

# **GUIDELINES FOR FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS (FWA)**

**Temple University**

**Subject:** Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA) Guidelines

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**Office Responsible for Review of Guidelines:** University Human Resources

## **I. SCOPE**

Temple University is a complex organization with diverse work environments, Flexible Work Arrangements are offered as a guideline rather than as a policy as no single approach would apply for all situations. These guidelines apply to all full and part-time University employees with the acknowledgement that some positions do not lend themselves to certain flexible work arrangements due to the nature of the work performed. Eligibility, guidelines and approval will vary by department and individual work requirements. These guidelines will help supervisors and employees think more carefully and creatively about how a flexible work arrangement can support institutional goals and improve employee satisfaction.

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

We support Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) as a way to foster a desirable and productive work experience while allowing us to adjust to the new work environment and provide employees with the flexibility needed to balance work and personal responsibilities.

While not all positions will be suited to FWAs, consideration of flexible work schedules will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis taking into account departmental needs and the employee's ability to maintain a high level of service. Implementation of FWAs should maintain or enhance the quantity, quality, and productivity of the employee's level of service. An FWA must be authorized in advance by an employee's supervisor and department leadership. Any modifications to an existing authorized agreement will also require approval. There is not a guarantee that all requests will be approved.

Requests for FWAs typically would be approved in cases where the:

- Business needs of the department will be met.
- Employees have more than 6 months of service although approval of an FWA sooner may be necessary as a recruiting tool. Shortening the waiting period requires approval of the department supervisor and school/department leadership.
- Supervisors may also consider an employee's performance, attendance and productivity levels in determining whether an FWA is approved.

Requests for FWAs may be approved in cases where the:

- Position does not require the employee's physical presence.
- Position essential tasks that are portable and can be performed away from the main worksite as effectively as at the work site.
- Work of the employee can be monitored by quantity and quality measures.
- Excellent levels of service can be maintained without hardship on customers or coworkers.
- Employee may not require frequent in-person supervision, direction or input from others who are on-site.
- Employee has sufficient knowledge and skill to be able to accomplish their work

Questions about related policies or procedures should be directed to your school/department's Business Office or the Human Resources Office.

### III. Types of Job Flexibility

#### Formal Job Flexibility

The formal agreement process outlined in this guide is designed for those employees and supervisors who want to institute an arrangement that *consistently differs* from their group's standard hours or work location, as in the examples described below.

A flexible work arrangement (FWA) is defined as work hours, workweek or work location that regularly vary from the standard schedule of the department in which the staff member works. FWAs include flex time, compressed work week, remote work, reduced work schedules and job sharing.

#### Definitions

Core Office Hours	A block of hours within the workday or work week, determined by the department based on their unit's business needs, during which all employees scheduled to work that day must be working and available for meetings and other departmental activities.
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Core Day(s)	Day(s) within the workweek on which all employees are expected to be at work in the office. Some departments may not have core days. Others may have a weekly meeting that requires in-person attendance.
Flex Time	A work schedule with agreed upon starting and ending times that differ from the standard schedule. Schedule should be set by one's supervisor and follow the department's core hours/days. The schedule may be the same each day or can vary from day to day. Employees still work the same number of scheduled hours as they would under a traditional arrangement.
Compressed Workweek	A work schedule that condenses one or more standard workweeks into fewer, longer days. The schedule must include a minimum of eight out of ten workdays over a two-week period and observe the department's core days. Employees still work the same number of scheduled hours as they would under a traditional arrangement.
Remote Working	A work arrangement in which employees regularly work from a home office or at an alternative worksite during part of a day or workweek. Contingent upon the staff member having a suitable off-site work location and equipment. Employees still work the same number of scheduled hours as they would under a traditional arrangement.

<p>Reduced Work Schedule</p>	<p>Assuming no negative impact on the department or other employees' workload and customer service.</p> <p>Two options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A regular work schedule that varies from the standard 40 hours per week. Will result in a prorated reduction in salary. In order to retain full benefits employees must work at least 35 hours per week. Leave accruals will be adjusted based on regular work hours.</li> <li>2. A 10- month appointment to permit a block of time off during a non-peak season (June-July) for the department. The employee maintains full-time status, is paid for 10 months over a 12-month timeframe, and leave accruals are earned on a prorated basis.</li> </ol>
<p>Job Share</p>	<p>A work arrangement where two staff members share the responsibilities of one full-time position, in which each staff member works part-time and shares a specific proportion of a full-time position. The two staff members will not be eligible for benefits with the exception of prorated time off if scheduled for at least 20 hours weekly.</p>

For the above arrangements, the supervisor and employee will work together to identify an acceptable agreement. The employee typically will take the first step by developing a proposal using the Request for Flexible Work Arrangement form, although a supervisor may initiate the conversation based on department need. The supervisor will review the proposal and work with the employee to modify as necessary. Once an arrangement is approved, the first three months of FWA will be a trial period. The formal agreement should then be reviewed and re-signed at least annually. The written agreement must state that the arrangement is subject to change or revocation at any time at the discretion of the supervisor.

