



FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS PROCEDURE

Approved by Executive Committee 28 November 2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This flexible working hours procedure recognises that an improved work-life balance can enhance employee motivation, performance and productivity. The University seeks to support its employees in achieving a better balance between work and personal commitments and will make every reasonable effort where possible to accommodate flexible working hour requests, taking into account the needs of the Department/School/Division/Faculty/University as well as individual needs.
- 1.2 The University's Flexible Working Hours Procedure sets out the procedure to be followed when employees initiate a request to work flexible hours in order to facilitate a better work/life balance.
- 1.3 The implementation of the Flexible Working Hours Procedure will be on a trial basis for 12 months up to the 31 December 2024. A review of the procedure will be carried out in advance of December 2024 to determine the viability of extending any such arrangement into the future.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This Flexible Working Hours Procedure outlines the procedures to be followed in respect of an employee request to avail of a flexible working hours arrangement.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This procedure is available to all employees of the University. An employee can make a formal request for flexible working hours provided they have been employed for at least 26 weeks prior to the application date. This procedure is subject to the operational needs of the University and will operate on the basis of agreement and approval with local management.

4. Definition of Terms

- 4.1 **Standard Working Week:** The standard working week for an employee is defined by the contracted working hours, whether it is full-time or part-time. The total number of hours to be worked under flexible working hours will not alter the existing contracted total working hours.
- 4.2 **Core Times:** A standard 'core time' is compulsory for all employees availing of an approved arrangement under the Flexible Working Procedure, the hours are as follows: - 10.00am to 4.00pm with a one-hour lunch break.
 - 4.2.1 The earliest start time is 8.00am and the earliest leaving time is 4.00pm. The latest start time is 10.00am and the latest leaving time is 6.00pm. Monday to Friday
 - 4.2.2 All employees must be present between 10.00am to 4.00pm unless absence is authorised by the Line Manager.
 - 4.2.3 A lunch break of 60 minutes is mandatory each day, Monday to Friday.

- 4.3 **Normal Office Hours:** Normal office hours are 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. Any implementation of flexible working hours for individual employees must not affect normal office hours. Sufficient staffing must be in place to allow for the conducting of business during normal office hours.

5. Principles

This procedure is underpinned by the following principles:

- 5.1 Requests to formally vary working hours through flexible working hours will be fully considered in a fair, open and transparent manner. Requests will be discussed with the employee and will be subject to the provision that any agreed flexible working hours arrangements must take into account the business needs of the University.
- 5.2 Each request will be considered in line with the needs of the business area. This will include impact on other employees and service provision. In some cases this may mean that it will not be possible to agree to a request.
- 5.3 If a request cannot be accommodated, the employee's line manager will discuss any available alternative options with them before a final decision is reached.
- 5.4 Employees can request flexible working hours in terms of defined daily start and finish times, within set limits, subject to Core Times and the Standard Working Week, with the agreement of local management.
- 5.5 Any implementation of flexible working hours for an individual does not alter any other contractual terms and conditions of employment.
- 5.6 If an employee subsequently changes roles, their flexible arrangement will not automatically transfer with them. In circumstances of this nature, employees must discuss their flexible working arrangement with their new line manager and make a new application should they wish to do so.
- 5.7 Implementation of flexible working hours will be on a trial basis up to the 31st December 2024 and is subject to the aforementioned procedure review.
- 5.8 Any employee availing of flexible working hours for a specific day or days of the week should adhere to the agreed flexible working hours for each day unless any temporary adjustment is otherwise agreed with the line manager in advance.

6. Application Procedures for Flexible Working

- 6.1 Employees who wish to have an application for flexible working hours considered, should have an initial discussion with their line manager to assess suitability of their role for flexible working hours.
- 6.2 Following initial discussion with their line manager, employees should complete the flexible working hours request form 4 weeks in advance of the proposed commencement date.
- 6.3 The line manager's decision to accommodate requests must primarily be based on university needs whilst also considering the needs of the

Department/School/Division/Faculty and working patterns of all team members.

- 6.4 If a request for flexible working hours cannot be facilitated, the line manager must state on the form the rationale for this decision to refuse the application and advise the employee of same.
- 6.5 Where an application for flexible working hours is refused, the applicant may wish to request a formal review. Prior to seeking a formal review, the applicant should have an informal discussion with their line manager. If the matter cannot be resolved through informal discussion, the applicant may seek a formal review by writing to the HR Business Partner for their area.

7. Termination of the Flexible Working Hours Arrangement

- 7.1 As this procedure is initially being offered on a 12 month trial basis, flexible working hours arrangements will automatically terminate at the end of the approved period or the 31 December 2024 which ever comes first.
- 7.2 Any flexible working hour arrangement may be terminated by the employee or the manager subject to a minimum of four weeks' notice unless otherwise mutually agreed. Some examples as to why a manager may terminate a flexible working hours working arrangement include, but are not limited to, business needs, insufficient team engagement, poor performance, failure to adhere to the approved start and finish time, or health and safety issues.

8. University Needs

- 8.1 The operation of the flexible working hours procedure cannot adversely affect costs or the operating requirements of the University. The relevant line manager will determine local requirements. This will also be subject to the approval of more senior management.
- 8.2 The normal operation of the Department/School/Division/Faculty must not be compromised. The onus is on all employees to cooperate in the achievement of these objectives.
- 8.3 It is important that sufficient employees be available outside core times to carry out normal work. Co-operation from all employees is therefore essential. Each office must have a sufficient employee presence to meet service needs and in accordance with normal office hours.
- 8.4 The procedure requires greater responsibility on all employees and managers to co-ordinate working hours with respect to other staff members of their Department/School/Division/Faculty.
- 8.5 The University reserves the right to withdraw the flexible working facility if it is found to be detrimental to its operations.

9. Work / Life balance Policies & Procedures

9.1 The University has a range of policies designed to support employees to balance work and home life and deal with personal responsibilities, as well as some of life's major events, details of which can be found below and [Here](#) :

- Adoptive Leave
- Carers' Leave Procedure
- Compassionate Leave Procedure
- Maternity Leave
- Parents Leave Procedure
- Parental Leave
- Force Majeure Leave
- Flexi Working Scheme
- Policy and Procedure for Blended Working
- Career Break
- Job Share Procedure
- Part-Time Working Procedure

10. Procedure Review

10.1 This procedure will be reviewed in 12 months or earlier if there is a necessary requirement to do so following the publication of the Code of Practice by the WRC on the right of parents and carers to request flexible working arrangements.

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