



Flexible Working Policy

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1. Policy to request flexible working

Introduction

1.1. The aim of this policy is to:

- help employees gain a better balance between their work commitments and their family commitments; and
- assist schools/services to structure working patterns and staffing levels in line with varying customer and business needs or around peaks and troughs of demand.

1.2. This policy incorporates the Flexible Working Regulations 2003.

1.3. This policy enables any employee to request to work more flexibly.

N.B. This policy does not provide an automatic right to work flexibility.

Eligibility

- 1.4. In order to make a request employees must:
 - 1.4.1. have worked for the University for 6 months; and
 - 1.4.2. have not made another application to work flexibly under the policy during the past 12 months.

Application procedure

- 1.5. Members of staff must apply to the Head of School/Service in writing by completing a 'Request for flexible working' form. This can be downloaded from the Human Resources website:
http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/41/flexible_working_request_form.
- 1.6. On receipt of an application the Head of School/Service should arrange to meet with the staff member, HR Manager and representative if required within 28 days (the rep may be a work place colleague or a recognised TU rep). Full consideration of the request must be given explaining all possible reasonable options.
- 1.7. The Head of School/Service will respond in writing to confirm the decision within 14 days of the meeting. If an application is being refused this must be for a permitted reason with an explanation as to why that reason applies and details of the appeals process.
- 1.8. The permitted reasons for refusal are as follows:
 - 1.8.1. Burden of additional costs;
 - 1.8.2. Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demands;
 - 1.8.3. Inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
 - 1.8.4. Inability to recruit additional staff;
 - 1.8.5. Detrimental impact on quality;
 - 1.8.6. Detrimental impact on performance;
 - 1.8.7. Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
 - 1.8.8. Planned structural changes.
- 1.9. If a change is agreed, a review date may be set for the individual and the Head of School/Service to consider whether the arrangement is working. Further changes to the arrangement may be made by agreement.
- 1.10. To ensure a consistent approach across the University, no application should be agreed or refused without consultation with the Faculty/Service HR Manager.

Appeals procedure

- 1.11. The member of staff has the right to appeal against the decision within 14 days of it being notified to them (unless there is a mutual agreement to defer this date).
- 1.12. The appeal must be made in writing to the Dean of Faculty (for staff in Academic Schools) or the Director of Human Resources or nominee (for staff in other areas e.g. Estates, RCS, Corporate Services).
- 1.13. The appeal meeting should be held within 14 days of receipt of the appeal (unless there is a mutual agreement to defer this date).

- 1.14. A workplace colleague or a representative of a recognised union not acting in a legal capacity may accompany the member of staff to the appeal. Should the chosen companion not be available at the time proposed by the employer the employee should propose an alternative time for the meeting to take place. This meeting must fall within 7 days of the date of the first meeting.
- 1.15. The outcome of the appeal should be notified to the member of staff within 14 days of the meeting taking place. If the appeal is unsuccessful a sufficient explanation should be provided in this letter.

Withdrawing requests

- 1.16. Requests will be deemed to be withdrawn if:
 - 1.16.1. the member of staff withdraws it verbally or in writing;
 - 1.16.2. the member of staff fails to attend the meeting to discuss the request without good reason. In certain circumstances failure to attend this meeting without any acceptable explanation being received beforehand will result in the case being heard in the employee's absence based on the information available at the time;
 - 1.16.3. the member of staff unreasonably refuses to provide information to back up their request (e.g. evidence of birth certificate or child's disability).

Record keeping

- 1.17. Departments should return the original 'Request for Flexible Working' form to the employee, send a copy to Human Resources and retain a copy in the department.

2. Guidelines to flexible working hours

Introduction

- 2.1. Flexible working is the variation of working hours, times, patterns or location. It enables faculties/school/services to fit staffing levels around business needs and to maintain an effective customer service. For members of staff, it enables them to work in new ways to achieve an improved balance between the competing demands of work and other personal commitments.
- 2.2. There are many different flexible work practices and below are a number of different options that can be considered by the University.
- 2.3. It is acknowledged that not all the options will be suited to all departments. Heads of School/Service and HR Managers should work together in consultation with TUs to agree suitable local agreements.