Please note that any employee approved for an FWA remains subject to all Temple University policies, procedures and rules of conduct. Bargaining unit employees remain subject to their current bargaining agreement. A flexible work agreement/schedule modification for non-bargaining staff does not change the at-will relationship between the employee and the University.

#### IV. Considerations and Responsibilities

In developing and approving arrangements, the employee and supervisor should consider the following.

<p><b><i>The Job</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· What are the key responsibilities and what are the tasks required for success in the job?</li> <li>· If the job involves supervision of others, how will a flexible work arrangement affect that supervision?</li> <li>· What goals were established through the performance development process? How will this arrangement help meet those goals?</li> <li>· How will a flexible work arrangement sustain or enhance the ability to get the job done?</li> <li>· How will any confidential information be adequately protected?</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Performance</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· How will work/performance be reviewed and evaluated? How will success be measured?</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Your Clients</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· How will business needs be met (or exceeded)? How flexible can you be to changing business needs? Who are your key clients? How will clients be impacted by your restructured schedule? How will you ensure that customer service needs will be met?</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Your Team: Co-Workers, Supervisor, &amp; Direct Reports</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· What practices will you need to establish to accommodate flexibility?</li> <li>· What will the impact be on your team members?</li> <li>· How will your restructured schedule affect work volume, peak periods, projects in progress, and/or overtime?</li> <li>· What will be the impact on coverage within your team (coworker's illnesses/leaves/vacations)? How does your plan address this?</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>Tools and Resources</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· What are the tools, resources, and best working environments required for successfully completing tasks and commitments?</li> <li>· What equipment/technology will be required to support the flexible work arrangement? In most cases, staff will be expected to provide their own equipment such as computers, printers, scanners, webcams, telephone lines, cost of utilities and phone and internet service if they wish to telecommute.</li> <li>· Are there any cost savings for you or Temple that might result from your flexible work arrangement?</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Employee Self Evaluation</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Are you self-directed and comfortable working without close supervision? Do you manage your time well? Are you comfortable working alone for long periods of time? How do you manage those employees who report to you?</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Pay Benefits and Employment Status</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· What are the benefit implications and impact, if any, on employment status and salary, job grade, vacation (e.g. if flexible work arrangement includes a request for reduced hours)?</li> <li>· Note that, if the arrangement involves a reduction in hours, it may not be possible to increase those hours later.</li> </ul>

**Flexibility Considerations and Responsibilities**

Creating a supportive and effective environment for flexibility will require that everyone work together and focus on outcomes and task completion. **Communication is imperative for a successful FWA policy.**

**Principles for Effective Workplace Practice**

- The needs of each group and employee are unique and so there can be differences in the flexible work practices between groups and individual employees.

- FWAs need to be mutually beneficial and meet or exceed the business needs of the group. The arrangement should be achieved without curtailing normal service hours; incurring additional costs; impairing the group's effectiveness in carrying out its function; placing undue burden on others in the group, whether individual employees or supervisors; or creating problems of safety, security, or supervision.
- The supervisor of each group is accountable for meeting the group's goals and service standards and has the authority and responsibility to approve or deny requests for flexibility for individual team members. Approval should be based on the business merit of each request.
- Formal job flexibility proposals should be in writing to ensure clarity and document approval. These formal job agreements should be reviewed and adjusted at least once a year.
- It must be clear that FWAs are subject to change or revocation at any time at the discretion of the supervisor.
- Alternative work arrangements should be clearly communicated to all members in the group and direct clients using tools including but not limited to a department calendar visible to all, office hours in email signature and email out of office messages.

### **Individual Employee Responsibilities**

Individuals must take the initiative to ensure that they are able to work effectively in a flexible way. Each employee is responsible for:

- Working effectively and efficiently independent of time and location and maintaining the expected quality and quantity of work.
- Maintaining satisfactory attendance.
- Communicating with their supervisor as early as possible when any needs arise that would require changes to flexible work arrangement and/or impede their ability to maintain efficiency within the arrangement.
- Working with their supervisor and teammates to understand what needs to be done and in what timeframe.
- Communicating work location and status of tasks clearly with team members and clients *when appropriate*.
- Ensuring access to the tools, including computer and internet access, needed to work at home. Each employee is responsible for providing their own equipment, connectivity or furniture when working from home.
- Making sure that the remote worksite is free from distractions including demands on employee's time and attention by dependents.
- Being able to adjust as business needs change or circumstances change.



- Making yourself available and changing schedules in order to be available for special department/school meetings, training or similar events.

