

Flexible Working Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the University of Manchester Conferences Ltd (UMC Ltd) (“the company”) approach to flexible working arrangements which is in accordance with the ACAS code of practice and guidance on handling requests to work flexibly in a reasonable manner.
- 1.2 The company recognises that flexible working can provide benefits to both members of staff and the University, and aims to support staff where possible/practical to manage the balance between work and home life.

2. Scope

- 2.1 All members of staff have a statutory right to request a change to their contractual terms and conditions of employment to work flexibly, subject to the eligibility conditions set out below.
- 2.2 Requests for flexible working may be for any reason and are not restricted to staff with family or care commitments. For example, employees may seek flexible working in order to undertake training, reduce their working hours on the run up to retirement or to take up a hobby or interest.
- 2.3 Requests for reasonable adjustments to working hours associated with ill health or disability may also be dealt with under the Sickness and Absence Policy and Procedures in appropriate cases.
- 2.4 This Policy and associated policies and procedures do not form part of any employee’s contract of employment and may be updated at any time.
- 2.5 This policy is not to be used for the purpose of staff who are requesting to work abroad. For such requests, staff and line managers are advised to consult the [Staff Working Abroad guidance](#) document and application form.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the manager to consider requests in accordance with this policy and any associated guidance documents, and respond to the member of staff within the prescribed timescales outlined in the principles below. .

- 3.2 It is the responsibility of the member of staff to ensure that they follow the process outlined in this policy, and provide as much information as possible to ensure that their request can be fully considered.

4. Requests for Hybrid Working

- 4.1 If a member of staff, or a team wish to explore the possible option of hybrid working, please see the [Hybrid Working Principles](#) for more information.
- 4.2 In situations whereby a line manager receives flexible working requests for hybrid working from within their team/department/unit, then they are advised to consider these requests in line with the [Hybrid Working Principles](#) in the first instance.

5. Eligibility for Flexible Working

- 5.1 In order to make a request under this policy a member of staff must:
- Be employed by UMC Ltd (inclusive of all grades) and therefore this policy does not include individuals who are agency workers
 - Not normally have made another statutory request under this policy in the preceding 12 month period. However, in the event that a member of staff has a change to their personal circumstances, then managers can make an exception and allow for more than one request during this time.

6. Principles

- 6.1 A member of staff does not have a right to work flexibly but has a right to request to do so. The company will try to accommodate requests where possible and may also, if appropriate, explore alternative flexible arrangements with the member of staff in order to reach a mutually beneficial arrangement.
- 6.2 All requests will be considered as quickly as possible, with a decision reached and communicated within one calendar month of the line manager receiving the request, unless there are exceptional circumstances for why this is not possible, in which case the member of staff will be kept updated by their line manager.
- 6.3 Any subsequent appeal made by a member of staff against the decision must be concluded within a maximum period of three calendar months. This timescale may be extended if necessary with the agreement of both parties, for example, to allow for a trial period if there are some concerns as to whether any new arrangements will work.

- 6.4 Once approved, changes to working patterns will normally amount to a permanent change to the staff member's contract of employment, unless otherwise agreed.
- 6.5 Staff have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at all formal stages of this process.
- 6.6 When faced with competing flexible working requests, managers will consider each case based on its own merits and in the order in which they were received.

7. Definitions

7.1 The term "flexible working" describes any working arrangements where the number of hours worked or the time or place that work is undertaken vary from standard practice. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- a change to the number of hours of work
- a change to the times, or days of work
- a reduction in the working week
- a shorter working year
- a job share arrangement. Job-sharing is quite different from part time work where the employee is individually responsible for the work. Job-sharers share all of the responsibilities of the post which they hold jointly. Pay, leave, and other benefits are split pro rata to the hours each work. Normally each job sharer should work exactly half time.
- work patterns such as, annualised hours, compressed hours, flexitime, shift working, staggered hours and term time working.

8. Temporary Working Arrangements

- 8.1 It is recognised that occasionally, staff may need to request a temporary change to their working arrangements for a short period, for example to enable them to deal with a temporary or urgent situation. As such needs may arise quickly, in these circumstances staff should approach their manager informally in the first instance, outlining their request and the likely duration. Managers should endeavour to respond to these requests as quickly as possible, applying the principles of this policy.
- 8.2 Temporary arrangements should be for a period no longer than three months. If the temporary arrangement is required longer term, then consideration needs to be given as to whether the change to working arrangements should be formalised and made a permanent contractual change, or whether a short extension to the arrangement would be sufficient and could be

accommodated e.g. one month. Requests to repeatedly extend a temporary arrangement will not normally be agreed.

