

POLICY 3.12 – Disconnecting from Work Policy

Policy Category:	Personnel – All
Subject:	Disconnecting from Work Policy
Approving Authority:	Board of Governors
Responsible Officer:	Associate Vice-President, Human Resources
Responsible Office:	Division of Human Resources
Related Procedures:	Disconnecting from Work Procedures
Related University Policies:	MAPP 1.4 – Policy on Emergency Response and Preparedness , MAPP 1.14 – Emergency Service Reduction or Closure , MAPP 3.8 – Employee Assistance Program , MAPP 3.1 – Health and Safety Policy , Adjunct Academic Appointments of Faculty , Conditions of Appointment for Physicians
Effective Date:	April 28, 2022
Supersedes:	(NEW)

A. PURPOSE

- 1.00 Western University (the "University") values the contributions of its employees. The University encourages and supports employees in prioritizing their mental and physical health, and professional and personal development, and is committed to providing an environment that promotes well-being.
- 2.00 The University recognizes that people benefit from uninterrupted breaks from work. Time away from performing or thinking about work is important for one's restoration and contributes to achieving a healthy and sustainable professional and personal life. The University has implemented this Disconnecting from Work Policy (the "Policy") to encourage employees to disconnect from work outside of their work hours.

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- 3.00 This Policy should be read alongside the University's associated policies, collective agreements, individual employment contracts, and any applicable and/or relevant legislation. Employees should also refer to the University's Procedures for the Policy when reviewing and/or consulting this Policy.
- 4.00 This Policy applies to all employees of the University.

B. DEFINITIONS

- 1.00 The following definitions shall apply to this Policy:
- 1.01 **Disconnecting from work:** To not engage in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work.
- 1.02 **Emergency:** An urgent and/or critical situation, temporary in nature, that threatens or causes harm to people, the environment or University property or disrupts critical operations.
- 1.03 **Employee:** Staff, faculty, clinical faculty, adjunct faculty, clinical adjunct faculty, managers and leaders, librarians and archivists, post-doctoral associates, graduate teaching assistants or any other individual who is an "employee" for the purposes of the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*.
- 1.04 **Work Hours:** The hours in which an employee performs their work as directed by their individual employment contract, policies, or collective agreement.

C. POLICY

- 1.00 **University Obligations**
- 1.01 The University will support and develop programs and resources to enhance employees' well-being and promote their ability to disconnect from work.
- 1.02 The University will take steps to ensure that all employees are:
- a) Informed of the circumstances in which they will be expected to engage in work-related communications outside their work hours.

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- b) Able to take applicable meal and rest periods and hours free from work as required by law, contract, policies, or an applicable collective agreement.
- c) Able to take vacation or other leave entitlements as required by law, contract, policies, or an applicable collective agreement.
- d) Able to work in a healthy and safe work environment.

2.00 Employee Obligations

2.01 The University encourages all employees to consider the following in the course of their work:

- a) Be considerate of colleagues' work hours (e.g., by not routinely emailing or calling outside of work hours).
- b) Take their applicable meal and rest periods and hours free from work as set out in their individual employment contracts, policies, or an applicable collective agreement.
- c) In a timely manner, speak with their supervisor or leader if they feel their workload is preventing them from being able to disconnect from work.
- d) Request and take their approved vacation entitlements as set out in their individual employment contract, policies, or an applicable collective agreement.

3.00 Ability to Disconnect from Work

3.01 To support the University's academic and operational requirements, work hours may vary across departments, positions, and staff and academic appointments.

3.02 An employee's ability to disconnect from work at a given time depends on the University's academic and operational needs and the duties and obligations of the employee's position, subject to an employee's employment contract, policies, an applicable collective agreement and/or minimum statutory entitlements under the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*.

3.03 An employee's ability to disconnect from work may be impacted in cases of emergency and other unforeseen circumstances. Employees may also be contacted outside of work hours regarding timely matters, such as scheduling and academic, operational, and support needs.

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3.04 This Policy shall not prevent the University or employees from engaging in communications outside of what may be considered work hours.

3.05 This Policy shall not limit or amend the provisions of other policies or the provisions of collective agreements entered into between the University and its employee groups and where such policies and agreements have application, those provisions shall prevail.

4.00 Reporting Concerns

4.01 All employees are expected to report any concerns or issues they may have that impact their ability to disconnect from work and/or impact their health and well-being.

4.02 Employees will not be subject to reprisal for reporting such concerns.