### **Supervisor Responsibilities**

- Supervisors have the responsibility to ensure that the business needs of the unit are being met when FWA are made such as:
- Setting clear goals and expectations for each team member
- Promptly addressing performance concerns with individual employees.
- Facilitating strong team dynamic, to allow for successful teamwork whether members are on-site or remote
- Establishing practices and group procedures that ensure communication and collaboration, e.g., daily check-ins, IM groups, etc.
- Providing tools needed to for efficiency and effectiveness of FWA
- Ensuring formal agreements are documented and part of the record for each employee.
- Effectively supervising and monitoring the effectiveness of a formal agreement and adjusting as necessary.
- Evaluating new agreements during a three-month trial period, making adjustments as needed
- Reviewing all agreements regularly and at least annually in a formal manner

## **V. Additional Considerations**

### **Time Off**

Staff who work remotely and are unable to work on their approved day(s) because of illness must use sick leave and must report their absence to their supervisor in the same way as they would in the event of absence from the regular Temple work site.

Staff who work remotely and wish to be relieved of responsibility for work on a particular day or days must use vacation or personal leave. Remote work privileges will be revoked if staff are found to be unavailable for work on days they have agreed to work remotely.

Holidays and administrative days granted by the university are established at a rate of 8 (or 7) hours per day for a full-time employee. In the event of a scheduled holiday occurring on a flex day when the employee would ordinarily be scheduled to work more than 8 (or 7) hours, the employee may either work to make up the difference or charge vacation or personal leave for the difference between their ordinary holiday hours (8 or 7) and their scheduled hours for that day. There should be no impact on the total weekly hours.

In the event of a scheduled holiday occurring on a day when the employee on a compressed work schedule would ordinarily be off, the employee shall receive an alternate day off in the same workweek. If the employee would ordinarily be scheduled to work more than 8 (or 7) hours on that day, the employee may either work to make up the difference or charge vacation or personal leave for the difference between their ordinary holiday hours (8 or 7) and their scheduled hours for that day. There should be no impact on the total weekly hours.

In certain cases, taking family or medical leave may be a more appropriate option than a flexible working arrangement. For more information, please see the FMLA and/or medical leave information on the [Human Resource website](#).

### **Violations of Rules of Conduct**

Staff approved for FWA may not engage in other employment during hours approved to work remotely. Staff found to be engaging in other employment during work hours will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment in accordance with the Rules of Conduct and revocation of the FWA.

Failure to fulfill normal work requirements, both qualitative and quantitative, may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination in accordance with the Rules of Conduct and revocation of the FWA.

### **Insurance**

The University assumes no liability for injuries occurring in the staff member's home workspace outside of work hours or outside the course and scope of the employee's employment, the specified work location and/or the telecommuting agreement. It is the staff member's responsibility to make sure that their homeowner's or renter's insurance covers injury arising out of, or relating to, business use of the home. Work-related injuries should be reported as required under the Workers Compensation policy outlined in Temple University [Employee Manual](#) accessible on the Human Resource website.

Staff should note that some homeowner policies do not automatically cover injuries arising out of, or relating to, the business use of the home. For their own protection, staff should have their homeowner's/tenant's liability policy endorsed to cover bodily injury and property damage to all third parties arising out of or relating to the business use of their home.

Staff who live in rented property should be aware that their lease may not permit business use of the premises.

## **Taxes**

The University normally withholds income tax based on the location of the staff member's Temple department, not on the location from which the staff member works remotely. Staff members working outside of the City of Philadelphia who have a formal remote work agreement with a specific work schedule stipulated should estimate the percentage of time they are working from home each month and make the change accordingly in TUportal/Staff Tools/PA Act 32 Certification Update. An alternative option would be to request a refund of withheld city taxes on a monthly basis using the Temple University [City Wage Tax Refund Application Form](#) found on the TUportal. Staff may wish to consult their tax advisor with respect to other tax consequences. It is the employee's responsibility to contact payroll in order to ensure proper withholding.

## **University Property**

Staff will be expected to provide their own equipment, such as computers, printers, scanners, webcams, and telephone lines, cost of utilities, phone and internet service if they wish to telecommute.

If Temple University pays for telecommuting equipment and provides it on loan, the equipment remains the property of the University while on loan, and the staff member must return such items upon termination of the telecommuting arrangement. If University equipment is provided, the department must catalog each piece of equipment with its serial number when the staff member takes possession.

University property such as computers, printers, scanners and other equipment loaned to a staff member is the individual's responsibility while it is not on University premises. Temple University will not provide any on-site technical support for either personal or university owned equipment and software located at a staff member's telecommuting worksite/residence. Staff must permit remote desktop control in order to have IT support and troubleshooting. Staff must return the equipment in the same condition in which it was originally received, minus normal wear and tear. Staff are personally liable for missing or damaged equipment (although a homeowner's or rental insurance policy may cover a loss). Staff are also responsible for the safety and security of all University property and proprietary or confidential information accessed from or transported to the remote worksite. Staff are responsible for continued compliance with any and all applicable University policies such as those governing technology, software and data usage.

## **Remote Access to Temple technology resources**

The Remote Access website (<http://remote.temple.edu>) provides access to Temple's TUapps and VPN resources, including the ability to remotely access your office computer.

Instructions to use Temple University's remote access services can be found at <https://its.temple.edu/remote-access-website>

## **Conclusion**

This guide is intended to provide foundational expectations for flexible work arrangements. If you have any questions regarding this guide, please contact Human Resources.