

Request for Flexible working Policy

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Flexible Working Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/1398)
- Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023

RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS

- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Various University Wellbeing policies
- Family Friendly Policies.

Flexible Working Policy

1.0 Introduction

Flexible working can lead to increased staff morale and motivation, help staff balance their work-life schedule better, which reduces stress and improves performance and productivity.

A request for flexible working could include a request for a change to the number of hours worked, for a change to the pattern of hours worked, a job share, term time only working, staggered or compressed hours.

Staff can make a request for flexible working at any time, and two requests will be considered within any 12-month period, this is not restricted by length of service. The process for making requests is outlined below.

2.0 How do I make a request for flexible working?

All requests must be made in writing to your line manager by filling in the requisite application form that can be found in the HR A-Z on the website, a copy should also be sent to the Business Partner for your area.

Requests made under this policy must include:

- the date of your application.
- the changes that you are seeking.
- the date on which you would like the change to come into effect.
- whether or not you have made a previous application for flexible working; and
- if you have made a previous request, when you made that application.

Line managers should not automatically reject a request simply because there is insufficient information contained within the request. In this eventuality, line managers will explain to what additional or amended information they need to provide and ask them to resubmit the request.

3.0 Flexible working request from staff members with disabilities

The University is committed to supporting staff members with disabilities and meeting its obligations under the Equality Act. Therefore, we will endeavour to support requests from staff members with disabilities and these requests may constitute reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act. Please refer to the disability passport and access to work guidance. Therefore, to ensure suitable consideration is given, disabled member of staff should indicate this on their application form when applying for flexible working.

4.0 How will my flexible working request be dealt with?

Once your line manager receives the request, it will be dealt with as soon as is reasonably possible.

There may be a situation where a request can proceed without further discussion and be approved based upon your written application, in this eventuality a meeting may not be necessary. In such cases, your line manager should consult with their Director of School/Service. Should the Director approve the request you will be notified in writing that your request has been approved, and a start date established.

If a meeting is required, your line manager will arrange a meeting to discuss the request and this meeting should be held within 28 days of receiving the request. Present at the flexible working meeting will be you and your line manager, a HR representative and you will also be given the opportunity to be accompanied by either a trade union representative or another member of staff from the University. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposed working arrangements and how it could be of benefit to both you and the University.

5.0 Who makes the decision on whether my request will be allowed?

After the meeting, your line manager in consultation with their director of School/Service will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to you and to the University against any adverse impact of implementing the changes. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis; agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another staff to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

The request may be rejected, granted in full or in part: for example, your line manager may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or you may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period.

You will be informed in writing by Human Resources of the decision within 14 days of the meeting. Copies of the original request plus the outcome letter will be kept on your Personnel File. Human Resources will then issue any changes to your contract where appropriate.

6.0 Reasons for turning down a flexible working request.

If your request is rejected, you will be provided with the reason why it has been rejected. Those reasons must be for one or more of the below business reasons, which are:

- the burden of additional costs.
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff.
- an inability to recruit additional staff.
- a detrimental impact on quality.
- a detrimental impact on performance.
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand.
- insufficient work for the periods the staff proposes to work.
- a planned structural change to the business.

Flexible working requests must not be rejected for any other reason.

7.0 Can I appeal against a flexible working decision?

If a member of staff is dissatisfied or unclear at any stage throughout the process, they should contact the Business Partner for their area.

If you are unhappy with the decision reached following your flexible working meeting, you have the right to appeal. Flexible working appeals are dealt with under stage 3 of the University's Grievance Procedure. Where possible, the appeal hearing will be heard within 14 days of receipt of the grievance, where possible. Information regarding the appeal process can be found in the university's Grievance Procedure section 3. To lodge an appeal, you should submit a completed appeal notification form, which can be found in the Grievance Policy. This should be sent to the Executive Director of Human Resources within 7 working days of receipt of the outcome from your request.

Outcome from appeal hearings will normally be given, in writing, within 3 days of the appeal meeting. If the appeal is upheld, the member of staff and the line manager (following consultation with their Director of School/Service) will discuss how and when the changes will take effect. Any changes to terms and conditions will be confirmed in writing by Human Resources

If the appeal is not upheld, there is no further right of appeal, and the process is exhausted.

9.0 Timescales

The time limits specified in this policy, may be extended where both the staff and employer are in agreement. For example, the relevant manager and the staff may agree to extend the time limit to give the member of staff a trial period on the flexible working arrangements.

10.0 Data protection

When managing a flexible working request, the University processes personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the University receives a flexible working request is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing their request for flexible working. Inappropriate access or disclosure of staff data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the University's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the University's disciplinary procedure.