****

**Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health**

**University of Manchester**

**Guidelines for PSS Managers on Flexible Working Arrangements**

***Introduction***

Flexible working includes any working arrangements where the number of hours worked or the time or place worked varies from standard practice. Details of the various types of flexible working arrangements and the University policies and guidance can be found on the University website through the following link: [Flexible Working](http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/human-resources/current-staff/leave-working-arrangements/flexible-working/). These additional guidelines have been developed to support Managers within the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health when managing flexible working requests in relation to the following:

* Full-time hours with a flexible arrangement
* Flexitime
* Working from home
* Compressed hours

These guidelines are applicable to FBMH staff at grades 1 to 7. They should not be construed as conferring any automatic entitlement to undertake these working arrangements as an assessment by local management will be required to ensure the arrangement meets the business needs. When assessing the business need, the local manager will need to consider the type of role as well as variations in the business needs throughout the year eg busy examination periods. The guidelines should help provide a consistent approach to the management of flexible working requests across the Faculty; although differences in business needs from one area to another mean assessment by local management is required. All flexible working requests must have received authorisation from the line manager. Agreement by a line manager to a request does not set a precedent. Each request will need to be considered on its own merit in the context of the flexible working arrangements already in place within the team.

Other flexible working arrangements such as part-time working, term-time only working, annualised hours and job share are not covered by these guidelines, although a number of the principles within this document will be applicable e.g. earliest start times. Further information on these flexible working arrangements are available on the University website detailed above and should be discussed with the relevant HR partner and agreed with the line manager.

Where possible, meetings should be arranged in the defined core hours to ensure those with flexible working arrangements can attend. There is no expectation for staff to attend meetings outside core hours.

***Detailed content***

1. **Full-time hours with a flexible arrangement**
   1. **General**

* Flexible working doesn’t necessarily involve a reduction in hours; it can include altering your working pattern. This may be due to reasons such as managing caring responsibilities.
* Flexible working is at the discretion of the Line Manager and can be reviewed as and when circumstances change.
* Once a flexible working pattern is agreed, the standard pattern should be adhered to unless otherwise agreed. Any deviations from these guidelines should be formally agreed and documented by the Line Manager.
* When a staff member requests an on-going irregular working pattern of hours, a flexible working request should be completed in line with the University Flexible Working Policy.
  1. **Working Arrangements**

Full time employees, subject to the needs of the business, may be able to work flexibly within the following boundaries:

* **Start time:** there is no expectation to start earlier than 08:00; however, staff should not start later than 10:00.
* **Departure time:** should be no earlier than 16:00 and no later than 18:00
* **Lunch:** minimum of a 30 minute unpaid lunch break
* **Annual Leave:** If the employee works different hours on different days then holiday entitlement should be converted to hours and booked by the hour (using the online calculator/conversion tool)
* **Bank Holiday/Closure Days:** If the employee works different hours on different days then, during weeks when bank holiday and closure days fall, they need to work the same proportion of their hours as someone working a more regular pattern of hours over 5 days e.g. during a week when there is one bank holiday, a full-time member of staff should work 28hours over the remaining 4 days. Any exceptions to this should be agreed with the line manager.

**2.0 Flexitime Framework**

**2.1 General**

* A flexitime scheme allows staff to have an element of flexibility over their working hours. It involves flexible start and finish times around ‘core working hours’, when attendance is required, and within the limitations of the ‘bandwidth’, which is the earliest and latest times between which hours can be worked. This allows staff more flexibility, subject to operational requirement, with their working hours.
* Flexible working necessitates teamwork and consideration from all members of staff for it to work effectively. The efficient completion of work within the Division or Function must always take priority.
* Flexitime is available for staff on salary grades 1 to 5 and will only be available locally if it can be adequately managed and monitored and be of mutual benefit to both staff member and office needs. If this not the case, then it should not be implemented due to the unnecessary administrative burden.
* Flexitime is a locally agreed arrangement and is not part of any formal contractual terms and conditions; it can therefore be withdrawn if necessary.
* Staff working part-time will normally work fixed hours and flexitime will only be accommodated if local managers feel that it can be operated appropriately and not be detrimental to managing workloads and office cover.
* This should be seen as a two way process. As the organisation is being flexible, the employee is also expected to adopt the same approach and respond positively and flexibly to requests that require an amenable attitude i.e. in the arrangements for lunchtime, sickness or essential office cover etc. As such, where an employee needs to have arrangements that require a specific work pattern, e.g. needs to start/end at a particular time of day, this should be requested formally via the flexible working policy and not as a case for flexitime.

