee should not be on a Performance Improvement Plan.
- Employee must have an adequate and safe home office setup, including:
  - Comfortable desk and chair
  - PC/laptop preferably less than 5 years old
  - High-speed internet access (recommended 5Mbps - cable modem or comparable service)
  - Microphone/speakers, phone, camera (optional)
  - If needed, printer, scanner, or fax
  - Method for safeguarding and protecting sensitive data
- Assess the operational and service needs of the office to determine minimum requirements for the employee to report to the campus for onsite work.

Operational considerations
- Establish expectations and ensure that you have the necessary resources to execute your responsibilities remotely.
- Establish how you will communicate with your team members (Email, Zoom, Teams, Google Hangout etc.).
- Consider having a daily call or virtual check-in (Virtual > Phone > Email for effective communication). Consider sharing cell phone #'s with the team.
- Ensure all team members have access to the systems/programs/tools typically required to do their job. Also, consider that the appropriate (additional) security and data privacy measures are in place while accessing/sending/receiving information, including paper copies of documents they may have at home.
- Managers/Supervisors should establish, and clearly communicate, the expectations of the work that needs to be accomplished.
- Create protocol for managing/approving hours. Set a communication process for discussing the need for time off or other issues that will require you to be unavailable. If you manage non-exempt employees – please be certain they punch out when they are taking their meal break.
- Set boundaries and expectations regarding response time.

- What are the expectations of response time to teammates, clients?
- What are the expectations for engaging and using technology? Active on Teams throughout the day?
- Create standards to email, document standards etc.
- Check in with your employees, ask how they are doing in their remote environment. Many people may be feeling isolated and fearful. If you have concerns about someone, refer them to HR.
- If your employee shares that they do not feel well, please refer them to their medical provider.
- Employees are responsible to ensure their remote workspace is safe and free from any safety hazards.
- If an employee gets sick while working remotely, they should make use of their leaves and follow their healthcare provider's recommendations.

Optimizing Remote teams
- Managing remote teams is similar in many ways to managing onsite staff. You still need to provide goals, resources, feedback and other essential support regardless of where you and your team are located. What is different is the need to plan out how you will deal with a few important logistical issues and stay informed about how work is progressing so you can monitor and support the productivity of your staff.
- Look for opportunities to collaborate and connect as a team, or in subgroups.
- Recognize employee contributions and listen to and share concerns and feedback.
- Work to build trust and treat your staff as professionals, be conscious not to micromanage.
- Leverage strengths of team members for different tasks, as appropriate.

Workers' Compensation:
- Workers' Compensation benefits will apply only to injuries sustained while working on a pre-approved remote work arrangement.
- Employees are responsible for notifying their supervisor/department chair of such injuries as soon as practical and an incident report must be completed immediately.
- The College is not responsible for injuries unrelated to such work activities that might occur in the defined off-site work location or elsewhere.
- The employee is responsible for any injuries sustained by visitors at their worksite.

ADDENDUM B: Guidelines for Employees

Pre-request

- Determine what arrangement would best meet your needs:
    - Where do you propose to work (home, alternate site)?
    - What schedule would you like (days and hours on campus, days and hours at the telecommuting site)?
    - Which of your duties do you propose to perform at the telecommuting site? Which do you propose to perform in the department?
    - If only a minor adjustment can be made to your work arrangements, what adjustment would be most valuable to you? (Examples: telecommute one day a week; be available to come in on short notice; suspend telecommuting during busiest times of the year.)

- Anticipate what problems this arrangement may cause for the organization and try to work out potential solutions. (Include the effect on your own assignment and how your role affects others, both within the unit and externally.)

- How will you communicate with your supervisor, co-workers, and clients?
    - How will materials be kept readily available to those who need access?
    - How will you be able to respond to emergencies or other unexpected events in your department?
    - How will you assure the security of college-owned materials and equipment?

- Can you provide a workplace that is as safe as your departmental work site, so as to minimize the likelihood of injury?

- Outline ways in which your proposed arrangement might benefit the organization.
    - Will service hours be extended?
    - Will you be more productive? In what ways, and how will this be measured?
    - Will your department be able to free up equipment and space?

- Come up with a plan that addresses your own concerns and, to the extent that you can, those you anticipate from your supervisor, co-workers, and clients.

- Request a meeting with your supervisor to explain what arrangements you would like and why. Discuss possibilities with your supervisor; actively listen and be prepared to revise your plan. (Flexibility goes both ways!)

- Suggest a trial period of X months.

- Develop a plan and timetable for monitoring the effectiveness of the arrangement.

Post request

- Maintain boundaries between work and home spaces (as much as possible).

- Try to create a comfortable, functional workspace that limits distractions (Use headphones!).

- Practice strict time-management – organize your day ahead of time, and block times to work on certain tasks.

- Set up a routine for eating and taking breaks (proper nutrition and hydration).

- Set a consistent routine for your day, (ex: to help match beginning and end times of a workday).

- Establish a daily habit to transition from work to home (change clothes, step outside, close computer).

- Schedule something socially stimulating to do after or before work.

- Be proactive with your manager and establish a standard method for updating your manager on progress.

- Look for opportunities to reach out to your peers. Do regular check in as you consider appropriate.