

# Right to Disconnect

**Category:** Human Resources

**Approval:** Board of Governors

**Responsibility:** Vice President, Human Resources

**Date:** April 2022

## Definitions:

**Employee:** All individuals working as an employee at the University, this includes the President, Vice-Presidents, Directors, Managers, Supervisors, Staff, Faculty, Student employees, Graduate student employees, and Researchers.

**Manager/ Supervisor:** Is a person who either has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker.

**Normal Working Hours:** The time an employee is scheduled to perform work according to their appointment to their position at the University, or schedule as set out by their manager/ supervisor.

\*Not all employees will have normal working hours determined by the University.

**Working hours:** This is time an employee spends performing work-related duties, whether scheduled or unscheduled, including but not limited to: reading and sending email, phone calls, meetings, or completing tasks.

## 1.0 Purpose/Reason for Policy:

Pursuant to Bill 27: Working for Workers Act, Trent University is committed to providing a work environment conducive to an appropriate work life balance for all employees as one method of ensuring employee well-being and job satisfaction.

## 2.0 Scope of this Policy:

This policy applies to all employees working at Trent University. Including, but not limited to the following employee groups:

- Executives
- Senior Management
- Exempt Management
- Exempt Administrative Employees
- OPSEU
- TUFA
- CUPE 1 and CUPE 2
- Research Employees
- Student Employees
- Other

### **3.0 Policy Statement:**

Unless specifically directed otherwise, employees shall be under no obligation to engage in work related activities such as sending and reviewing emails, phone calls, video calls or, engaging in work related activities outside of their normal working hours.

#### **3.1 Requirement to Work outside of Normal Working Hours:**

From time to time an employee may be required to engage in such activities upon direction from their direct supervisor or under direction from their respective Vice President. In such circumstances the employee will be notified as far in advance as possible of planned work which is required to occur outside of the normal working hours. In the event of unplanned requirements the employee will be contacted by phone or text message indicating the requirement to perform work.

Employees will be remunerated as per the Employment Standards Act (if applicable), employment contract, or their Collective Agreement for planned or unplanned work required to be performed outside of their normal working hours.

In the case of employees who do not have a pre-determined schedule set by the University, it is expected that the employee will use their discretion to perform their duties in accordance with their Collective Agreement or Employment Contract while ensuring established response times and deadlines are adhered to. Employees may work with their Chair, Dean or Supervisor to assist in determining appropriate contact hours.

In the case of Executives or Senior Management (as defined by the Exempt Compensation policy), it can be expected that ongoing communication outside of normal working hours may be required due to the nature of their position.

#### **3.2 Notifications regarding after hours communications:**

Managers should encourage employees to disconnect from work after their normal working hours. Understanding, however, that working hours for individuals across the University may vary, communications will be sent after hours from time to time. Such communications should clearly indicate whether an immediate response is required. Scheduling an email to be sent during an employee's normal working hours should be encouraged wherever possible.

Employees are encouraged to put an "out of office" message on their email when they will be out of office, or otherwise unable to respond within the normal timelines.

#### **3.3 Reporting Concerns**

- 3.3.1 All employees are expected and required to report any concerns or issues they may have which they feel are impacting their ability to disconnect from work.
- 3.3.2 Employees are encouraged to report such concerns or issues, in writing, to their immediate supervisor. If that is not appropriate or the matter cannot be resolved by doing so, employees should direct their concerns or issues to Human Resources.
- 3.3.3 Employees will not be subject to reprisal for reporting such concerns as outlined above or for inquiring about, exercising or attempting to exercise any rights as provided under the ESA.

### **3.4 Posting, Notice and Retention**

- 3.4.1 The University shall 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 shall provide each employee a copy of the revised Policy within 30 days of the changes being made.
- 3.4.2 The University shall 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.
- 3.4.3 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.

**Contact Officer:**

Director, Human Resources

**Date for Next Review:**

July 2023