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Policy Owner	Chief Work Transformation and Organization Culture Officer
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DISCONNECTING FROM WORK POLICY

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this Policy is to affirm the University's commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of its Employees particularly through the University's compliance with the Provincial directive to convey the University's expectations to Employees with respect to disconnecting from work.

The Working for Workers Act, 2021, Schedule 2 (the "Act"), requires certain employers to introduce a written policy informing Employees of the workplace's approach to disconnecting from work. The Act recognizes a value enshrined by the University, namely, the importance of well-being in an increasingly online working environment.

To that end, the University encourages its Employees to achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance. The University acknowledges that the achievement of this balance necessitates the cultivation and maintenance of a workplace culture that respects employees' rights to disconnect from work outside of their working hours, which may vary in a unique academic context. This Policy affirms the University's support of such a workplace culture.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

"Disconnecting from work" means 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 outside of working hours.

"Employee or Employees" are those individuals who are considered employees of the University under the Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000 (the "ESA");

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. This Policy applies to all University Employees while providing service to the University.
4. The Chief Work Transformation and Organization Culture Officer, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of this Policy.

POLICY

5. University Obligations

- 5.1.** While this Policy does not preclude University Employees from contacting individuals (including other Employees or vendors/third parties) for work-related purposes outside of what may be considered working hours, the University supports and aims to foster a workplace culture that promotes and values disconnecting from work. Consequently, the University will take steps to:
- inform Employees of their regular working hours, where applicable;
 - encourage Employees to be mindful and respectful of the time when other Employees—including those without formally designated hours of work--- can reasonably expect to disconnect from work;
 - encourage Employees to make best efforts to refrain from contacting other Employees for work-related purposes at such times, and,
 - request that managers, or, as appropriate, HR services, respond to questions or concerns regarding disconnecting from work from Employees.

6. Employee Obligations

- 6.1.** Employees are expected by the University to undertake the following with respect to their work:
- a) to co-operate fully with any mechanisms, if applicable, utilised by the University to record working time or update their working status, including when working remotely, flexibly or when mobile;
 - b) to be mindful of other Employees' working hours and their time outside such hours; and,
 - c) raise any concerns or issues they may have which they feel are impacting their ability to disconnect from work with their manager or, where appropriate, HR services;
 - d) by making best efforts to refrain from routinely emailing or calling outside of working hours or expecting answers or responses outside of working hours.

7. Disconnecting From Work – Supports and Resources

- 7.1.** The University offers a variety of supports and resources to promote a healthy workplace. Resources can be found online at: <https://hr.ontariotechu.ca/healthy-workplace/index.php>
- 7.2.** Where it is helpful, Employees are encouraged to seek professional and/or medical assistance as they see fit if such circumstance impact upon their health and wellbeing, and, in particular, to access the University's Employee Family Assistance Program as needed: <https://hr.ontariotechu.ca/healthy-workplace/Employee Assistance Program/index.php>
- 7.3.** An Employee's ability to disconnect from work depends on the University's business and/or operational needs and the duties and obligations of the employee's position. Employees do not have a right to disconnect beyond what is in their employment contract, applicable collective agreement and/or university policy, and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA.
- 7.4.** If Employees have questions or concerns that they feel are impacting their ability to disconnect from work, they are encouraged to raised these matters with their manager or, where appropriate, HR services.

8. Posting, Notice and Retention

- 8.1.** The University will provide a copy of this Policy to each Employee regardless of their position within 30 calendar days of implementation. Should any changes be made to the Policy after its implementation, the University will provide each Employee a copy of the revised Policy within 30 days of the changes being made.
- 8.2.** The University will provide a copy of this Policy to all new Employees upon onboarding and within 30 calendar days of the Employee commencing employment with the University.
- 8.3.** The University will retain a copy of this Policy and any revised version of this Policy for a period of three years after it ceases to be in effect.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 9.** This Policy will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Chief Transformation and Organization Culture Officer, or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- 10.** Ontario Working for Workers Act, 2021, S.O. 2021, c. 35 - Bill 27
Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000, S.O. 2000, c. 41
Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

- 11.** Academic Staff Employment Policies
Non-Academic Staff Employment Policies