

	DISCONNECTING FROM WORK POLICY #10.16	
CATEGORY: Human Resources/Diversity & Equity	APPROVAL DATE: May 16, 2022	
EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2, 2022	REVIEW DATE: March 1, 2023 (then every two (2) years from approval date)	
APPROVAL: Board of Governors		
OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY: People & Culture Office		
ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY: Executive Director, People & Culture		
PREVIOUS VERSIONS: None		

1. PURPOSE:

OCAD University (“OCAD U” or “the University”) acknowledges the importance of the wellbeing of its employees and is committed to encouraging and supporting employees in balancing their working and personal lives. Employees are encouraged to disconnect from work outside of their working hours in accordance with and subject to this Policy.

Disconnecting from work means not engaging 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 established working hours.

This Policy should be read alongside the University’s associated policies and guidelines, including the Respectful Work and Learning Environment policy, the Accommodation in Employment for Persons with Disabilities Policy, the Health & Safety Policy, Emergency Response and Business Continuity Procedures, the Email Policy, the Vacation Policy for Managers & Confidential Staff, Vacation and Overtime Guidelines for Administrative Staff, Remote Work Guidelines, and any relevant and applicable legislation and collective agreements, and any other policy that may become applicable and/or relevant.

2. SCOPE:

This policy applies to all employees of OCAD U, whether they are working in the workplace, remotely, under a flexible working arrangement, or are mobile. For clarity, “employee” under this Policy refers to those employees of the University who are considered employees under the *Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA)*.

3. POLICY

3.1 Employer and Employee Obligations

The University is responsible for creating and maintaining healthy work practices with the support of the Board of Governors, the President, and Senior Management. The University supports and aims to foster a workplace culture that promotes and values disconnecting from work and will take all reasonable steps to support employees being able to disconnect from work outside of their hours of work in accordance with this Policy.

Supervisors will support the Policy by working with those employees they supervise to outline what their working hours are reasonably expected to be and of the circumstances, if any, in which they are expected to engage in work-related communications outside their working hours. Supervisors will be mindful of employees' working hours and develop practices/procedures that support the application of this Policy.

Employees will take all reasonable steps to ensure that they effectively manage their work and work-related communications during their established hours of work. Employees are expected to be mindful that working hours can differ for their colleagues and to not expect responses outside of the University's service hours. Employees will use any applicable tools to record working time or update their working status (e.g., out-of-office messages) as applicable, including when working remotely, flexibly or when mobile. Employees will notify their manager if they feel undue pressure to work or respond to work-related communications outside of their working hours.

All employees share the responsibility of supporting and upholding the ability to disconnect from work.

3.2 Ability to Disconnect from Work

An employee's ability to disconnect from work depends on the University's business and/or operational needs, including emergency response protocols, and the duties and obligations of the employee's position, subject to an employee's employment contract, applicable collective agreement and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA.

Nothing in the Policy precludes the University or other employees of the University from contacting colleagues, vendors/other third parties or other employees outside of what may be considered working hours or standard business hours, subject to any rights or entitlements the receiving colleague or employee may have under their employment contract, applicable collective agreement and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA.

This Policy does not afford employees a "right to disconnect" beyond what is within their individual employment contract, applicable collective agreement and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA, which may include rights or entitlements speaking to: hours of work and hours free from work, overtime pay, meal and/or rest periods, public holidays and public holiday pay, and vacation.

All employees are expected to report any concerns or issues they may have which they feel are impacting their ability to disconnect from work.

Employees will not be subject to reprisal for reporting such concerns or for inquiring about, exercising or attempting to exercise any rights as provided under the ESA.

Nothing in this Policy is intended to amend or supersede any grievance procedure or other aspect of any applicable collective agreement.

3.3 Policy Communication

The University will provide a copy of this Policy to each employee, within 30 calendar days of implementation. If any changes are made to the Policy after implementation, the University will provide each employee a copy of the revised Policy within 30 calendar days of the changes being made.

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.

The University shall 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.