

Flexible Working Arrangements Procedure

Version 1 – Reconfirmed 16 June 2023

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Purpose

This procedure describes how to apply for different types of flexible working arrangements at the University of Tasmania.

Applicable governance instruments

Instrument	Section	Principles
<i>University of Tasmania Staff Agreement 2021 - 2025</i>		
<i>Fair Work Act 2009</i>		
<i>National Employment Standards</i>		
<i>People Policy</i>	1 People recruitment, management and development	1.5

Procedure

1. Guiding Principles

The University is committed to supporting all employees to achieve their work, personal, family and relationship goals by facilitating flexibility in employment and working arrangements to achieve the optimum balance between professional and personal responsibilities. Flexibility is about supporting our workforce to deliver results in the most productive way possible, by focusing on an outcome-based work model, whilst enabling a vibrant University campus and organisational culture.

The University will strive to enable all employees to achieve their flexible working goals and will consider every request for flexible working arrangements with a genuine desire to achieve an outcome which is acceptable to both the individual employee and the University. Whilst some flexible work arrangements may not always be possible due to operational or other limitations, managers and employees should be open to discussing and considering a range of flexible work options which suit their mutual objectives.

The University recognises that individual employees and leaders are accountable for enabling personal and team effectiveness and must be empowered to achieve this. To this end, UTAS embraces a principles-based approach for enabling flexible work as follows:

- **Staff take responsibility for their own needs**
 - Each of us has the responsibility to look at our own needs. We must work proactively with our manager and team to determine how to best implement flexibility and balance that will enable us to meet our university and personal goals. It is important to understand that not all career opportunities will be 100% compatible with our chosen level of flexibility and balance. In this situation it is key to remember that we have choices regarding our career and life goals, and that we each take responsibility for accepting these.
- **Flexible integration should have a positive effect on all involved**
 - The choice to adopt flexible work arrangements must have a positive impact on all involved – on our students, our team, our family and ourselves. Within the University, there will be some areas and roles where flexible arrangements are more challenging to implement because of our University commitments.
- **Quality of output is more important than the quantity of activity**
 - Fostering an environment that is flexible and fluid and is focussed on results and positive outcomes provides an opportunity for a great experience for all.
- **Teams are flexible when managing work and personal needs**
 - The success of the University requires each of us to be flexible to meet the changing demands of the University. Managers and staff are encouraged to communicate openly as University and personal needs change. There will be occasions when flexible arrangements may need to be modified in order for us to meet our University requirements.
- **We operate in a people centric way**
 - The University's commitment to equity doesn't mean treating everyone the same. It means recognising and respecting our differences, and taking the time to understand what is important to each of us.
 - It also means that we value difference and the University will implement strategies which align with both University and individual needs.
 - Consistency and care will deliver an array of different but very workable and successful arrangements.
- **Ongoing performance and contribution are a prerequisite**
 - We each have a responsibility to ensure that we contribute as individuals and team members to the University's success. Flexible arrangements should be reviewed regularly by the manager and the employee to ensure they are working successfully.
 - The University expects all staff to demonstrate personal responsibility to ensure job requirements and University commitments are met regardless of where or how they are working.
 - Flexibility is about supporting our workforce to deliver results in the most productive way possible, by focusing on an outcome-based work model, whilst enabling a vibrant University campus and organisational culture.

2. Categories of Flexible Working Arrangements

The following categories of flexible working arrangements are available to UTAS employees:

Life Flex

Informal access to leave for life's anticipated or unplanned events such as a doctor's appointment or dealing with an emergency.

Share Flex

A job divided into multiple roles performed by multiple staff.

Time Flex

Working the same number of hours overall but varying start and finish times or structuring your working day around other commitments.

Place Flex

Working at a location other than your usual official place of work - such as at home or from a different work site.

Part-time Flex

A regular work pattern where you work less than full time and are paid on a pro rata-basis for that work.

Buy Flex

Buy leave – taking additional leave above your entitled leave.

3. Applications for Flexible Work Arrangements

All UTAS employees have access to apply for flexible working arrangements. Some will be managed informally via mutual agreement between employee and leader, and others will require a formal application and approval process.

In the first instance, an employee should discuss their intention to apply for a flexible work arrangement with their manager.

Employees wishing to formally request flexible working arrangements must complete the relevant application form a minimum of 28 days prior to the flexible working arrangement being formalised.

Approval of a Flexible Work Arrangement is at management discretion and can be refused on reasonable grounds which can include:

- the new working arrangement requested by the employee being too costly;
- there is no capacity to change the working arrangements of other employees to accommodate the new working arrangements requested by the employee;
- it would be impractical to change the working arrangements of other employees, or recruit new employees, to accommodate the new working arrangements requested by the employee;
- the new working arrangements requested by the employee would be likely to result in significant loss of efficiency or productivity;
- the new working arrangement requested by the employee would be likely to have a significant negative impact on service; or
- the level of supervision or security arrangements within a building/office to accommodate the new working arrangement is inadequate.

UTAS will either approve or decline a request in writing within 21 days of the application. If the request is refused, UTAS will advise the reason(s) for the refusal.

All flexible working arrangements must be constantly monitored and formally reviewed every six (6) months, following implementation to confirm that both the employee and manager are comfortable to continue the arrangements. Flexible working arrangements may be terminated by UTAS at any time due to changing operational requirements.

For further information and advice, contact your People and Wellbeing Business Partner.

Applying for 'Life Flex' arrangements

Employees may request informal leave for life's anticipated or unplanned events such as a doctor's appointment or dealing with an emergency. This leave should always be discussed and approved by the employee's manager, should be infrequent, and should not impede on the employee's capacity to complete the necessary objectives of their role.

No formal application is required for these flexible working arrangements, however approval in writing (i.e. email) is appropriate.

