



University of
St Andrews

Flexible Working: Guidance for line managers

Document type	Guidance
Scope (applies to)	Line managers
Applicability date	21/03/2024
Review / Expiry date	30/03/2027
Approved date	21/03/2024
Approver	Deputy Director of Human Resources
Document owner	Human Resources Officer
School / unit	Human Resources
Document status	Published
Information classification	Public
EDI review/Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Staff/Employee relations/Flexible working
Purpose	To be read in conjunction with the Flexible Working Policy. To support line managers with the flexible working process.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	New guidance developed to complement the Flexible Working Policy	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	21/03/2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance is intended to help you deal with written requests made by employees to change their contractual terms and conditions (e.g. their working hours, shift times or place of work).

2. Handling requests in a reasonable manner

- 2.1 All requests (including any appeals) must be considered and decided on within a period of **2-months** from first receipt (unless there is an agreement to extend this period with the employee).

- 2.2 Line managers should be mindful that the process can be time consuming and therefore should ensure that they deal with flexible working requests without delay.

- 2.3 Once a formal flexible working request has been received, you must:

2.4 Consider the application

- 2.4.1 Review the application. This should include carefully assessing the effect of the request on the School/Unit and on the employee, including potential benefits and impacts for both parties of accepting or rejecting it.

- 2.4.2 Discuss the application with your HRBP particularly if support or procedural guidance is required.

- 2.4.3 Decide if a formal consultation meeting is required or whether approval can be given without the need for a meeting.

2.5 Flexible working meeting required

- 2.5.1 If you require further information or are unsure if the request can be accommodated, you must:

- Acknowledge the flexible working application with the employee via email and note that they will be invited to a flexible working meeting.
- Arrange for the meeting to take place in a private setting without reasonable delay ensuring advanced notice is provided (normally 5 working days but can be sooner if the employee agrees to this).
- Invite the employee to the meeting (in writing).
- Consider if you would like a member of HR to attend/support with the process.

2.6 At the meeting

- 2.6.1 Openly discuss the request with the employee; review the application form together and ask questions for clarity.

- 2.6.2 Consider alternative flexible working options with the employee and if there are better ways to accommodate some or all of the request (if applicable).

2.7 Decision

- 2.7.1 Review what has been discussed in the meeting considering the benefits of the requested change in working arrangements for the employee and the School/Unit and weighing these against any adverse business impact of implementing the changes.
- 2.7.2 Ensure that when considering the request that the decision is fair, equitable and does not discriminate against individuals.
- 2.7.3 You must accept a flexible working request unless there is a genuine business reason not to. If there is a business reason, consider if alternative options can be explored or if you can agree to their request with modifications.
- 2.7.4 Discuss the request and the decision with your HRBP.

2.8 Communicating the decision

2.8.1 If you can accommodate the request, you must:

- Verbally confirm the decision with the employee and agree on an implementation date.
- Notify [HR Support \(and HRBP\)](#) of the outcome via email and attach the flexible working form. (This must be actioned before implementing any agreed changes to terms).
- Disregard any paperwork once it has been submitted to HR.

2.8.2 If you cannot accommodate the request or offer an alternative option, you must:

- Discuss the request and the decision with your HRBP.
- Confirm the outcome in writing as soon as possible clearly stating the business grounds to explain the decision. The letter should include the right to appeal.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	New guidance developed to complement the Flexible Working Policy	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	21/03/2024