# Flexible working policy

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<td>31/12/2020</td>
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<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Allows employees to request a change to their current working arrangements.</td>
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1. Introduction

1.1 The University is committed to providing equality of opportunity and developing work practices and policies that support work-life balance. This policy has been developed to support flexible working arrangements to help employees achieve, if possible, more balance between their working and non-working lives.

2. What is flexible working

2.1 Flexible working allows employees to vary their working arrangements to a more flexible arrangement. Employees may request a change in the hours they work, a change in the times they work or request temporarily to work from home. It is not an automatic right as there may be circumstances when the University is unable to accommodate a desired work pattern.

2.2 It is important that employees understand that an accepted application for flexible working is a permanent change to their contract, except in the case of temporary home working; or the need to accommodate a short-term difficulty; or unless agreed otherwise. The agreed terms will become part of their contract of employment and cannot be changed until both parties agree otherwise. Before making such an application, individuals should, therefore, ensure that they have carefully considered which working pattern will best suit all of their needs. These considerations should include:

- What the financial implications might be if their working pattern is changed;
- How the new pattern will affect their individual service performance or the service performance of their School/Unit.

3. Eligibility

3.1 In order to make a request to work flexibly, individuals must satisfy the following criteria in that they must:

- Have been employed by the University for 26 continuous weeks before the date the application is made;
- Have not made another application to work flexibly in the past 12 months (exceptional circumstances may be considered);
- Agree, if they are to work at home, to be contacted at home during defined working hours by telephone and/or email.

4. Procedure

4.1 Flexible working requests should be discussed informally with the appropriate Head of School/Unit prior to making a formal application. Appendix B provides guidance for managers/Head of School/Unit to manage flexible working requests.

4.2 The application process will take no longer than 3 months from the submission of the application, including any appeal outcome, unless an extension to this is agreed by all parties.

4.3 Formal applications should be made to the Head of School/Unit on the flexible working application form. A word version of this form can be found on the HR policy page or via the following link. The member of staff will be invited to attend a meeting with the Head of School/Unit to discuss their application within 28 days of receipt of the application, unless the application is approved in writing prior to this date. This meeting must take place even if the employee is on leave. Human Resources will usually be in attendance at this meeting.
4.4 The aim of the meeting is to explore the suggested work pattern in depth, and to discuss whether and, if appropriate, how best it might be accommodated since it may be possible to consider alternative working patterns should there be a problem accommodating the work pattern proposed in the application.

4.5 If the employee cannot attend the meeting at the date and time suggested by the Head of School/Unit, the meeting will be postponed to a date and time convenient for both parties within 7 days of the original meeting date.

4.6 If an employee, without good reason, fails to attend the rescheduled meeting, a further meeting will be arranged. If the employee fails to attend this second meeting, without good reason, the request will be treated as withdrawn.

4.7 Notification of the outcome of the meeting will be sent within 14 days of the meeting taking place. If the application is accepted, Human Resources will detail, in writing, the appropriate changes to the terms and conditions of employment and the date they will become effective.

4.8 The Head of School/Unit may approve the application subject to a trial period of 3 months. The commencement of the trial period should not coincide with any quieter periods in the School/Unit, as this may not provide an accurate reflection of the potential effect of the new pattern of working. If at the end of this period, it is deemed that the new pattern is not suitable by either party, the employee will revert to their original working pattern.

4.9 If the application is unsuccessful, the employee will be notified in writing detailing the reasons for the rejection including a sufficient explanation and the details of the appeals procedure should they wish to appeal against the decision taken. No application will be approved or rejected without consultation with Human Resources.

4.10 Flexible working is not an automatic right as there may be circumstances when the University is unable to accommodate a desired work pattern. A request for flexible working may be refused for the following reasons.

- The burden of additional costs;
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- Inability to recruit additional staff;
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- Detrimental impact on quality;
- Detrimental impact on performance;
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
- Planned structural changes.

5. Appeal process

5.1 An employee has the right of appeal against a refusal to grant flexible working. The appeal should be made in writing to the Director of Human Resources within 14 days of being notified of the decision.

5.2 The employee will be invited to attend an appeal hearing which will be convened by an appropriate deputy of the Principal. The panel will also include another Head of School/Unit with no prior involvement. A member of Human Resources will be in attendance. The employee’s Head of School/Unit will present to the panel the reasons for refusal to grant.
flexible working. If the employee cannot attend the meeting, it will be postponed to a date and time convenient for all parties within 7 days of the original date set.

5.3 If an employee, without good reason, fails to attend the rescheduled meeting, a further meeting will be arranged. If the employee fails to attend this second meeting, without good reason, the appeal will be treated as withdrawn.

5.4 The employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative during the meeting.

5.5 The employee will be notified of the outcome of the appeal meeting within 14 days of the meeting. This notification will be in writing and will either outline the new terms and conditions with the date they become effective or will sufficiently explain the grounds for the decision to reject the appeal.

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Appendix A: Flexible working application form

Please note: A word version of this form can be found on the HR policy page or via the following link.

Note to the employee

You can use this form to make an application to work flexibly. Before completing this form, you should first read the University’s Flexible working policy and discuss the request informally with your Head of School/Unit.

You should note that it may take up to three months to implement an approved request and possibly longer where difficulties arise however the University will make every effort to manage requests in a shorter timescale wherever possible.

In order to comply with the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Flexible Working Regulations 2014, the application must be completed in full and must:

- State that it is an application to change your terms and conditions of employment in order to work flexibly;
- Specify the change applied for and the date on which it is proposed the change will become effective;
- Explain what effect (if any) you think making the change would have on the University and how, in the your opinion, any such effect might be dealt with;
- State whether a previous application for flexible working has been made and, if so, when;
- Be dated.

