Responding to the Pandemic through Flexible Working Arrangements

Throughout the pandemic, work environments have shifted between virtual, in-person and hybrid scenarios. Remote-first work policies, which allow employees to choose their work location for any given day, have enabled workplaces to more quickly adapt to changing pandemic conditions. Furthermore, while remote-first policies have been more common for non-academic professionals than for college and university faculty, during the Delta and Omicron surges in late 2021 and early 2022, an increasing percentage of academic faculty and non-academic professionals reported that their employer’s had remote-first workplace policies in effect.
Over the course of the pandemic, an increasing percentage of academic faculty worked on campus or in the office. With the re-opening of campuses in early 2021, the percentage of faculty working in the office increased substantially, and by Fall 2021 more faculty reported working in the office than working remotely as campuses re-opened for in-person instruction. Remote work, however, remains a major, if not full-time, work environment for academic faculty alongside in-person instructional and on-campus activities.
Starting in September 2021, over half of academic faculty reported working more than half-time or full-time on campus while just over one-third of faculty reported working half-time or less on campus. These percentages have remained relatively steady since Fall 2021, albeit an uptick in more time spent off-campus in January 2022 during winter break which also coincided with the Omicron surge.
Academic faculty transitioned away from remote work as a primary work environment starting in Fall 2021, with only 41% of faculty reporting working remotely more than half-time or full time in August 2021. By April 2022, 71% of faculty reported working remotely half-time or less and only 13% reported working remotely more than half-time or full-time.
Non-academic professionals reported a return to in-office work shortly after the vaccine roll-out in early 2021, starting in April 2021, over half of non-academic professionals reporting that they were working in the office, and this percentage continued to increase to almost 80% by October 2021, thereafter plateauing. Meanwhile, remote work has remained a prominent work option with 74% to 84% of non-academic professionals working from home to some level since June 2020.
Since May 2021 nearly 40% of non-academic professionals have reported working in the office half time or less, and this percentage has remained relatively steady since. By July 2021, just over one-third of non-academic professionals reported working more than half-time or full-time in the office, and this also has remained relatively steady since then with some minor fluctuations.
Remote work has remained a key work environment for non-academic professionals since May 2020, although as offices opened up in 2021, the percentage of non-academic professionals working remotely more than half-time or full time declined to approximately 50% by August 2021 and has remained relatively steady since then.

We will continue to provide current snapshots on the impacts of COVID-19 on the geoscience enterprise throughout the year. For more information, and to participate in the study, please visit: www.americangeosciences.org/workforce/covid19

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