**2.2 Working Arrangements**

* **Accounting period:** Flexitime schemes have a defined accounting period at the end of which staff are expected to reconcile actual hours worked with their contractual requirement, subject to allowance for a small number of carry over credit and debit hours. The accounting period under this scheme is 4 weeks.
* **Office opening hours:** Offices occupied by more than one individual or that are required to be open for operational business needs, as designated by the line manager, will require early morning and late afternoon cover and lunchtime cover. These hours will be determined locally within the bandwidth defined below. Staff on the flexitime scheme should organise between themselves how they will cover these hours.
* **Core hours:** These are the hours when all employees within the flexi scheme should be based at their point of work ie desk, lab etc.. In most cases this will be 09:30 to 16:00 but line manager discretion may be used for 10:00 to 16:00, where this fits with the business needs. Staff arriving after the core hours, will be deemed late for work. Staff wanting to leave work before 16:00 will need to use flexi-leave or annual leave, as necessary.
* **Bandwidth:** This is the earliest and latest times between which hours can be worked. In most cases, this will be 08:00 to 17:30 but line manager discretion may be used for 08:00 to 18:00, where this fits with the business needs. Staff working outside these hours cannot record these additional hours as flexitime.
* **Lunch:** Lunch may be taken at anytime between the hours of 12:00 and 14:00. Offices that meet the ‘office opening hours’ criteria should not be ‘closed’ for lunch except in exceptional circumstances, with prior agreement of the line manager. Staff who choose to work during their lunch period do so of their own choice so a 30 minute break must be recorded as standard on the flexi-sheet. It is expected that staff should not work beyond a five hour period without taking at least a 30 minute break.
* **Working week**: The working week comprises a standard of 35 hours, or pro rata for part-time staff.
* **Absence from work:** Annual leave, special leave and sickness should be recorded for every full day of annual leave and sickness and pro rata for half-days, as they do not affect the flexitime working arrangements.
* **Appointments:** The following appointments will be taken as a part of the accrued flexitime; dental appointments, doctor’s appointments, solicitor’s appointments, regular routine hospital appointments, waiting for deliveries/repairwork etc. Hospital appointments that are unanticipated, e.g. casualty or ‘one off’, will not be deducted from the flexitime. For appointments relating to maternity, the arrangements will be as set out in the Terms and Conditions of the Appointment.
* **Accruing flexitime**: Staff may accrue a maximum of 7 hours flexitime within a 4 week period and they will be expected to take this flexitime by the end of the next period. Flexi-time should be taken with the prior consent of the line manager and only when it fits the business needs of the organisation. Flexitime must not be taken when the requirement of the role necessitates a member of staff to be present, e.g. during an examination or key admissions period. If an employee has not taken the flexitime during the appropriate 4 week period, then the accrued time will be lost.

If it is anticipated that staff will be required to work hours in excess of the 7 hour limit for operational reasons during exceptionally busy period, this must be agreed in advance with the line manager and the time in excess of 7hours recorded as time in lieu on your annual leave card.

Flexitime should not be accrued during quiet periods in the working year, which is to be determined by the line manager. This is a system which allows staff to work flexibly and to ensure that any additional hours worked during busy periods can be reclaimed.

* **Exceeding debit limits:** This will not normally be permitted. When a member of staff marginally exceeds the limit on a single isolated occasion, then they will be asked to make up the time. There may also be circumstances when managers have discretion to allow some excess carry over in exceptional circumstances (e.g. where a period of extended leave has prevented someone from reducing debit hours). Where problems persist then a number of options will be available to managers to deal with the matter including disciplinary action in line with the University’s policy for Leave and Working Arrangements.
* **Flexi-leave:** At the end of each accounting period the hours should be verified by the line manager who will sign off and agree the amount of debit or credit to be carried forward. Any flexi-leave taken must be requested by the individual and approved by the line manager in advance of it being taken. Approval may be declined if the operational requirements of the business dictate this.

The maximum flexi- leave that can be taken in an accounting period is 7 hours.

Flexi-leave taken in core hours must be taken over no more than two flexi-leave occasions during a 4 week accounting period, with a minimum of one hour to be taken at any one time.

* **Recording Flexitime:** Flexitime will be recorded electronically, by the relevant individual on a spreadsheet and this will be held on a shared drive. For the purpose of time keeping, the clock on the computer will be used as the one to record time against. The member of staff should therefore check that their computer clock is set correctly and should advise their line manager if this is not the case. Managers may also wish to use a ‘clocking in’ system locally which could be electronic or a manual signing in system, which is helpful when staff are spread across a wider area.

In the event that the computer system is not working, the member of staff should alert their line manager. At the end of the 4 week period, the employee should print off a copy of their hours and give it to their line manager for checking and authorisation. This will then be retained for recording purposes.

* **Misuse of Flexitime System:** The flexitime records will be closely monitored via clocking in systems and/or shared drives. In the event that an employee is found to have abused the system by incorrectly recording their working hours, they will be expected to revert to standard working hours immediately and may be subject to disciplinary action.
* **Cessation of Employment:** A member of staff leaving their local area should ensure that there is no outstanding debit time left on their record sheets.

