

Letter of Information

Research Study

From home to hybrid: rethinking work after COVID-19 and the changing work practices and working lives of tech workers in the Toronto-Waterloo Corridor

Investigators

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Are you a...?

- a) Employee, manager, or supervisor working in Ontario's technology sector?

OR

- a) Policy maker (in the public or private sector), human resource professional, management consultant, or economic development professional working in Canada.

You are invited to take part in this study about the future of work and flexible work in Ontario.

The goal of this study is to better understand the future of work and flexible work.

What will happen during the study?

We are inviting you to an interview of about 60 minutes. In this interview you will be given a chance to tell your stories, perspectives, and opinions about your working practices, how you make use of (or not) flexible work arrangement such as remote or hybrid work, and what the future of work means to you. Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The research team may also take handwritten notes during the interview.

Who can participate in the study?

If you are part of groups a) or b) above, you may be eligible. Full eligibility requirements are:

a) For employees, managers, and supervisors in Ontario's technology sector.

- At the time of the interview, you live and work in Ontario and have done so since at least January 2022.
- You work for an employer on a full-time or part-time basis, i.e., you are not working as a contractor or are otherwise self-employed.
- You are 18 years of age or older as of January 2022.
- Your employer currently offers some form of flexible choice of work location, meaning you can work at least some of your hours at home or at a location other than home, rather than spending all your work hours in an office environment owned or rented by your employer.
- You work in Ontario's technology sector, including design, digital media, software engineering, or other professional, scientific, and technical services.

b) For policy makers (in the public or private sector), human resource professionals, management consultants, or economic development professionals working in Canada.

- At the time of the interview, you live and work in Canada and have done so since at least January 2022.
- You work for an employer on a full-time or part-time basis, i.e., you are not working as a contractor or are otherwise self-employed.
- You are 18 years of age or older as of January 2022.
- Your employer currently offers some form of flexible choice of work location, meaning you can work at least some of your hours at home or at a location other than home, rather than spending all your work hours in an office environment owned or rented by your employer.
- You work in the public or private sector in a role related to policy making, program administration, human resources, management consulting, economic development, or other management consulting services.

What's in it for me?

Risks? There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in the interview. Conversations and questions asked in the interview do not go beyond everyday conversations about work practices that you may typically have in your daily life with co-workers, your employer, friends, or family.

Benefits? It is unlikely that there are direct benefits to you. However, by better understanding the experiences of the groups identified above, researchers and others may be able to understand the issues these groups face in flexible work and broadly what the future of work holds.

Why are we collecting your demographic data?

Demographic information allows us to better understand certain background characteristics of our study's participants. At the end of the interview, we will be asking questions about age, ethnicity, race, income, work situation (occupation and full-time, part-time status) marital status, sexuality and gender identity, education, and parental status/responsibility.

Your identities are confidential.

We will keep your identity confidential. Participants names are not used in the study results. When information is shared, we will not use your name, but instead use a pseudonym. We can sometimes be identified by the stories we tell or the specific way we answer questions. However, we will obscure identifying details given during the interview to help keep your identity confidential. Your anonymized responses will be used by the researchers to assist with publications. Audio-recorded interviews and their transcripts will be kept on the researcher's password protected and encrypted hard drive for at least 7 years. Handwritten notes will be stored safely in a locked office on the University of Waterloo campus and kept for at least 7 years.

Where will the interview be?

The interview can be completed virtually, using the University of Waterloo's official Zoom or MS Teams subscriptions. Zoom and MS Teams has implemented technical, administrative, and physical safeguards to protect the information provided via their services from loss, misuse, and unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction. However, no Internet transmission is every fully secure or error-free.

Participation is voluntary.

- Participation in this study is voluntary. You can decide to stop at any time, even part-way through the interview for whatever reason.
- If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences. If you decide to stop participating, any data or information collected will be destroyed.
- If you do not want to answer some questions you do not have to, but you can still participate in the study.

Questions for us?

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #45143).

If you have any questions about this study or would like more information, please contact by email at tyler.blackman@uwaterloo.ca.

Consent

Consent in this study is informed, voluntary, precedes the collection of interview data, and is documented. Your informed consent will be documented at the beginning of the interview. You will be asked to answer the following questions below:

- a) Do you consent to participating in the interview?

- b) Do you give permission for your interview to be audio-recorded?
- c) Do you agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any paper or publication resulting from this research, with the understanding that you will be referred to both by your area of expertise (e.g., policy maker, management consultant, software developer, project manager) and by a pseudonym in place of your real name (e.g., John Smith or Jane Doe)?

To participate, participants must verbally consent to the interview. Participants may indicate that they do not consent to the audio recording of the interview and/or the use of anonymous quotations and still participate in the interview.

Ethics clearance

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #45143). If you have questions for the Board, contact the Office of Research Ethics, toll-free at 1-833-643-2379 (Canada and USA), 1-519-888-4440, or reb@uwaterloo.ca.”

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