**Flexible Working - FAQ**

*One of my team has asked for the same flexible working arrangement that one of his colleagues is already undertaking. Do I have to say yes?*

No. You are required to consider the request based upon the factors set out in this guidance, but you do not have to approve a request because others have previously had an approved request for the same or similar flexible working arrangements.

*I am concerned about the potential operational impacts of a flexible working request. Can I say no?*

Yes. The Flexible Working Policy sets out the reasons that you may turn down a request for flexible working. If you are not sure what the impact might be, you can consider a trial period without any commitment to make this a permanent arrangement. A trial period may provide you with the information you need to either reject or accept a request.

*Will I set a precedent by agreeing to a flexible working request?*

No. Every request should be considered on its own merits at the time it is received. Saying yes to one request will not mean that you have to say yes to any future requests.

*One of my team made a request six months ago for flexible working. It was agreed, but he has now made a subsequent request. Do I need to follow the process again?*

Generally speaking, no. Only one request can be made in twelve-month period. This individual will therefore be eligible to make another request in a further six months, unless exceptional circumstances apply and you wish to exercise your discretion to allow a further request to be made. It would be good practice to ask why a second request is being made before making a decision.

*It is going to be very difficult to assess whether or not the flexible working arrangement requested will work. What should I do?*

Consider a trial period. During a trial period there is no formal change to terms and conditions of employment. The length of a trial can be agreed between you and the individual; what is most important is that it is long enough to give you both time to assess the success of the arrangement. If the arrangement is not successful at the end of the trial, the individual will revert to their previous contractual working

arrangements. This amounts to a refusal of the request. If the trial is a success, the working arrangements can be confirmed.

*One of my team wants to work from home some of the time. Does this need to be considered as a flexible working request?*

Not necessarily. If the individual simply wants to work from home on an occasional basis for any reason, this can be an informal agreement between the two of you. If this is a permanent request to work from home then it may be sensible to ask them to make a formal flexible working request.

*I have had two requests at the same time. How do I approach this?*

Requests should be considered in the order in which they are received. If the first request is approved this will naturally change the context in terms of the second request. There is no requirement on you to make a decision based on the most deserving request, simply consider each request on its own merits in order.

*What if I agree to a request and in the future it causes problems for the department or other colleagues?*

Once a request is agreed, it is a permanent change to terms and conditions of employment. As with any other member of staff, there is nothing to prevent you having open dialogue with anyone to identify if changes can be made to working patterns to accommodate the needs of the University or its students. There is however no automatic right to require members of staff to return to previous working arrangements.

*Can I suggest an alternative arrangement to the one the member of staff has put forward in their request?*

Yes. As part of your meeting dialogue, it is acceptable for you to discuss whether there are any other alternative.

## Related Documents

Flexible Working Policy and Procedure