

Flexible Work Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure establishes the process for requesting, approving and effectively implementing flexible work arrangements in accordance with the [Flexible Work Policy](#).

Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to continuing and fixed-term staff members employed by Macquarie University who request flexible work arrangements on a regular or formal basis, and managers / supervisors responsible for considering these requests.

(3) This Procedure must be followed for all regular or formal flexible work requests. This includes all part-time, job share and compressed fortnight flexible work arrangements.

(4) This Procedure may also be followed when a staff member requests to work flexible start and finish hours or work from home / telecommute on a regular long-term basis, and it is deemed appropriate to formalise these arrangements (refer to the [Flexible Work Policy](#) for more information).

Section 2 - Policy

(5) Refer to the [Flexible Work Policy](#).

Section 3 - Procedures

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff Member

(6) When preparing a flexible work request, be considerate of the business needs of the work area and be prepared to consider alternative options in discussion with the manager / supervisor.

(7) Be prepared to have a trial period to assess how well the flexible work arrangement is progressing and to openly discuss any issues with the manager / supervisor.

(8) Pro-actively manage personal workload, continue fulfilling inherent requirements of the role, and ensure performance is not negatively impacted by the flexible work arrangement.

Manager / Supervisor

(9) Give due consideration to the request, taking into account both the business needs of the work area, and the staff member's personal circumstances.

(10) Seek advice from Human Resources when there are concerns that a flexible work arrangement is not reasonable or practicable.

(11) Respond to flexible work requests as soon as reasonably possible and within 21 business days from the date of written request.

Human Resources (HR)

(12) Advise managers / supervisors and staff members who are considering flexible work on available options and considerations for effective and mutually beneficial flexible work arrangements.

Process

(13) There is a [Flexible Work Procedure Flowchart](#) available for this Procedure.

Making a Flexible Work Request

(14) A staff member should review the [Flexible Work Policy](#) and this Procedure prior to making a request for flexible work.

(15) It is good practice to discuss the intention to submit a request for flexible work with the manager / supervisor prior to making a formal request.

(16) A staff member requesting a flexible work arrangement on a formal basis must make the request in writing using the [Flexible Work Application Form](#) clearly outlining details of the change sought and reasons for the change.

(17) In addition, the staff member must also complete [Working from Home Health and Safety Checklist](#) if requesting to work from home.

Consideration and Assessment of a Flexible Work Request

(18) Each request for flexible work will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The manager / supervisor should consider the request carefully, taking into account the benefits of the requested change in working arrangements for the staff member and for the work area, and weighing these against any business impacts.

(19) The manager / supervisor should arrange to talk with the staff member as soon as possible after receiving their request. The manager / supervisor and the staff member should discuss the following considerations:

- a. the type of flexible work proposed;
- b. duration of the flexible work arrangement;
- c. trial period to assess the effectiveness of the arrangement;
- d. review dates;
- e. notice period for which the arrangement can be altered; and
- f. any impacts on the team, business continuity, or clients, and how these may be addressed.

(20) If the staff member is requesting to work from home on a regular basis (not as a 'one-off'), the manager / supervisor must also review the [Working from Home Health and Safety Checklist](#) and discuss whether the work environment at home meets the health and safety standards set by the University. If an issue is identified, the manager / supervisor must consult with their Health and Safety Advisor.

(21) The manager / supervisor does not have to approve or refuse the request in full. If there are concerns that the proposed arrangement will not be practicable, the manager / supervisor and the staff member may consider and discuss alternatives to the proposed flexible work arrangement.

(22) Managers / supervisors are encouraged to discuss a proposed flexible work arrangement with Human Resources if they have any concerns.

Responding to a Flexible Work Request

(23) The Approval authority may:

- a. grant the request in full;
- b. grant the request in part;
- c. propose a modified version of the request;
- d. ask the staff member to trial the flexible working arrangement for a specified period; or
- e. refuse the request.

Timeframe for Responding

(24) The manager / supervisor must acknowledge receipt of a flexible work request as soon as reasonably possible, and respond to the request within 21 business days from the date the request was submitted.

(25) Under the [Fair Work Act 2009](#), the University has an obligation to respond in writing within 21 business days from the date the request was submitted if the staff member requesting flexible work:

- a. is the parent, or has responsibility for the care, of a child who is of school age or younger;
- b. is a carer within the meaning of the [Carer Recognition Act 2010](#) (means an individual who provides personal care, support and assistance to another individual who needs it because that other individual: has a disability, or has a medical condition, including a terminal or chronic illness; or has a mental illness; or is frail and aged);
- c. has a disability;
- d. is 55 or older;
- e. is experiencing violence from a member of their family; or
- f. provides care or support to a member of their immediate family or household, who requires care or support because they are experiencing violence from their family.