It will help your Head of School/Unit to consider your request if you provide as much information as you can about your desired working pattern.

Once you have completed the form, you must submit this to your Head of School/Unit.

If your request is agreed, your terms and conditions will change to reflect your new working pattern. This will be a permanent change to your terms and conditions unless otherwise agreed.

Note to Head of School/Unit

This is a formal application made under the right to apply for flexible working and the duty on the University is to consider such applications seriously and reasonably. You should arrange to meet with your employee as soon as possible after receiving their written request. If you intend to approve the request then a meeting is not needed. An HR representative can attend the flexible working meeting if required. It is important that no changes to terms and conditions are made without notifying HR Support & Advice team in the first instance.

You must confirm receipt of this application in writing immediately, confirming the date your received the application. You will also be required to set up a meeting with the employee and confirm the arrangements in writing or if you accept the request without the need for a meeting, you must inform HR Support & Advice of the change to terms and conditions and request they write to the employee confirming the changes.

Please complete page 4 and submit to Human Resources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPLOYEE DETAILS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of School/Unit</td>
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### Qualifying criteria

I would like to make an application to work flexibly and I hereby confirm that:

- [ ] I have 26 weeks continuous service with University of St Andrews.
- [ ] I have not made another flexible working application within the previous 12 months.
- [ ] If applicable, I confirm that the conditions of my visa do not prevent me from making any change to my employment.

### Type of request

- [ ] Permanent
- [ ] Temporary

### Reason for request

This section is not mandatory however it would be beneficial to have this information for Athena Swan recording purposes.

- [ ] Caring responsibilities
- [ ] Job-share
- [ ] Improved work/life balance
- [ ] Other reason (please specify)
- [ ] Do not wish to disclose.

### Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/shift times/place of work)


### Describe details of your request for flexible working (days/hours/shift times/place of work)


### I would like this working arrangement to commence on: [DATE]  xx/xx/xxxx

### I would like this working arrangement to cease on: [DATE] (if temporary) xx/xx/xxxx
Anticipated business impact
It is important to consider the possible business implications associated with adopting flexible working arrangements. Please provide details of the following considerations to help you to better explore and discuss the proposed changes with your line manager.

Examples:
- Cost (save or increase)
- Will my department need to employ someone else?
- Will there be an impact on the service my department provides?

How will the change benefit your School/Unit and the University
Example:
- What are the business benefits of your proposed way of working?

How will the change impact my colleagues/team?
Example:
- Will it put more pressure on others?
- Will there be enough cover?
- Is the team heavily resourced / has work reduced?

Accommodating the new work pattern
To minimise disruption, I think the effect of the proposed changes in my work pattern could be dealt with as follows:

I understand the following statements:
- All flexible working arrangements are subject to a trial period.
- It is not an automatic right to have applications accepted as there may be circumstances when the University is unable to accommodate a request.
- Any reduction to hours will impact upon my salary and certain benefits (such as annual leave and pension contributions) and these changes will be permanent (unless a temporary arrangement has been agreed).

Employee signature:        Date:

Please submit completed application to Head of School/Unit
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Head of School/Unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible working request</td>
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<tr>
<td>If rejected, please give rationale for decision:</td>
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<tr>
<th>If approved:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please confirm start date of the change to terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If temporary, please confirm end date of the change to terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you wish a trial period with review date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review Date (if applicable)</td>
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**Please detail any changes to the proposed work pattern proposed (if applicable)**

| Signed: | Date: |
Appendix B: Flexible working guidance for Heads of School/Unit

Introduction

- There are many different working practices and this guide has been compiled to help management when dealing with/processing flexible working requests.
- It is acknowledged that not all options will be suited to all Schools/Units. Heads of Schools/Units should work together with Human Resources to agree local arrangements.

Reduced hours

Individuals who work full or part time may ask to reduce their hours.

Advantages

- Can recruit another person to fill the remaining hours offering greater flexibility and greater range of skills
- Potential cost saving if the post can be undertaken in fewer hours

Disadvantages

- May be difficult to recruit cover if only a few hours available
- Gap in service if vacant hours cannot be filled
- Loss of specific expertise

Compressed hours working

- Compressed hours involves the reallocation of work time into fewer and longer blocks during the week. Generally the number of hours worked during the week will stay the same. Examples of compressed hours are to work 4 days a week or 9 days over a fortnight. This can be accommodated by starting work early, and/or finishing late, so that the employee builds up additional hours which can then be used to take a half day or full day from work.

Advantages

- Can suit the operational needs of the School/Unit

Disadvantages

- If no cover, option may not be possible
- Staff may become tired working longer hours and, therefore, potentially less productive

Varied hours

- For full-time employees, the normal working week is 36.25 hours giving a notional working day of 7 hours and 15 minutes.
- Employees may request to vary the time that they start and finish work on particular days or throughout the week.
- Managers should consider which hours, if any, the employee can vary and also if any should be core hours, these being the times that the employee must be present and available for work (subject to routine authorised absences).
Term-time only

- The employee would only work during term-time (either school terms or University semesters), taking unpaid leave during the holidays.

Advantages

- Employees can spend time at home during the holidays
- Employees work at busier times, saving costs during holidays

Disadvantages

- Difficult option for any unit that is busy all year round

Working from home

- Home working may be considered if temporary circumstances arise that make it difficult for an employee to attend the University for the full working week e.g. if someone is unable to get to work because of an accident or injury.
- It may be appropriate, in some instances, to allow an employee to work from home if they have an important piece of work to complete and require peace and quiet to do so. A formal agreement would not be required in this instance but the individual and their line manager should agree what the expected output is.
- There are many issues to consider when organising home working. Advice on this issue should, therefore, be sought from Human Resources at the earliest opportunity.