



FLEXIBLE WORK GUIDELINES

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1 Purpose

1. The University recognises flexibility is a key enabler of staff equity and inclusion and facilitates attraction, progression and engagement of a high- performing, diverse and inclusive workforce.
2. This Guideline outlines the flexible work options available to Academic staff and Professional Services employees within the University and provides guidance on the design, initiation and monitoring of flexible work arrangements.
3. This Guideline should be read in conjunction with the University’s Enterprise Agreements, Professional Services Staff Time and Attendance Policy and Operation of Flexible Hours of Work Procedures.

2 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
Breastfeeding and breast milk extraction	Time for breastfeeding and breast milk extraction at work - the University acknowledges the importance of breastfeeding and actively supports mothers wishing to breastfeed through flexibility to take lactation breaks during the workday.
Casual employment	Casual employment is for work which is normally irregular and for a short duration (casual employment).
Compressed work schedule	An agreed regular working pattern where a staff member works their ordinary fortnightly hours compressed into a shorter period. This can be achieved by working longer but fewer blocks of time.
Fixed term employment	Fixed term employment is for a specified term or ascertainable period, for which the instrument of engagement will specify the start and end date of employment or, in lieu of a finishing date, the circumstance(s) or contingency relating to a specific task or project which will determine the end date of employment.
Flexible start and finish times	A regular work pattern where the staff member’s start and finish times vary from core business hours within the work area.
Job share	An employment arrangement where two (or more) staff members, each working part-time, share all the duties and responsibilities of a full-time equivalent position.
Manager/Supervisor	Person who is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of a staff member. This includes Faculty Executive Managers for Professional Services Employees and Heads of School for Academic Staff.
Portfolio	A group of business units excluding faculties, reporting to a senior executive
Staff	All people employed by the University including conjoint appointments, whether on continuing, permanent, fixed term, casual or cadet or traineeship basis.
Working remotely	Working from a location (within Australia) other than the staff member’s usual workspace at UOW, including at the staff member’s home as agreed between the University and the staff member. Note some positions may not be suited to remote work including frontline service roles and ground workers.



3 Application & Scope - Exclusions or Special Conditions

1. This guideline applies to all Academic and Professional staff members employed on a fixed term, casual or ongoing basis by the University. The ability for some casual staff to work flexibly does not alter the casual status of their employment.

4 Guideline Principles

1. Participation in flexible work arrangements is voluntary and at the request of the staff member.
2. The University will review each request for flexible work on a case by case basis and take into account:
 - a) Individual needs of the staff member;
 - b) Terms and conditions of the staff member's employment and job requirements; and
 - c) The operational requirements of the work area.
3. A manager/supervisor must give full consideration to a request for flexible work. The manager/supervisor and the staff member should discuss the request, including any alternative proposals, before any decision is made regarding flexible work arrangements.

5 Eligibility

1. Requests for flexible work arrangements to work remotely may be submitted by an academic or professional services staff member, including a new staff member at any time.
2. Approval of requests for flexible work arrangements to work remotely may be given at any time including at commencement of employment.
3. For flexible work arrangements other than to work remotely, clause 45.1 of the University of Wollongong Enterprise Agreement (Professional Services Employees) 2019 will apply. Clause 45.1 states Professional Services employees who have completed at least 12 months continuous service in their current position may request a change in their work arrangements.
4. The manager/supervisor of Professional Services employees may at their absolute discretion consider flexible work requests from staff with less than 12 months continuous service.
5. The University may, upon request from an academic staff member at any time facilitate flexible working arrangements including changes to working times and changes to work location.
6. The University acknowledges the importance of breastfeeding and actively supports mothers wishing to breastfeed through flexibility to take lactation breaks during the workday.

6 Formal Request for flexible work arrangements

1. Flexible work arrangements may include, but are not limited to:
 - a) working part time, job share or reduced hours arrangement;
 - b) working remotely (usually from home) on a regular basis;
 - c) moving to a compressed work schedule;
 - d) flexible start and finish times.



2. Staff should discuss their requirements with their manager/supervisor and should be prepared to consider other options that will meet both their needs and the relevant work unit's requirements.
3. Staff must submit their request in writing to their manager/supervisor using the Flexible Work Arrangement form setting out the details of the change sought including the duration, and the reasons for the change. Staff should also complete the agile workplace arrangement form provided by the Work Health and Safety Unit, and if assistance is required submit to WHS.
4. Approved flexible work arrangements will include a trial period (generally three months which will allow sufficient time to see if the arrangement is working although this time frame may need to be varied or conclude earlier if the arrangement does not meet the needs of both parties). At the conclusion of the trial period the arrangement should be reviewed to determine if it meets the needs of both parties and/or if any changes are required to improve the arrangement.
5. Approved flexible work arrangements may be reviewed quarterly to ensure that the arrangement continues to meet the needs of the University and the employee.
6. Formal requests for a flexible work arrangement may impact a staff members pay or entitlements and therefore require a variation to the staff member's employment contract in circumstances where a staff member's hours of work per week are reducing, for example. If this is the case or a manager/supervisor is unsure of the impact of the flexible work arrangement they should speak to their HR Business Partner.
7. The University's policies and procedures as well as performance expectations continue to apply regardless of where or when the staff member performs their work.

