

ROWE FAQ for New Supervisors

ASCO's Results-Only Work Environment is a different way of working for many supervisors (and employees). As part of your transition, ask your supervisor and other managers in your department about best practices, guidelines, standards and working agreements for your department and unit. Please contact your HR Business Partner if you still have questions after talking with your colleagues, reading this FAQ, and reviewing resources on [myasco](#).

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1. What do supervisors need to do differently in a ROWE?

ROWE is similar to a "self-directed work team" structure where employees have the latitude to work in way that is best for them, as long as standards and results are met. In more traditional work environments, supervisors focus on the daily management of tasks (e.g., assigning, tracking, monitoring, reporting). In a ROWE, this responsibility shifts to the employees, enabling supervisors to manage in an oversight mode and instead focus on higher level work such as coordination between projects or departments, developing employees' capabilities and coaching for high performance, problem solving at a more strategic level, and investigating improved work processes, technology, and equipment. While supervisors still have accountability for their team's quality of work and results, this is accomplished through facilitative leadership techniques vs. directive, hands-on management.

2. How much leeway does staff have to determine how a result is achieved?

In a ROWE, employees have the latitude to determine how to accomplish a result. In many cases, we are working on cross-organizational initiatives or results that involve colleagues. In those situations, employees should be working collaboratively to make those decisions, with the final decision maker being the person who "owns" that result. Additionally, for many of ASCO programs, the quality of the service, deliverable, or member experience *is* part of the expected results. When articulating goals, it is helpful to include both qualitative and quantitative standards. That is a way to shape the direction and quality of the work, while still giving employees the freedom to determine how best to achieve that result.

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3. Am I allowed to ask/say “Will you be in the office tomorrow?”

In a ROWE, employees are given the latitude to decide the best way to meet the agreed upon results. This includes decision about hours worked, physical location, which activities to use to achieve the result, sequencing and pacing of tasks, when and how to involve others, etc. Your questions and observations link to results and respect your direct reports’ ownership of decisions in how results will be achieved. For example, you wouldn’t want to ask what time an employee will be in the office or working the next day, but it would be acceptable to ask for a progress report if you see signals that the work is not meeting standards or the established project milestones or results.

4. How will I know if the work is getting done?

It is incumbent on the employee to let others know if they are not on track with projects or deliverables. When discussing performance standards and expected results with your direct reports, it is also helpful to identify key milestones, intermediate targets, and indicators that the work is on track – both qualitatively and quantitatively. In addition to serving as guideposts for employees to track progress, having agreed upon progress indicators helps identify potential problems before crises points, and serves as a status report roadmap for keeping colleagues and management updated on progress.

5. How do I know if someone has capacity to take on additional work?

The best way to know is to ask. If you have additional work that needs to be accomplished, have a discussion with the team about what you want to accomplish and how it relates to the broader goals and priorities for ASCO. Perhaps there is a way to organize the work, pace or sequence a project or redistribute tasks that frees up more team/ organizational capacity. Sometimes employees will willingly take on additional work and “find time” for work they find compelling, challenging and satisfying. Other times employees might have full workloads, and then it is similar to traditional environments where managers and employees have a discussion about priorities and where to cut back. If you think the employee has capacity to take on more and he or she doesn’t agree, talk it through with your direct report. This can be an opening for training and coaching or identifying process improvements to increase individual or team efficiencies.

6. Are meetings *really* optional?

The intent behind making meetings optional is to reduce time spent in unproductive meetings, re-set the expectation that meetings are the “default” mechanism for doing the work or gaining collaboration, and to maintain the focus on the results vs. the tasks. Optional meetings are not a blanket permission to decline *all* meetings, to RSVP at the last minute (or not RSVP at all), or to forgo meetings where participation is important to collective or team results. Employees who miss meetings related to their results are still responsible for providing attendees with updates before the meeting, knowing what happened and completing any required action items that result from discussions or decisions made. Employees who continually miss critical meetings might benefit from a coaching conversation about direct/indirect benefits and outcomes associated with meetings, team building, etc.

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7. If I would like someone to be on-site for a meeting or a project, what do I do?

