

FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUESTS - GUIDANCE NOTES FOR STAFF

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Flexible Working Policy

Finding the right work-life balance is important for all of us in terms of motivation and commitment to our work. Flexible working arrangements can be beneficial for both employees and the University. However, please bear in mind the following:

- a. The arrangements need to suit the University as well as yourself. You have a right to request flexible working, not a right for this to be approved.
- b. You are requesting a permanent change to your terms and conditions of employment, so you cannot expect to automatically revert to your original hours at a future date. Any future changes would be through the same application process and will depend on the service needs and budget at that time.

If you are only requesting an informal short-term temporary arrangement to deal with personal issues, such as reduced hours for a couple of months to care for a sick relative, discuss this with your manager as it may not be appropriate/necessary to use this procedure.

- c. If you are working here on a visa please consult HR Services before making a request as any changes to your contract may affect your visa.
- d. Consider what impact your requested arrangements would have on the work you do, the service and the rest of your team? How would the service needs be met? For example....
 - could the job be done differently, but equally effectively?
 - Would a replacement/cover be required or could the work be done at a different time or in a different way?
 - Are there any potential costs or savings?
 - Does this present any development opportunities for others in the team?
 - For academic staff you should consider the effect on teaching allocations, the research grant (i.e. could be extended if necessary?) and if you are on probation (will be affected or need to be extended?).
- e. Your manager will arrange to meet with you to discuss your request. This provides the opportunity to explore the potential benefits of your request and how it might be accommodated.

It will help your application if you have thought this through as described above and completed the appropriate section on the application form.

You do not have to explain the reasons for your request but it might help your manager to understand your needs in order to explore the best way to meet both these and those of the service.

- f. Your manager is free to explore alternative suggestions with you in order to try to find a compromise solution. S/he may suggest a temporary or trial period if they have justifiable reservations, or suggest a different start date (e.g.) if other measures need to be put in place in order to make your request workable.
- g. Agreeing to a request from a colleague does not set a precedent. Your manager must consider each case individually based on the impact on the service.
If there are already a number of other employees working flexibly in your area, your manager may be unable to approve any further requests due to the impact on the service.
- h. It may be that the type of flexible arrangements you would like are not suitable for the type of role for which you are employed. In which case you may need to consider alternative roles if you wish to pursue this.
- i. Having weighed up the situation, there is no legal obligation to grant the request if it cannot be accommodated. Your manager may turn down a request as long as the reason for turning it down is one of the business reasons set out in the policy (6.2).
- j. Once a decision has been reached this will be confirmed in writing to you.