8.3 At the end of any temporary changes, the member of staff will revert to their normal working pattern.

8.4 Managers are required to inform Human Resources of any temporary agreed changes to ensure that any necessary changes to salary are made. This can be done by completing and submitting a [FW1 form](#) to HR Services (hrrservices@manchester.ac.uk).

9. Flexible Retirement

9.1 If you are aged 55 or over then you may be eligible for flexible retirement. Flexible retirement allows you to access a proportion of your pension benefits whilst continuing to work at the University.

9.2 In order to apply for flexible retirement you will need to submit a flexible working request that encompasses a reduction in your hours/salary, which is in accordance with the amounts set out in the flexible retirement provisions of your pension scheme.

9.3 If your request for flexible working is declined then you would not be eligible to apply for flexible retirement.

9.4 For further details please contact pensions@manchester.ac.uk

10. Application Process for Flexible Working

10.1 Before submitting a request to work flexibly, staff are encouraged to discuss their request informally with their manager in the first instance.

10.2 Applications should be put in writing to the line manager using the [FW1 Form](#).

10.3 Upon receipt of a request, the manager will consider it carefully, taking into account the potential benefits and weighing them up against any adverse impact of the proposed changes. Decisions will be based on whether or not a request can be granted on operational grounds. The University's ability to provide an effective service will be paramount.

- If the manager can approve the request straight away, there is no need to have a meeting unless the manager chooses to do so. The manager will notify HR Services (hrrservices@manchester.ac.uk) of any changes and this will be confirmed in writing to the member of staff.
- Where the manager requires further information or discussion, they should arrange to meet with the member of staff at a mutually convenient time to discuss the request in more detail.

This will provide an opportunity to explore the desired work pattern in depth and to discuss how this might be accommodated. It will also provide an opportunity to consider other alternative working patterns should there be any challenges in accommodating the desired work pattern outlined in the application. The manager may be accompanied by a member of Human Resources if they wish.

- 10.4 Should the member of staff be unable to attend the meeting, a further meeting will be arranged. However if they fail to attend again without good reason then the application will be considered to be withdrawn and the employee will be informed of this decision in writing.
- 10.5 If there is likely to be any delay in considering the request, the manager will keep the employee informed.

11. Trial Periods

- 11.1 Where it is not clear if a flexible working arrangement will be effective, or if both parties feel it would be beneficial, a trial period of new working arrangements may be offered to enable a full assessment of the impact of the request on the member of staff, department and colleagues.
- 11.2 The trial period will normally last between one and three months. The length of the trial period will be agreed in advance.
- 11.3 During the trial period, the changes to the staff member's terms and conditions of employment will be regarded as temporary.
- 11.4 At the end of the trial period the member of staff and manager should meet to discuss and review it, and consider the continuance of the arrangements.

Outcomes of this meeting may include:

- the new working arrangements will be approved and become permanent and contractual
- the arrangements are not approved and the member of staff will be required to revert to their previous working arrangements
- the manager may propose an alternative working arrangements which will ensure that the departmental operational objectives are met whilst still providing flexibility.

- 11.5 The outcome of the trial period will be confirmed in writing.

12. The Decision

12.1.1 Decisions will be based on whether or not a request can be granted on business grounds. The company's ability to provide an effective service will be paramount. The manager should always consult with Human Resources in cases where the application may be refused.

12.1.2 Once a decision is reached the manager will inform the member of staff of the outcome in writing, which may be to:

- agree to a new work pattern and a start date
- agree a trial period of proposed working arrangements
- confirm a compromise agreed with the member of staff
- provide a clear business reason as to why the application cannot be accepted. This reason must be one of those listed below.

13. Grounds for refusing a request

13.1 The manager should carefully consider the advantages, employee wellbeing, possible costs and potential logistical implications of any request. Advice is available from your [HR Partner](#).

13.2 Not all working patterns or flexible working options will be suitable for all departments or units. It may also be difficult to accommodate flexible working requests from several staff members in the same area. Each case will be considered on its own merits in the order in which it was received.

