

Flexible Working Policy

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Flexible Working

Policy

1 Background

Flexible working is a phrase that describes any working pattern adapted to suit an individual's needs. Under the provisions set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, with effect from 30 June 2014 all employees have a statutory right to request a flexible working pattern. In this context employers are required to consider all requests in a reasonable manner. The guidelines for dealing with all requests are set down in the ACAS Code of Practice on handling requests to work flexibly.

Under this policy all requests for flexible working made under the provisions will be given due consideration in the context of business requirements. A flow chart summary of the process is shown in Appendix A.

2 Benefits of Flexible Working

The University recognises the various benefits of working flexibly which can include:

- the retention of skilled and experienced members of staff
- improved staff morale, motivation, commitment and engagement
- enhanced recruitment by appealing to a more diverse workforce
- reduced levels of unexpected absenteeism
- better levels of productivity and competitiveness
- enhanced reputation, contributing to the University being an employer of choice

3 Qualifying Criteria

This procedure applies to all staff with at least 26 weeks continuous employment with the University who are seeking a change to their working arrangements for any reason. Staff employed for less than 26 weeks, workers and agency staff do not have a statutory right to request flexible working.

4 Application Procedure and Timescales

An eligible employee who is seeking a change to their working arrangements within the scope of this procedure will complete an "Application for Flexible Working" Form available from <http://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/policies/hr/> detailing the nature of the flexibility they are seeking. Applications may be submitted up to three months in advance of the date you wish your flexible working to begin. Applications submitted further in advance may be considered in exceptional circumstances. The Form should be submitted to the applicant's line manager and a copy sent to Human Resources.

The request can be for a variation in:

- The hours required to be worked
- The times when required to work
- The place where required to work

Appendix B provides examples of the type of flexible working requests that may be requested and considered.

Under the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, the consideration process, inclusive of appeals, must be completed within three months of receipt of the application. It is therefore recommended that the timescales set out below are followed.

The application should normally be considered and either agreed or a meeting held to discuss the application, within 28 days of receipt of the Form.

The line manager, following consultation with Human Resources, will contact the member of staff to discuss the request. If the request is agreed, Human Resources will provide the employee with written notification of the variation in contract outlining the date from which it is to take effect.

If the request is not agreed at this stage the line manager and a Human Resources representative should meet with the member of staff to discuss the application. The employee may choose to be accompanied by a fellow employee, or trade union representative. This meeting will normally take place within 28 days of receipt of the application.

Following the meeting, the applicant's line manager will normally notify the employee of the decision within 14 days of the meeting date. If a contract variation has been agreed this will be confirmed in writing by Human Resources, including the date the variation is to take effect.

If the application has been refused then the member of staff will be notified of the reason/s for refusal (as set out in Appendix C). The notification will also advise about the appeal procedure.

5 Appeal Procedure

If the application is refused the employee may appeal the decision. The appeal should be submitted in writing, setting out the grounds of the appeal, within 14 days of receipt of the written decision. The applicant may appeal the decision if there is new information that was not available to the line manager at the time they made the original decision or if the applicant thinks that the application was not handled reasonably in line with this policy. The appeal should be submitted to the next level of management within the Department/School with a copy sent to the Director of Human Resources.

An appeal meeting should be arranged within 14 days of the receipt of the appeal. The employee may choose to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union representative. The employee will be notified of the decision on the appeal within 14 days of the date of the appeal meeting.

6 Withdrawal of an Application

The University may treat an application as being withdrawn where the employee has:

- Notified the withdrawal orally or in writing
- Failed to attend a meeting under this procedure more than once without reasonable cause
- Refused to provide information necessary to assess the application without reasonable cause.

Except where the withdrawal has been provided in writing, Human Resources will confirm the withdrawal to the employee in writing.

