

Policy

Title: FLEXIBLE WORKING (HR/ER/Version 2)

From: HR/ER

Last updated: 23/01/15

Please note that from 06 April 2024 there have been legislative changes made to the right to request flexible working. Please visit the [Flexible Working HR Webpage](#) for more information.

1. Introduction

The University recognises that working flexibly can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity.

Employees who wish to reduce their hours or change their working pattern to transition into retirement should use the [Flexible Retirement Policy](#).

2. Eligibility

From 30 June 2014, all employees who have been continuously employed for 26 weeks at the date the application is made have the right to request flexible working and to have their request considered by the University. An employee can only make a statutory request once in any 12 month period.

3. Requests for flexible working

The range of flexible working options open to employees may include:

- a permanent or temporary change of hours
- a change to working pattern
- a request to work from another location for some of the time where the role allows

All requests must be made in writing by completing an [application form](#) which is available via the HR Website.

Any request made under this policy must include:

- the date of the application;
- the changes that the employee is seeking to his/her terms and conditions;
- the date on which the employee would like the terms and conditions to come into effect;
- what effect the employee thinks the requested change would have on the organisation;
- how, in his/her opinion, any such effect might be dealt with;
- a statement that this is a statutory request;
- whether or not the employee has made a previous application for flexible working within the last 12 months; and
- if the employee has made a previous request, when the employee made that application.

An application should not be refused if it does not contain the required information. It should be explained to the employee what additional or amended information he/she needs to provide and the employee asked to resubmit the request.

4. Meeting to discuss a flexible working request

The line manager should hold the meeting within 28 days of receiving the request. Where a request can without further discussion be approved in the terms stated in the employee's written application, a meeting will not be necessary.

An employee may choose to be accompanied at the meeting by a work colleague or Trade Union representative.

The aim of the meeting is to find out more about the proposed working arrangements and how they could be of benefit to both the employee and the University.

5. Outcome of a flexible working request

After the meeting, the line manager will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to the employee and to the University against any adverse impact of implementing the changes. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis, and agreeing to a request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to his/her working pattern.

The employee will be informed in writing of the decision within 14 days of the meeting. The request may be granted in full or in part, for example, the University may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangements for a trial period. The employee will be given the right to appeal the decision if the employee's request is not upheld or is upheld in part.

6. Reasons for turning down a flexible working request

Applications will be subject to consideration of the business impact of the request including the impact on the work of the Unit/Service and the consequences for other employees. The final decision will be based on the needs to the business.

The line manager will give reasons for the rejection of any request and must be for one or more prescribed 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 effect on performance;
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- insufficient work during the proposed working times; and
- a planned structural change to the business

The line manager must not reject a request for any other reason.

7. Approved flexible working requests

If the request is approved, the employee and the line manager will discuss how and when the changes will take effect. The line manager will provide HR with a copy of the application to be placed on file, and the notification of the decisions in order for HR to action any change to terms and conditions and arrange a variation to contract to be sent to the employee as soon as reasonably practicable.

8. Appeal

If an employee is dissatisfied or unclear at any stage throughout the process, he/she should contact the relevant HR Manager.

If an employee is dissatisfied with the way in which his/her request has been handled, he/she should appeal in writing to the next level of management, which would normally be the employee's line manager's manager as there would be a requirement for the individual to have a thorough understanding of the operations of the team and the potential impact of the application upon the service it provides. The appeal should be submitted within 14 days of receiving notification of the decision setting out the grounds for the appeal. The appeal should be heard within 14 days. The employee will be informed of the outcome of his/her appeal within 14 days of the appeal meeting.

9. Timescales

All requests will be dealt with within a period of three months from first receipt to notification of the decision on appeal.

The time limits stated within this Policy may be extended where both the employee and employer are in agreement. For example, the relevant manager and the employee may agree to extend the time limit to give the employee a trial period on the flexible working arrangements.

10. Related Policies/Links

Employees may wish to consult the following sources of information:

Policies (and related guidance and supporting documentation):

- [Flexible Retirement Policy](#)
- [Career Break Policy](#)
- [Leaving the University](#)

Websites:

- [The HR website](#)
- [The Pensions website](#)

University Colleagues:

- [the Pensions Office](#)
- [Ask HR](#)
- Your Line Manager
- Your Trade Union Representative

11. Maintaining this Policy

The University will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and its general compliance within the organisation. This policy will be kept up to date and amended accordingly to reflect any changes in response to revised legislation and applicable standards and guidelines.

DATE	REV No	CONTENT	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY
January 2015	2	Revised to reflect the statutory changes which came into effect on the 30 June 2014	K Walmsley	JNC