

**Wright State University
Flexible Work Arrangement
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Manager:

- 1. Does an employee have to work in a job for a certain length of time before he/she can apply for a Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA)?**

Not necessarily. It is the supervisor's responsibility to review the needs of the college and/or department to ensure adequate coverage. However, the supervisor should consider, before agreeing to any flexible work arrangement request, whether the employee has been in their position long enough to have established themselves as someone who produces timely deliverables and whether or not the individual is currently meeting all performance expectations.

- 2. If a supervisor receives multiple requests and all cannot be accommodated, how does he/she rate the needs of the requestor to decide which requests to approve? Would an employee's reason for requesting a Flexible Work Arrangement be an important factor?**

Reasons for an employee's request should not be used as a significant factor in determining which requests to approve (*any request submitted out of a need for a reasonable accommodation, should be submitted through the Office of Equity and Inclusion*). The supervisor should ask the requesting employees for assistance in identifying solutions that would enable each of the employees to meet the needs of the college/division, as well as their individual needs. However, when employee requests for flexible work arrangements are beyond what is operationally feasible, performance and individual job responsibilities, should be the primary considerations.

- 3. As a supervisor, how do I deal with the possibility that everyone is going to want to have Fridays or Mondays off?**

Decisions for approving or denying flexible work arrangements should be based on college/departmental needs. Objective criteria, such as performance, demand of customers or specialized skills should be considered. You may need to get input from each of the requestors to discuss alternatives to the arrangements being requested. Always provide direct and transparent communication and when requests exceed operational capacity, you must be willing to say so.

- 4. As a supervisor, may I require someone else to change their schedule to accommodate others who want a flexible work schedule?**

While supervisors may change work schedules to accommodate the needs of the operation, such a change is not advisable in this situation. It may appear that you are favoring one employee over another one. It is advisable to consult with your supervisor as well as with your Human Resources Business Partner to address concerns which could result in unintended consequences.

5. Can flexible work arrangements be used to deal with busy times of the year when there is a need for an office to be open earlier or later?

Your college and/or department may need to open earlier or later during the beginning of a semester or during the summer if you are working with students. If this is a short-term arrangement (less than 3 months), then it is not necessary to operate under the Flexible Work Arrangement Guidelines. Supervisors should be clear with regard to these scheduling expectations and should plan to provide as much advance notification as possible to all employees who will be impacted during these times.

6. Can employees work on Saturday or Sunday as part of their flexible work schedule?

This will be determined based on if the needs of the department are being met by allowing such an arrangement. It should be noted however, that the use of additional resources (additional heating/cooling) to accommodate a flexible work arrangement is not an acceptable agreement to a flexible work arrangement request.

7. We have several employees with flexible work arrangements in my office but I am worried that coverage is going to be a problem during busy times of the year. Is there anything I can do?

Many colleges/departments have peak times where everyone needs to be in the office during regular business hours. Supervisors can require that flexible work arrangements be suspended during these times. Scheduling exceptions and expectations, when foreseeable, should be noted on the Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement Form.

8. Once a flexible work arrangement has been approved, how can it be introduced smoothly into the work group to address perceptions of fairness?

It is good management practice to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently and to ensure that no one employee becomes overloaded with additional work due to another employee's flexible work arrangement. It is also necessary to ensure that proper communication to those individuals impacted by an approved flexible work arrangement is given. If there is a worry that colleagues may find the flexible work arrangement unfair, supervisors, at the planning stage, should meet with the work group/department to define work parameters and develop a system to manage the work group/department's work schedule.

For example, it would be useful to agree to procedures for the following:

- Methods of briefing staff – e.g. on new tasks, progress, continuing tasks
- Methods of dealing with forwarding – e.g. calls from the office, urgent correspondence, other correspondence
- Scheduling meetings – how and when will they be scheduled and how meetings will be conducted. For example, will it be required for the flexing employee to meet in person or is a conference call acceptable.
- Any discussions relative to the flexible work arrangements e.g. work not getting done, deadlines being missed, etc. – how and when these type of issues will be dealt with.

9. What is the appropriate level supervisor to be involved in approving an employee's flexible work arrangement request?

This may vary by college/department. If you are a supervisor who has been asked to review a flexible work arrangement request and you are not sure if you are the appropriate person to start the process, consult with your own supervisor.

10. If an employee would like to have a flexible schedule during the summer months between graduation and the start of school - do, they need to apply for a flexible work arrangement?