7 General

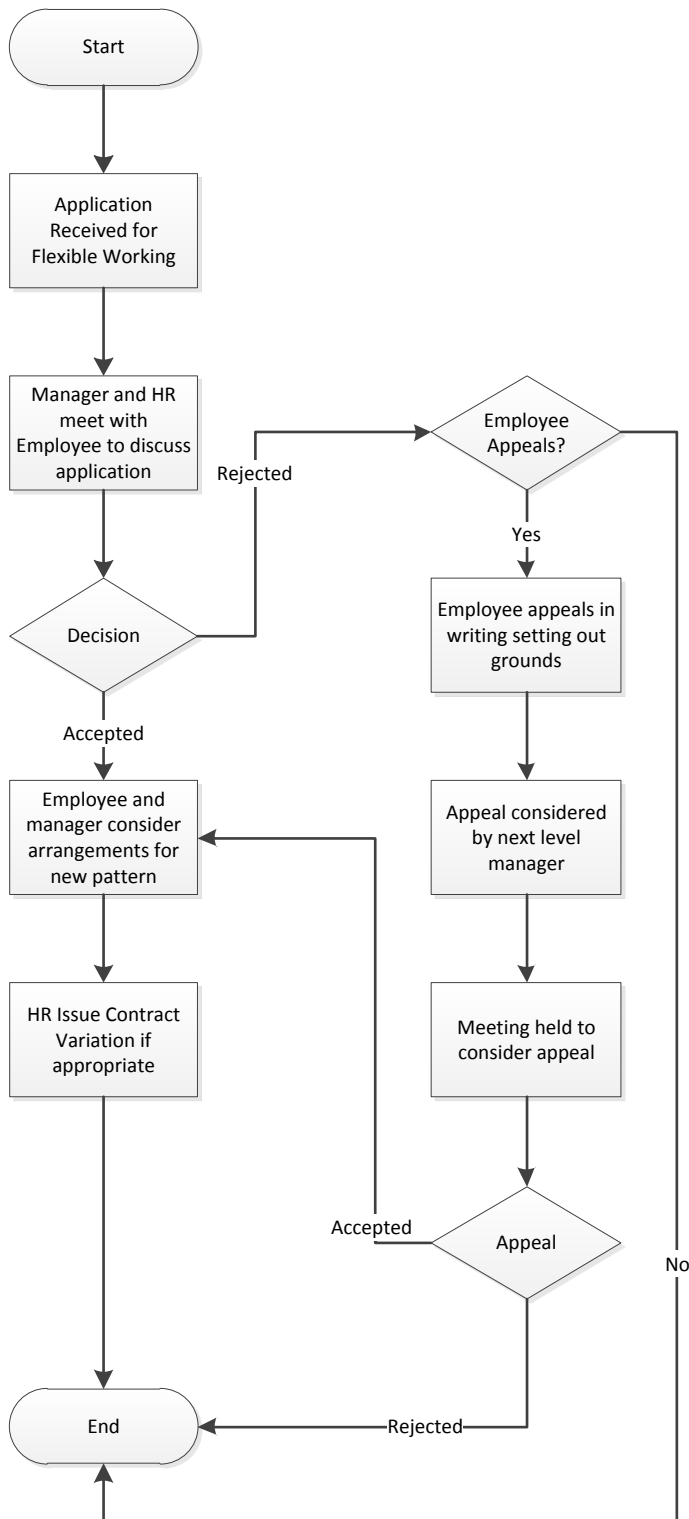
The timescales for considering an application or an appeal may be varied by mutual agreement of the parties.

There may be instances where the line manager is unsure that the arrangements requested are sustainable in the business or about the possible impact on other employees. In such cases, the line manager and employee may agree for the arrangements to be in place on a temporary or trial period basis rather than rejecting the request.

Subject to discussion with their line manager, the accompanying employee will be given time off during working hours to attend any meetings with the employee specified by this procedure.

Any subsequent request for Flexible Working may only be submitted once a 12 month period has elapsed.

Appendix A: Process Flow Diagram



Appendix B: Types of Flexible Working Arrangements

Flexible working describes any work pattern adapted to suit individual needs. Common types of flexible working are:

Part time:	working less than the normal hours, perhaps by working fewer days per week.
Job sharing:	part time working where two (or occasionally more) people share the responsibility of a full time job between them.
Term-time:	working only during University semesters.
Annualised hours:	working an agreed number of hours over the course of a year, but those hours can be spread unevenly throughout the year. This could be a mixture of part-time and full-time working (e.g. working full-time during a department's busiest period and working part-time for the remainder of the year).
Homeworking:	regularly working from home. Further guidance can be obtained from the University's Guidelines for Home Working.
Variable working pattern:	starting and finishing work earlier/later than the normal working pattern.

Appendix C: Statutory Grounds for Refusing a Request for Flexible Working

The refusal of a request must relate to at least one of the nine statutory reasons as follows:

1. the burden of additional costs
2. detrimental effect on ability to meet customer need
3. inability to re-organise work amongst existing staff
4. inability to recruit additional staff
5. detrimental impact on quality
6. detrimental impact on performance
7. insufficiency of work during the periods that the employee proposes to work
8. planned structural changes
9. such other grounds as may be specified by regulations