

Overview

Optimizing our current and future office space ensures that, as an institution, we use these important physical resources effectively. The following guidelines were developed to help General Fund academic and administrative units on the Ann Arbor campus allocate office space and align these decisions with benchmarks of existing and future buildings.

Units should refer to these guidelines when planning new construction or renovations to ensure greater consistency with campus norms for office space. U-M Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC) will refer to this document when working with units and architects during the design phase of all new construction or renovations on the Ann Arbor campus. Exceptions to the guidelines require the approval of the Office of the Provost.

NOTE: Academic and administrative units with internal space policies or guidelines should ensure that their guidelines align with the information provided in this document.

Space-per-Person Recommendations

The following tables show the recommended assignable square footage for a person by position type. These guidelines are not a guarantee that an employee or affiliate of the University will receive a specific office type or amount of square feet, but rather defines the maximum net assignable square feet (NASF) a person in a specific role should occupy. Net assignable square feet is defined as the area of a building suitable for occupancy measured from the interior walls, including closets and secondary corridors within assignable space. This excludes main corridors, bathrooms, and other non-assignable space.

Square Footage Ranges

The square footage ranges are provided to accommodate the varying programmatic needs of these positions across the University. For example, a unit may assign an office on the smaller end of the square footage range to a person who is more likely to spend time working in a research lab than in an office. Conversely, a person may be assigned an office on the upper end of the range to accommodate frequent meetings with multiple individuals.

Applying the Guidelines in Shared Spaces

The recommended square footages of shared spaces specify the total amount of office space that should be dedicated to any one person. They do not necessarily indicate the actual size of the office or workspace. For example, a department should designate a cumulative 120-256 square feet for four temporary employees (30-64 square feet per person); this space may or may not accommodate all four persons simultaneously.

The following space-per-person recommendations are based on recent construction projects at the University and on space guidelines from other higher education institutions and the private sector. They were developed in collaboration with the Office of the Provost; Architecture, Engineering and Construction; and various administrative and academic units.

NOTE: The types of room occupants listed below do not reflect official U-M job titles or classifications. They are listed strictly for the purpose of showing the relationship between role, space type, and net assignable square feet (NASF). The information is only to be used when making office space related decisions.

Types of Room Occupants	Space Type	Recommended NASF per Person
Executive		
President	Private Office	400
Vice President	Private Office	300
Academic Units		
Dean	Private Office	240
Associate or Assistant Dean	Private Office	160
Department Chair	Private Office	160
Faculty, Tenure Track	Private Office	100-160
Faculty, Research	Private Office	100-160
Faculty, Non-Tenure Track (e.g. Lecturer III & IV) ¹	Private Office, Shared Office, or Cubicle	80-100
Faculty, Visiting or Consulting	Shared Office or Cubicle	80
Faculty, Emeritus (Active)	Private Office, Shared Office, or Cubicle	64-140
Faculty, Emeritus (Non-active)	Shared Office or Cubicle	30-64
Fellow, Lecturer I & II, Visiting Scholar ¹	Shared Office or Cubicle	80
Unit Administrative Manager	Private Office	100-160
Technician, Associate, or Specialist (Research)	Private Office, Shared Office, or Cubicle	30-100
Research Fellow	Shared Office or Cubicle	30-80
Staff, Professional (Full-time)	Private Office, Shared Office, or Cubicle	64-100
Staff, Professional (Part-time) ²	Shared Office or Cubicle	80
Staff, Administrative Support (Full-time)	Shared Office or Cubicle	64-100
Staff, Administrative Support (Part-time) ²	Shared Office or Cubicle	64-80
Graduate Student Instructor ¹	Shared Office or Cubicle	30-64
Graduate Student Research Assistant ¹	Shared Office or Cubicle	30-64
Temporary or Student Staff	Shared Office or Cubicle	30-64
Administrative Units		
Associate or Assistant Vice President	Private Office	160-240
Director	Private Office	100-160
Associate or Assistant Director	Private Office	100-140
Manager	Private Office, Shared Office, or Cubicle	80-140
Staff, Professional (Full-time)	Private Office, Shared Office, or Cubicle	64-100
Staff, Professional (Part-time) ²	Shared Office or Cubicle	80
Staff, Administrative Support (Full-time)	Shared Office or Cubicle	64-100
Staff, Administrative Support (Part-time) ²	Shared Office or Cubicle	64-80
Temporary or Student Staff	Shared Office or Cubicle	30-64