Applying for 'Part-Time Flex' arrangements

A part-time employee works less than their equivalent full time contracted hours per week and the work is scheduled with set, regular hours each week or fortnight. Part-time work arrangements can benefit employees through providing them with the ability to maintain employment and skills while balancing personal interests or commitments. An employee may request to convert to a part-time working arrangement on a temporary or permanent basis. In considering whether converting to part-time employment is appropriate, employees and Managers must contemplate the operational impacts of an employee working less hours and subsequently whether the workload is manageable for both the individual and across the broader team.

Examples of a part-time flexible working arrangement may include: requesting to reduce the number of hours worked each day in order to care for school aged children; requesting to reduce the total number of working days per week in order to provide care for a person who requires it (within the meaning of the Carer Recognition Act 2010); requesting to work part time in order to commence a smooth transition to retirement.

A formal request for changes to hours can be made via the *Fraction Roster Change Form*.

Applying for 'Share Flex' arrangements

Job sharing is when two or more employees share the duties of one job on an ongoing or short-term basis and can include:

- two employees sharing one position and all tasks however working on different days with no overlaps.
- two employees sharing one position however taking on different aspects of the job.
- two employees working three days per week with one day overlap when both are at work.
- two employees working alternate weeks (or longer periods in the case of operational employees on a roster).

Employees who share a position will be employed on a permanent part-time basis. If one of the employees on a job share arrangement leaves the organisation, the other affected employee will be consulted to explore alternative job share or flexible work arrangements. UTAS reserves the right to withdraw a job share arrangement if one of the employees leaves and an alternative option is not agreed.

Once a job share arrangement has been arranged and agreed between the job share parties and the relevant line manager, a formal application for approval of changes to hours can be submitted via the *Fraction Roster Change Form*.

Applying for 'Time Flex' arrangements

Flexible working hours allow employees to work their usual hours however with either early or late start and/or finish times e.g. 7am-3pm daily instead of 9am-5pm.

Compressed working hours allow employees to work their normal full-time hours over less than the five standard workdays in a week. The hours need to be within the standard working hours of the UTAS Staff Agreement. Examples can include:

- Working 8.44 hours per day for 9 days in a fortnight, providing a day off per fortnight; or
- Working 7.72 hours per day for 19 days in a month [four weeks], providing a day off per month [every four weeks]

A formal request for changes to rosters / hours can be made via the Fraction Roster Change Form.

Applying for 'Place Flex' arrangements

To enable a vibrant campus atmosphere, team effectiveness, and enhanced organisational culture, UTAS employees are expected to fulfil the responsibilities of their roles primarily on campus. Employees may wish to apply to undertake some of their work responsibilities from home. As a guide, employees should aim to spend a minimum of 60% of their working hours in the office / campus environment.

Working from home may be as follows:

- Fixed, regular and ongoing days working from home (i.e. every Friday working from home, with Monday to Thursday in the office environment). This scenario requires a formal application and approval process, by completing the Flexible Working Arrangements Application Form.
- The employee working from home as required on an ad hoc basis. Ad hoc arrangements should be irregular and can be arranged informally via either written or verbal approval from the Manager without the formal application and approval form being necessary. Should ad hoc arrangements become a regular occurrence, these should be formalised according to the application and approval process (which can be found at the bottom of this document).

Consideration should be given to the following before a formal working from home arrangement is approved by the Manager:

- The home-based work area provides an appropriate level of privacy and security to enable the employee to fully comply with UTAS' policies relating to the protection of sensitive, personal and confidential information.
- An employee's performance prior to making the request and their track record of working autonomously.
- If the employee is a supervisor/manager, their ability to supervise and lead effectively whilst working from home.
- Managers are encouraged to consider the broader implications of individual flexible working arrangements on the team environment, ensuring there is always suitable team representation in the office environment, and the opportunity for collaboration is not diminished.
- Working from home arrangements are not a substitute for childcare or other dependent care. Employees are responsible for ensuring that appropriate childcare or dependent care arrangements are in place.
- Employees who work from home are responsible for securing a suitable internet connection which enables sufficient connectivity for remote working, at their own expense, together with the necessary equipment required to create an ergonomically appropriate home work station.

Formal requests for ongoing working from arrangements can be submitted for approval via the *Working From Home Request Form*.

Applying for 'Buy Flex' arrangements

Employees in ongoing or fixed term roles are entitled to purchase additional annual leave each year of five days or more. A salary deduction will be put in place for 12 months to pay for additional leave, which will accrue progressively over that 12-month period.

Applications for purchased leave can be submitted via the *Annual Leave Purchase Form*

4. Flexible Working Arrangements and the Fair Work Act

Some employees have a legal entitlement under the Fair Work Act to request flexible working arrangements. This includes employees who are:

- A parent of, or have a responsibility for the care of a child who is school age or younger;
- A carer (within the meaning of the Carer Recognition Act 2010);
- A person with a disability;
- Aged 55 or older;
- Experiencing family violence; or
- Providing care or support to a family member, or someone they live with, who is experiencing family violence.

and who have worked with the employer for at least 12 months, or long term casuals who have a reasonable expectation of continuing employment on a regular and systemic basis.

5. Resolving Issues

Employees dissatisfied with a decision made in relation to flexible working arrangements can contact their People and Wellbeing Business Partner for further guidance.

Related procedures

N/A

Versions

<u>Version</u>	Action	Approved by	Business Owner	Approval Date
Version 1	Reconfirmed, unchanged	Chief People Officer	Chief People Officer	16 June 2023
Version 1	Reconfirmed, unchanged	Chief People Officer	Chief People Officer	3 June 2022
Version 1	Approved	Chief People Officer	Chief People Officer	11 June 2021

Definitions

N/A