7 Consideration of the request

1. The manager/supervisor will fully consider a request including any associated impacts on the work unit. They will provide a response as to whether the request is approved, or not approved within 21 business days. Any request that is not approved, must be based on reasonable business grounds, and those reasons must be provided to the staff member.
2. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis.
3. The staff member's direct manager/supervisor will consider whether the request can be accommodated, taking into account:
 - a) the staff member's role and responsibilities;
 - b) the staff member's colleagues, clients and any other relevant stakeholders;
 - c) business requirements (including but not limited to efficiency and productivity, customer service and any costs) and the work unit's ability to meet its operational objectives; and
 - d) the impact on the staff member if the arrangement is not implemented
4. Within Faculties, all requests for flexible work arrangements will be approved or declined by the Faculty Executive Manager for professional services employees and the Head of School for academic staff. Where academic staff report directly to the Executive Dean, the Executive Dean holds this responsibility.
5. Within Portfolios all requests for flexible work arrangements will be approved or declined by the Director.



6. Flexible work arrangements may be requested by all staff and do not represent special provision for a certain type of worker or a reward that needs to be earned. Flexible work arrangements must be requested, discussed, agreed and approved.

8 Outcome of the request

1. The appropriate delegate set out at 7.4 and 7.5 may approve a flexible work arrangement request from a staff member.
2. Managers/supervisors considering declining a request must first consult with their immediate manager/supervisor and demonstrate reasonable business grounds to decline a request. Following this consultation requests can only be declined:
 - a) After obtaining advice from an HR Business Partner; and
 - b) Where there are reasonable and demonstrable business grounds to do so. These may include that the requested arrangement would, for example:
 - i. be too costly;
 - ii. require a rearrangement of work which could not be accommodated as proposed;
 - iii. result in a significant loss of operational efficiency;
 - iv. conflict with allocated on-campus teaching or other academic responsibilities;
or
 - v. have a significant impact on student, staff or other stakeholder service.
3. Where a staff member remains unsatisfied with the outcome of their request for flexible work arrangements they may approach their HR Business Partner. The HR Business Partner may arrange a meeting with the manager/supervisor to discuss the request.
4. Documentation of the flexible work arrangement is important to avoid misunderstandings. A confidential and secure record of the arrangement must be kept by the manager/supervisor. The staff member should also keep a copy of the documented arrangement.
5. Any flexible work arrangements that impact a staff members hours of work, whether daily, weekly or fortnightly, should be submitted using the appropriate documentation via the HR HelpDesk.
6. Staff may seek advice from their HR Business Partner at any time when considering, submitting or upon receiving a decision about their flexible work arrangement request.

9 Review the arrangements

1. A staff member and their manager/supervisor should meet regularly during the trial period, including at the mid-point, to discuss the flexible work arrangement to ensure it continues to meet the needs of both parties and whether or not any changes are required to improve the arrangement.
2. Following the completion of the trial period the staff member and their manager/supervisor should discuss the flexible work arrangement to confirm that it meets the needs of both parties or identify if any changes are required, and to confirm the continuity of the arrangement.
3. Approved ongoing flexible work arrangements should be reviewed as part of regular staff and manager/supervisor meetings at least quarterly and including performance discussions.



10 Transfer of a flexible work arrangement

1. Flexible work arrangements are not normally transferrable from one position to another. If the staff member applies for a new position, they must discuss and agree their flexible work arrangement request with their new manager/supervisor. The arrangement must be approved for the new position.

11 Termination of a flexible work arrangement

1. Where the agreement is not meeting the needs of both parties, and discussions have not been able to rectify the issues, the staff member's manager/supervisor should seek advice from their HR Business Partner. Consideration should be given to factors such as team cohesion, workload management, and staff ability to deliver the inherent requirements of their position.
2. A staff member may also request to end their flexible work arrangement at any time and this will need to be discussed and agreed with their manager/supervisor.
3. Where it is agreed to end the flexible work arrangement and this impacts a staff members pay or employment conditions, the manager/supervisor and staff member should complete the required documentation and submit via the HR HelpDesk.

12 Informal requests for flexible work arrangements

1. Informal requests for flexible work arrangements to meet ad-hoc and short term needs are not continuing arrangements. UOW recognises that informal flexibility is a feature that staff members may require from time to time but should not be substituted for other appropriate leave in the circumstances, for example when sick leave or annual leave is appropriate. Requests should be discussed with the manager/supervisor as they arise or where possible be agreed in advance. Such requests may include but are not limited to:
 - a) changing the days of work occasionally (for part-time arrangements);
 - b) changes to start and finish times; or
 - c) working from home or at another location occasionally.