Part-time working/reduced hours

- 2.4. These are hours that are less than the "normal full time hours" paid at pro rata the usual rate for the post. Staff can request to reduce their hours to fit in with outside commitments.

- Pros
 - Could fill the remaining hours with another person therefore introducing more flexibility and a greater range of skills.
 - If the post can be undertaken in fewer hours there could be a cost saving.
- Cons
 - If there are only a few available hours it may be difficult to recruit.
 - If the vacant hours are not filled there could be a gap in the service.
 - These could be overcome if there is a ream of staff.

Working pattern variation

2.5. This allows staff to agree a particular working pattern that allows them to work flexibly around their own commitments and/or the business/customer needs of the school/service. This could take a variety of forms e.g. late starts/early finishes some days and early starts/late finishes other days; splitting hours by taking an extended break during the day and completing daily hours later that day; working contracted hours over a shorter period of days.

- Pros
 - Allows staff to work flexibly during the week to allow for changing times or family commitments.
- Cons
 - If the team is not large enough to enable cross cover or the role requires attendance at specific times, this option may not be appropriate.
 - Could be confusing for the faculty/school/service, depending on the pattern adopted.
 - Can be difficult to manage e.g. bank holidays, closure days and annual leave need to be managed appropriately.

Term time only

2.6. These are hours worked only during term time (either school term or University term) and take unpaid leave during the holidays. Staff will accrue annual leave during the term and this will be calculated into their salary. Salary will be paid in 12 equal instalments.

- Pros
 - Allows staff with school age children to spend time at home during the holidays.
 - Allows University staff to work at the busier times when the students are in but a cost saving can be made during the holidays.
- Cons
 - Could be difficult in departments that are busy all year round.

Annualised hours

2.7. These are hours calculated over a period of a year rather than a week. This allows people to work according to the peaks and troughs or workload e.g. gardeners.

- Pros
 - Could allow more time at home during quiet periods.

- Cons
 - Busy periods and requested time at home may clash making this option difficult.

Flexi time

2.8. Flexi time allows staff to choose their starting and finishing times as long as they are in work at core times to be agreed with the department. These can be, for example between 10 and 12 and 2 and 4 allowing flexibility at lunch time.

2.9. Staff must work their contracted hours over a 4 week period and can work over or under per 4 weeks.

- Pros
 - This allows flexibility for all staff within any department.
 - Staff can take short periods of time off to undertake personal commitments and make up the time on another day.
 - Good use of staff time as staff can be asked to work 'over' in busy periods and take time off in quieter periods.

- Cons
 - Clear and accurate records of working hours needs to be kept.

N.B. A clear departmental policy would be required to implement this successfully.

Working from home

2.10. This is a possible option for some staff where the nature of the work allows it to be done at home.

N.B. Unless the University required the staff to work at home, staff would be responsible for providing their own equipment e.g. computer.

- Pros
 - A significant amount of time can be saved travelling to and from work.
 - Work can be undertaken flexibly to fit in with family commitments.
- Cons
 - Not all jobs are suitable for working from home.
 - In certain circumstances colleagues might find communication difficult.

Job Share

2.11. This involves two people sharing one full-time post.

- Pros
 - Offers a great deal of flexibility within one post.
 - Offers two perspectives two sets of skills within the same post.
- Cons
 - Any lack of communication between the job sharers could cause problems.

2.12. Please refer to the job share policy for further information.

Career breaks

2.13. This is unpaid leave for an extended period in order to pursue ones interests or commitments e.g. world travel, childcare and other caring responsibilities.

- Pros
 - Allows staff to take a break from work without losing their post.
 - Allows the University to retain skills.

- Cons
 - The vacant post needs to be filled temporarily.

2.14. Please refer to the career break policy for further information.

Further information on flexible working options is available from Human Resources.

N.B. All flexible working patterns should be in line with the Working Time Regulations.

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