13.3 An application may only be rejected for one of the following business reasons:

- the burden of any additional costs is unacceptable
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- an inability to recruit additional staff
- the University considers the change will have a detrimental impact on quality
- the University considers the change would have a detrimental effect on its ability to meet customer, student or service demand
- the University considers the change would have a detrimental impact on performance of the individual, the team or the University
- there is insufficient work during the periods that the employee proposes to work
- where the requested changes will not fit in with planned structural changes

14. Appeals Procedure

- 14.1 The member of staff may appeal the decision within 10 working days of the original decision being notified to them. The grounds for the appeal should be put in writing to the UMC-designated HR (appropriate Faculty/Directorate Head of Human Resources) Partner who will appoint a suitable manager to hear the appeal, which will normally be a manager more senior to the person who made the initial decision.
- 14.2 A representative from Human Resources (not previously involved with the application) will provide guidance and support to the appeal manager. The appeal manager may, as they feel necessary, request further information and/or evidence, and may wish to meet with the employee and/or the manager. The appeal manager will make a final decision on whether the appeal should be allowed or rejected.
- 14.3 The appeal manager will notify the employee of the outcome of the appeal in writing within 10 working days of the appeal decision. Their decision will be final.

15. Terms and Conditions

- 15.1 Where a flexible working request is approved, which results in a reduction in working hours, salary and benefits will be pro-rated to reflect the new working hours. In the case of the shorter working year e.g. term time hours, the pro-rated salary will be paid over a 12 month period.
- 15.2 Other benefits, for example holiday, will be also be pro-rated.
- 15.3 The company's ability to offer and continue a job share arrangement depends on finding a suitable job share partner through the normal recruitment processes. If one partner in a job share arrangement leaves the company will offer the post as a whole time post to the remaining job sharer, or seek to recruit a replacement. If this is not possible and the requirement is for a whole time post, the company will make all reasonable efforts to redeploy the remaining job share partner.

16. Monitoring

- 16.1 The policy will be reviewed regularly and may be amended as appropriate following consultation with the UMC Board, and communication with UMC employees and any recognised trade unions. The policy and any associated policies and procedures do not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and may be updated at any time.

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Flexible Working Policy and Procedure
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Supersedes:	Flexible Working Policy and Procedure , August 2017
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Equality impact outcome:	High
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	
Related policies:	Special Leave Policy
Related procedures:	Shared Parental Leave Maternity / Adoption Leave Policies Paternity Leave Policy Parental Leave Policy Career Break Policy Retirement Policy
Related guidance and or codes of practice:	Flexible Working Guidance for Managers Flexible Working Guidance for Staff Hybrid Working Principles Hybrid Working - Manager FAQ's Hybrid Working - Staff FAQs
Related information:	
Policy owner:	Human Resources
Lead contact:	Andrew Stephens, Human Resources Manager

Flexible Working Application Form (part 1)

FW1

Please give completed form to your line manager

Employee Name:	
Employee Number:	
Job Title:	
Organisational Unit/School:	
I have made a previous flexible working request in the last 12 months	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked):	
Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (days/hours/times worked):	

I would like this working pattern to commence from:	
What impact do you think the proposed change would have on the University? How do you feel this impact might be dealt with? <i>Please read the Flexible Working Requests - Guidance Notes for Staff</i>	
Is there any additional information you wish to provide to support your application?	
Flexible Retirement – if you are over 55, are you considering drawing some of your pension if your flexible working request is agreed? (Please note this will not influence the decision regarding your flexible working request, but will help us to provide you with appropriate information.) It is your responsibility to contact the Pensions Office to find out if you are eligible and to obtain estimates. If your flexible working request is agreed, you will need to submit an application to obtain your pension. For details see: Retirement/Employment Options after age 55	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Signature:	
Date:	

Flexible Working Application Form (part 2)

FW1

To be completed by line manager

Employee Name:		
Employee Number:		
Job Title:		
Organisational Unit/School:		
Flexible working arrangements agreed (provide full details of new arrangements):		
Permanent change to contractual terms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Start date:

Temporary change to contractual terms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Start date:	End date:
If temporary, provide explanation:			
Manager name (print):			
Manager signature:		Date:	
Manager to send this form to HR Services (hrservices@manchester.ac.uk) HR Services will confirm contractual changes in writing to employee and make necessary changes to payroll and employee record			

Flexible working arrangements rejected	
Reason for rejection section (refer to section 12.3 of the Flexible Working Policy).	
Explain reasoning:	
Further comments:	
Manager name (print):	
Manager signature:	Date:
Manager writes to employee giving full explanation. Retain this form on file locally.	