13 Academic Availability

1. It is recognised that some academic tasks may more efficiently or necessarily be performed off campus as per clause 28 of the University of Wollongong (Academic Staff) Enterprise Agreement, 2019. Academic staff need to be aware that their absence from campus may have an impact on their colleagues, students, and School or Research Institute initiatives and responsibilities. The arrangements must be discussed and agreed with the staff member's manager/supervisor to ensure:
 - a) Students have reasonable access to academic staff involved in supervision, teaching or administering in any unit, subject or course in which they are enrolled;
 - b) campus-based responsibilities are appropriately balanced with home/other location work arrangements;
 - c) appropriate contact and availability arrangements are in place; and
 - d) an understanding of WHS requirements and responsibilities including an understanding of ergonomic self-assessment that must be undertaken on a working environment away from campus.



14 Working Remotely

1. It is generally expected that staff who choose to work remotely will be working from home.
2. There are positions at UOW in which the work cannot be done remotely due to the nature of the job, for example front line service roles, ground workers. Alternate flexible work arrangements may be available however including job share, compressed week, and flexible start and finish times.
 - 2.1. Managers/supervisors will identify roles not suited to working remotely by referring to the inherent requirements of the position.
 - 2.2. Where a staff member does not agree with the manager/supervisor that the job cannot be done remotely, the staff member is encouraged to discuss with their manager/supervisor.
 - 2.3. Managers/supervisors considering declining a request to work remotely on the basis that the work cannot be done remotely must first consult with their immediate manager/supervisor and demonstrate the inherent requirements of the role that necessitate being on campus. Following this consultation requests can only be declined after:
 - a. obtaining advice from an HR Business Partner and
 - b. where there is agreement between all parties that the inherent nature of the work requires the job holder to be on campus
3. If a staff member is approved to work remotely, from home or another location they do so on the understanding that:
 - a) all costs of setting up a remote office (including but not limited to desk, monitors, chair and internet connection) are the responsibility of the staff member (Academic staff are not able to access consulting funds for the purpose of establishing a remote office. Refer to the Consultancy Expense Guidelines for appropriate use of consultancy funds). These costs may be tax deductible.
 - b) When working remotely, staff must, as in any work environment, maintain appropriate confidentiality and privacy of information.
 - c) When working remotely, staff must, as in any work environment, take reasonable care for their health and safety, take reasonable care of any University equipment in their use and comply with the University's Work Health and Safety Policy and other relevant guidelines.
 - d) Staff should complete the agile workplace arrangement form as part of the request for flexible work arrangements. A link to the form is provided in the flexible work arrangement request form.
 - e) The manager/supervisor and the staff member must ensure that appropriate security arrangements are in place, and that the staff member complies with IT policies when working remotely.
 - f) Working remotely must not be used as a substitute for responsibilities unrelated to work.
 - g) Staff are to remain accessible while working remotely during agreed working hours.



4. Where remote working is implemented on a regular basis (not as a 'one off') the manager/supervisor and the staff member should agree on the optimal time spent in the office. It is recommended managers/supervisors and the staff member agree on the days and time in the office.
5. Staff who work remotely are required to follow the same procedures for notifying of absences (e.g. sick leave or carers leave) that apply to all staff.

15 Manager/Supervisor responsibilities

1. Manager/Supervisor responsibilities include:
 - a) giving all requests for flexible work arrangements due consideration as outlined in this guideline document,
 - b) clarifying with staff member their work deliverables and timeframes
 - c) regularly reviewing progress against set goals, understanding any assistance required regarding resources, support, dependencies etc.
 - d) ensuring the agreed outcomes are delivered
 - e) communicating within the team about agreed flexible work arrangements and how they will work within the team;
 - f) ensuring that all staff members who work flexibly are included in important meetings, events and communications (for example, scheduling meetings during core hours and the day the staff member is working);
 - g) notifying relevant stakeholders who might be impacted by the new arrangements;
 - h) specifying how the arrangements will be assessed to ensure the staff member and business requirements continue to be met;
 - i) enabling the provision of technology and equipment where required and at the University's discretion;
 - j) keeping the original written agreed flexible work arrangement on electronic file and providing a copy to the staff member
 - k) approving required staff system changes, if applicable; and
 - l) identifying and managing any risks associated with the arrangement, including health, safety and wellbeing.

16 Staff member responsibilities

1. Staff member responsibilities include:
 - e) clarifying with the manager/supervisor the work deliverables and timeframes
 - f) regularly reviewing progress against set goals, request any assistance required regarding resources, support, dependencies etc.
 - g) ensuring the outcomes agreed with the manager are delivered
 - h) submitting their request in writing to their manager/supervisor using the Flexible Work Arrangement form setting out the details of the change sought including the duration, and the reasons for the change.



- i) communicating with colleagues about any new flexible work arrangements, this may include updates to email signatures where appropriate;
- j) participating in review discussions about the flexible work arrangement to ensure it continues to meet the needs of both parties;
- k) communicating with their direct manager/supervisor about interruptions to ability to work remotely, e.g. network issues
- l) taking reasonable care for their health and safety, and the safety of others;
- m) taking reasonable precautions to protect University information;
- n) taking reasonable care of any assets that have been provided to them (i.e. laptops, phones); and
- o) taking reasonable precautions necessary to secure the University's equipment.

17 Version Control and Change History

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1	6 April 2022	Chief Operating Officer 6 April 2022	First Version.