**How to assess a role for flexible working**

Whether a role is suitable for flexible working (such as part time, variable hours, compressed hours, occasional homeworking, job share, term time only, among others) will depend on several factors. These include; operational requirements, impact upon colleagues or customers, the amount of collaboration required, technology or the need for work to be completed at a specific place or time.

Flexibility can take place in **when** work is done, **how** work is done, and **where** work is done.

Most jobs are made up of the following basic types of activity:

1. Collaboration activities – work undertaken with other people, at the same time. This doesn’t have to be face to face. Examples might include serving customers, having a meeting with colleagues or students, delivering a presentation.
2. Concentration activities – tasks that are often performed alone and may need a quiet space free from interruption. Examples might include analysing data, writing a report, writing up research.
3. Transactional activities – tasks that are routine or repetitive. Examples might include processing paperwork, cleaning, producing regular / standardised reports.

When considering whether a role can be suitable for flexible working consider the following:

* What percentage of the role is collaboration, concentration and transactional?
* What percentage of the activities are time dependent. Are they required in ‘real time’ or at specific start or end times, or can this be variable?
* What percentage of the activity is location dependent? Do tasks have to be done in a specific place, or can they be done remotely or anywhere?

If it can’t be determined easily, consider asking the job holder (where they are in post) to keep a note of the work they undertake each day, as categorised above, over an appropriate time period to allow analysis. Ask them to note down their tasks and consider the extent to which they are time and location dependent.

What patterns emerge from your review or data collection? What changes could be made or trialed? How could work be organised differently to allow for non-time / location dependent work to be undertaken at different times or in different places? Where work requires collaboration, does this need to be face to face or could other forms of collaboration work just as well? Where work requires high concentration, could this be done at different times or in different places? Where work is highly transactional, is it also time / location dependent? What tasks could be split between different individuals (in a potential job share situation) or across different days or hours of the week? Does the percentage of transaction, collaboration or concentration work change throughout the month or year?

Also consider:

* What are the potential benefits to the individual or the University of flexible working?
* What are the potential disadvantages to the individual or the University of flexible working?
* What tools (or access to technology / systems) would be required to support flexible working?

Examples

A role that requires both writing and delivering training courses is likely to have a combination of concentration and collaboration activities. The collaboration activities will need to be done face to face and at a specific time and location. The concentration work could be done at any time or location. This could lend itself to a split between homeworking and office based working, or flexible hours on days where there is no training delivery.

A role that requires large amounts of transactional administration might have deadlines (such as end of month completion) but don’t need to be completed at set times of the day, allowing for flexibility with daily or weekly hours.

A role that involves providing student face to face support will require large amounts of collaboration at certain times of year. When students are not present, the work may change to tasks being more focused on concentration or transactional tasks, allowing for different hours or patterns of work at different times of the year.

Where the potential impacts of flexible working are not clear, it is possible to agree a trial period of alternative ways of working, without making a contractual change or obligation. For more information, see this [how to guide.](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=36768)