Approving a Flexible Work Request

(26) To approve a flexible work request, the manager / supervisor must:

- a. complete and sign appropriate forms:
 - i. [Flexible Work Application Form](#) for all requests; and
 - ii. [Working from Home Health and Safety Checklist](#) for working from home arrangements;
- b. ensure appropriate approvals; and
- c. forward the form to their Human Resources Client team member for review and processing.

(27) The manager / supervisor must advise the staff member that the request is approved and discuss with the staff member how and when the changes might be implemented.

(28) The manager / supervisor should communicate the new arrangement and any impacts to relevant team members and stakeholders in the University.

Refusing a Flexible Work Request

(29) A manager / supervisor should genuinely consider a request for flexible work, including alternative proposals. Managers / supervisors are encouraged to consult with Human Resources and / or their line manager before refusing a request.

(30) If a manager / supervisor refuses a request, the response must be in writing and include the reasons for the

refusal.

(31) An application for flexible work may only be refused on reasonable business grounds, which include but are not limited to:

- a. the nature of the work is incompatible with the proposed flexible work arrangement;
- b. the new working arrangements requested by the staff member would be too costly for the University;
- c. accommodating the requested flexible work arrangement will have a disproportionate impact on other staff;
- d. it would be impractical to change the working arrangements of other staff, or recruit new staff, to accommodate the requested flexible work arrangement;
- e. the new working arrangements requested by the staff member would be likely to result in significant loss of efficiency or productivity;
- f. the new working arrangements requested by the staff member would be likely to have a significant negative impact on customer service.

(32) If a request is refused, the staff member may make a further application:

- a. where the circumstances have changed; or
- b. after twelve months from the date of the initial application.

Implementing Flexible Work Arrangements

Trial Periods

(33) It is recommended to trial a flexible work arrangement where possible. Trial periods are particularly recommended when there is some uncertainty about how practicable the arrangement is for the staff member and for their work area.

(34) Depending on the duration of the proposed flexible work arrangement, the recommended duration of trial periods is three (3) to six (6) months. However, the duration of trial periods can vary on a case-by-case basis to allow sufficient time for the staff member and their manager / supervisor to implement and become used to the new working practices before making any decisions on the viability of a new arrangement.

(35) The manager / supervisor may consider a mid-point review of the flexible work trial as an opportunity to discuss the effectiveness of the arrangement with the staff member and make timely adjustments if required.

(36) At the end of the agreed trial period, the University reserves the right to require the staff member (with reasonable notice, i.e. two (2) - four (4) weeks) to revert to their previous working arrangement.

Managing Flexible Work Arrangements

(37) The success of flexible work requires a 'give and take' approach and a shared responsibility between staff members and their managers / supervisors.

(38) Staff members working flexibly should ensure that they continue to actively manage personal workload, and continue to fulfil the inherent requirements of the role and performance expectations.

(39) Clear, open and regular communication between the staff member working flexibly, the manager / supervisor and other team members is key to an effective flexible work arrangement.

Reviewing and Changing Flexible Work Arrangements

Ongoing Changes and Adjustments

(40) The manager / supervisor and the staff member should be prepared for ongoing adjustments, recognising that flexible work arrangements may need to change over time to maximise business outcomes and the staff member's wellbeing.

(41) Any changes to a flexible work arrangement proposed by either the manager / supervisor or the staff member outside the review period, should be discussed by the staff member and manager / supervisor in the first instance, with reasonable notice.

Review

(42) Flexible work arrangements must be reviewed at the end of the agreed period. If the arrangement is for over one (1) year, it is good practice to also conduct annual reviews.

(43) The aim of reviewing flexible work arrangements is to ensure that the arrangement still meets the needs of both the work area and the staff member, and that the arrangements are agreed rather than presumed.

(44) The review process is a conversation between the staff member and their manager / supervisor.

(45) The outcome of the review may be one of the following:

- a. the existing arrangement will be renewed with no change;
- b. the arrangement will end, and the staff member will revert to the original work arrangement; or
- c. a new arrangement will be negotiated.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(46) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(47) Definitions specific to this Procedure are contained in the accompanying [Flexible Work Policy](#).

Status and Details

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Effective Date	22nd February 2021
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Responsible Executive	Nicole Gower Vice-President, Professional Services
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