¹ The University is obligated to provide space appropriate for assigned employment functions to members of the Lecturers Employee Organization (LEO) and Graduate Employees Organization (GEO), as defined in their contracts. Contact your unit's labor relations representative if questions about space assignments arise.

² Part-time denotes the room occupant is 50% FTE or less. If the occupant is more than 50% FTE, it is recommended to follow the guidelines for a full-time room occupant.

Private Offices, Shared Offices, and Cubicles

Private offices are necessary for many positions at the University. The size of the office varies depending on the type of work and the need to meet with individuals or groups frequently and in a private setting. These spaces should be able to accommodate a desk, files, bookshelves, and space to meet with an additional one to six people. The following positions would, in most cases, require private offices:

Executive	Academic	Administrative
President	Dean	Associate or Assistant Vice President
Vice President	Associate or Assistant Dean	Director
	Department Chair	Associate or Assistant Director
	Faculty, Tenure Track	
	Faculty, Research	
	Unit Administrative Manager	

Some positions in a unit or department may require private office space, while a person with similar duties in another unit or department may not. The following positions should be allocated private office space on a case-by-case basis:

Academic	Administrative
Faculty, Non-Tenure Track (e.g. Lecturer III & IV)	Manager
Staff, Professional (Full-time)	Staff, Professional (Full-time)
Faculty, Emeritus (Active)	
Technician, Associate or Specialist (Research)	

Shared offices, cubicles, and open workspaces are an efficient use of office space. Shared offices should be assigned to individuals who require a certain amount of privacy or reduced noise levels. Cubicles and open workspaces are particularly space-efficient, flexible, and can accommodate additional guests as needed. The following positions would, in most cases, be assigned a shared office, cubicle or open workspace:

Academic	Administrative
Faculty, Visiting or Consulting	Staff, Administrative Support (Full-time)
Research Fellow	Staff, Professional (Part-time)
Fellow, Lecturer I & II, Visiting Scholar	Staff, Administrative Support (Part-time)
Faculty, Emeritus (Non-active)	Temporary or Student Staff
Staff, Administrative Support (Full-time)	
Staff, Administrative Support (Part-time)	
Staff, Professional (Part-time)	
Graduate Student Instructor	
Graduate Student Research Assistant	
Temporary or Student Staff	

Special Circumstances

Multiple Offices

Assignment of multiple offices for faculty and staff is strongly discouraged, unless there is a true demonstrated need. Faculty with joint appointments and persons with staff in multiple buildings may be assigned a secondary office, provided it is not located within the same building as the primary office. A secondary office can be shared or private; however, it should be smaller than the primary office. A size of 80 to 160 square feet is recommended.

All decisions related to multiple offices should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Use of Unoccupied Offices

One significant way to reduce the shortage of office space is to ensure that all offices are occupied throughout the year. When offices are left unoccupied for significant periods of time, such as during sabbaticals or other leaves, units and departments should use these spaces to alleviate any pressing space needs.

Emeritus Faculty Offices

Emeritus faculty may be provided shared offices, if space is available within a unit, as long as they remain engaged in unit activities. These shared offices are intended to allow an individual to maintain contact with their unit, discipline and colleagues. An emeritus faculty member actively engaged in teaching or research may retain a private office at the discretion of the unit, if space is available.

Questions about these guidelines should be directed to space.utilization@umich.edu.