First ask yourself why in-person attendance important, and how critical the employee's physical absence is to the result (vs. being a work style preference). In a ROWE, it is incumbent on the employee to determine how to best achieve the expected result. If you have adequately outlined expectations (including both qualitative and quantitative standards), and the employee has an established track record of effectiveness, trust them to make the right decision. If this is a stretch or developmental assignment, use your inquiry and coaching skills (i.e., this is the first time you are taking this on, where are you feeling confident, what will be a stretch, what might be different approaches to this work and what are the implications for results, what are the signals you are on track vs. asking for help or raising the concern flag, etc.)

8. How does ASCO make sure employees aren't taking advantage of ROWE, slacking off, and not making good use of their time?

ROWE is about results. The only way to "slack off" in a ROWE is to fail to deliver expected work and thus fail to meet the expectations of the job. If an employee is not meeting performance standards or delivering agreed upon result(s) - that is considered a performance issue.

9. What about employees who need more supervision?

In a ROWE, employees are expected to meet goals and expectations regardless of when and where they are working. It is everyone's responsibility to be clear about expected results; if an employee wants training or coaching to help accomplish those results, she/he needs to make that known to the supervisor. While it is a managerial responsibility to coach and support your direct reports' learning and professional development, employees should not require an inordinate amount of direction and support to achieve their results.

10. What happens if someone isn't delivering results?

Ask questions to clarify why an employee is having problems meeting results and provide feedback and coaching to support the employee's efforts to address the performance issue. In a ROWE, it's up to the employee to drive any performance improvement and to initiate (reasonable) requests for support or resources to close the performance gap. Supervisors and employees can consult with their HR Business Partner or the Learning Team for additional resources and strategies to help employees develop critical skills and close the performance gap. If poor performance persists, supervisors should work with Human Resources to explore other performance-based actions that can range from coaching to a Performance Improvement Plan to termination of employment.

11. Does ASCO have core business hours?

ASCO will be "open for business" from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to stay in synch with the non-ROWE world. The widely accepted "business day" from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. is when our members will telephone, mail will be delivered, job candidates will come for interviews, volunteers will attend meetings, and the like. If a particular set of tasks or job can be done during non-traditional work hours, employees can choose to do so, provided results are achieved and performance standards are met.

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12. How do I handle timesheets?

Timesheets should show actual time worked, and paychecks will be based on the regular salary for the year. If a non-exempt employee works more than 37.5 hours in a week, he or she will be paid for overtime. ***Overtime must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor***. Overtime rates are straight time for 38-40 hours and time and a half for time worked over 40 hours per week. OT is not given to non-exempt employees who choose to work more than 7.5 hours in a day, and the weekly total does not exceed 37.5 hours. Overtime budgets are managed by each department; please talk with your supervisor about department Overtime Budgets and Practices. General information timesheets is included in the Timesheets Orientation Training and a briefing on ASCO's FLSA practices can be found in your onboarding materials (Fair Labor Standards Act: Maintaining Compliance in a Results-Only Work Environment).

13. What is the practice for handling employees who are out sick?

Employees continue to receive their salary during vacation, illness, appointments, personal time, family commitments, jury duty, etc. as long as arrangements have been made for the work to get done. If an employee is unable to honor work commitments or deliver agreed upon results, he or she is expected to coordinate coverage with colleagues and/or the supervisor. When an absence extends beyond one week or requires the reduction/temporary suspension of expected results (e.g., FMLA, Short-term Disability), employees can tap into their **Extended Leave Account**. Any situation requiring the use of Extended Leave should involve HR (hrbenefits@asco.org) and requires more extensive coverage planning by the employee's team and supervisor.

14. What happens when an employee wants to take a vacation?

Employees are expected to manage the daily, quarterly, and annual rhythms of their work, including advance planning when they want to go "offline." Some employees will choose to go totally offline, others prefer to check in or to work for portions of a day to keep work moving during their absence. It is incumbent on the employee to coordinate "offline" time with their colleagues, find coverage for critical deliverables/tasks, negotiate alternative deadlines on non-time sensitive results, and to communicate those coverage plans. Supervisors should ensure there is sufficient cross-training and understanding of each other's work so colleagues can fill in for each other and confirm that workloads allow for time away from the office.

15. Where can I find more information on ROWE?

There is no single "instruction manual" with hard and fast guidelines. Any resources with information on how to engage and empower employees, participatory management techniques, managing for results, coaching, and developing staff will help you supervise effectively at ASCO. The HR Department provides **instructor-led** and **online training via Workday Learning**, resources via the **Lending Library** and coaching support for managers as needed (contact your HR Business Partner). ROWE specific resources can also be found on **myASCO's ROWE pages**.