**3.0 Working From Home**

**3.1 General**

* The University is the normal place of work for all members of staff. However, it is recognised that occasional working from home may enable staff to work more effectively on a particular piece of work where concentration is important, there is little or no need for input from colleagues, and to avoid the interruptions that are part of the office environment.
* These guidelines cover occasional working from home. For the purposes of satisfying where "occasional" working from home is relevant, this should only be agreed on an *ad hoc* rather than regular basis and with each instance, is subject to separate approval by the line manager. The number of working from home days should total no more than 10 days in any calendar year.
* When considering a request for regular working from home, many of the guidelines below will still be applicable but it is necessary to complete a flexible working request in accordance with the University Flexible Working Policy. This will enable the line manager to assess whether the arrangement fits with the business needs of the area.
* The permission to work from home applies to staff working at Grade 6 or above. However if a piece of work where concentration is important is required on an occasion, permission may be granted to other staff to work from home as an exception at the manager’s discretion.
* At the same time, this must be balanced against the impact the absence of the member of staff working from home has on work colleagues and the overall effective running of the office in which they work. At all times, the overriding determinant will be the effective running of the office and the level of service it is required to provide.

**3.2 Working Arrangements**

* Any arrangements for working from home must be discussed and agreed in advance on each separate occasion with the appropriate manager, (for example, Director of Faculty Operations, Head of School/Student Operations , Head of Faculty Function), and clear work objectives and measurable deliverables agreed, which should be reported back on returning to normal working.
* Working from home should not be agreed where there are Office, Faculty or University meetings which should take precedence.
* When working from home, the employee must be available and contactable during their normal working hours (except lunch break) by office colleagues. They should circulate their home telephone number to a designated member of the Office; this will not be divulged outside the office without the employee’s permission.
* To ensure that members of staff outside the office can still contact the employee if they need to, they should set up their work voicemail and divert their calls to it, in advance. Throughout the day, the employee should periodically check their voicemail remotely by dialling 0161 275 0101.
* If the employee is ill on a day when working from home had been agreed, or need to instead take leave owing to some unforeseen circumstance, the normal notification and recording arrangements must be followed.
* The manager should ensure in advance that there will be adequate cover in the office where working from home has been agreed. Working from home should not normally be agreed for more than one day or for more than one member of the office at any one time.
* Where there is unforeseen absence of other office staff, the local manager may postpone any working from home arrangements. If this occurs on the day on which a member of staff is working from home, and the running of the office may be compromised, the Head of Office retains the right to contact the member of staff to come into work.
* Working from home should not be an alternative to attending work when a staff member is sick. This must be recorded as a sickness absence as detailed in the University Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure and the employee should not undertake any work.
* Where a staff member is required to take special leave due to an emergency, as per the University Special Leave Policy, the staff member may choose to work from home, as appropriate; however, this must still be recorded as a Special Leave day on the employee annual leave form.
* The staff member should ensure their working environment at home complies with the health and safety guidelines that would apply at work, as detailed on the health and safety services website (ref. [Home Working](http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/toolkits/work_off_campus/home_working/)). The self-assessment checklist detailed in the document must be completed by the employee and approved by their line manager.
* The staff member must also ensure the University’s policy on remote working is adhered to, in order to ensure the University meets it legal, contractual and duty of care obligations in relation to information governance. This information can be found on the University’s Data Protection website: [Bring Your Own Technology and Remote Working procedure](http://www.dataprotection.manchester.ac.uk/policiesandprocedures/). Further advice can be sought from your local Information Governance Coordinator or Information Governance Guardian.
* The Faculty is unable to meet any out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of working from home.

**4.0 Compressed Hours**

**4.1 General**

* Compressed hours is when the agreed total hours worked in a week are compressed into fewer days by working longer days.
* For this type of flexible working arrangement to be undertaken it is necessary to complete a flexible working request in accordance with the University Flexible Working Policy. This will enable the line manager to assess whether the compressed hours arrangement fits with the business needs of the area.

**4.2 Working Arrangements**

* **Working Hours:** the compressed hours should be limited so the working day is not too long.

e.g. full-time compressed hrs should be undertaken over no fewer than 4.5days

e.g. staff wishing to undertake compressed hours over a four day week would be required to reduce their working week to 31.5hours ie 0.9FTE

* **Start time:** there is no expectation to start earlier than 08:00
* **Departure time:** should be no later than 18.00
* **Lunch:** a minimum of a 30 minute unpaid lunch break should be accounted for if the hours worked in a day exceed five hours.
* **Annual Leave:** If an application to work compressed hours is approved then an adjustment will need to be made to annual leave to ensure the individual receives the correct entitlement, it may be more appropriate to convert the number of days an individual is entitled to into the number of hours so proper account can be taken of the different number of hours worked on different days.
* **Bank Holiday/Closure Days:** During weeks when bank holiday and closure days fall, the employee needs to work the same proportion of their hours as someone working a more regular pattern of hours over 5 days eg during a week when there is one bank holiday, a full-time member of staff should work 28hours over the remaining 4 days. Any exceptions to this should be agreed with the line manager.