No, for short term or periodic flexible work requests (less than 3 months) supervisors are free to use their best discretion in allowing such requests.

11. How often should the flexible work arrangement be reviewed?

It is advisable that any FWA be reviewed regularly, but not less than once annually, or as needed. If performance standards diminish as a result of the FWA, this should be reviewed immediately. Employees should be notified in advance if a change in their existing flexible work arrangement becomes necessary.

Employee:

1. How long could it take for my proposal for a FWA to be approved by my supervisor?

There is no specific timeline in place. If you feel that approval or denial of your flexible work arrangement request is taking longer than necessary, follow up with your supervisor to inquire as to the status of your request. As a reminder, thoughtful consideration should be given to each FWA request submitted, and immediate feedback may not be possible. However, a response should be provided within a reasonable timeframe. You may also choose to consult with your Human Resources Business Partner for suggestions on appropriate and timely follow up.

2. Can my flexible work arrangement be changed? Who can make a change?

The first priority for a supervisor is to have an appropriately staffed and functioning college/department, so if something changes in the department, a flexible work arrangement may need to be altered. Supervisors are encouraged to provide reasonable notice to an employee (not less than two weeks) when changing or terminating an existing FWA. However, the employee may request to terminate the FWA at any time. If there is an immediate and critical need, a supervisor has the option to change an employee's schedule with shorter notice.

3. What happens if a meeting, training session or important event is scheduled when I am supposed to be off?

It is important to remember that the work of the university and the department must not suffer as a result of employees using flexible work options. There will be events or meetings that cannot be scheduled around your flexible schedule. You and your

supervisor would need to discuss and determine how it will be handled. In some cases, you may have to come in. The schedule for non-exempt employees would have to be adjusted so that overtime is avoided.

4. What if my schedule needs to be adjusted for a short period of time for a special event or specific project? Do I need to fill out the form?

No. If a schedule is being adjusted for a short time, less than 3 months, it is not necessary to use the flexible work arrangement process.

5. I want to take a class, but don't want to have to take vacation. Can this process be used to accommodate that request?

The flexible work arrangement process could be a viable option for such a scenario. If your supervisor agrees that such a request is operationally feasible, you should be able to develop a flexible schedule, on a semester-by-semester basis to meet the needs of the college/department, as well as to accommodate your class schedule.

6. What do I do if my flexible work arrangement isn't working out?

It is up to you and your supervisor to ensure that the flexible work arrangement is compatible with both the needs of the college and/or department as well as with meeting your personal needs. You should have a discussion with your supervisor to address any issues with the agreed upon arrangement. You should also consider whether a modification to the existing arrangement, might be necessary.

Benefit/Payroll Issues

1. How is vacation, sick leave or holiday calculated under a flexible work arrangement?

Tracking vacation, sick leave and holidays is the responsibility of the employee and his/her supervisor.

2. How does an employee on a flexible work schedule record sick or vacation time?

When an employee takes sick or vacation time they must indicate the hours they were regularly scheduled to work. For example, if a non-exempt employee is regularly scheduled to work four (4) 10-hour days each week and is sick on one of the scheduled days, they must indicate 10 hours of sick time on their bi-weekly timesheet.

3. If an employee is working an alternate schedule (four 10-hour days Monday – Thursday) and is sick on Tuesday, can the employee decide to come in to work on Friday so they do not have to take sick time for the week?

Normally, since the employee's new alternate work schedule is Monday -Thursday, the employee would take 10-hours of sick leave on Tuesday. In certain circumstances, the manager may allow the employee to work 10-hours on Friday in lieu of sick time on Tuesday. This allowance should be an exception and only allowed in special situations.

- 4. If a paid holiday falls on a day on which an employee is not normally scheduled to work, can the employee take off one of his or her regularly scheduled days that week?**

Most employees are eligible to receive holiday pay, based on their full-time equivalency (FTE). It is university practice that an employee working an alternate schedule be allowed to revert back to the customary, 8-hours a day/5- day workweek, in order to allow them to receive their 8 hours of holiday pay during a week with a holiday.

- 5. How do flexible work arrangements affect the accrual rate for Vacation and Sick Leave?**

No adjustment is required as long as the total regular hours worked remains the same.

- 6. What happens if there is an inclement weather scheduled on my non-work day?**

An inclement weather day on your non-scheduled work day would have no impact on your work time.

- 7. How would a flexible work arrangement affect my benefits?**

As long as an employee's total regular work hours remain the same, employee benefit eligibility will remain the same.