

Subject: Flex Work Arrangement Policy

Office Responsible for Annual Review of this Policy: Human Resources

Related University Policies: N/A

I. SCOPE

This policy applies to full-time staff.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The University recognizes the growing demands on staff while at work and the increasing challenges in finding new and better ways of serving students, other customers and meeting the University's goals. American University supports flex work arrangements to foster a highly desirable and productive work environment that is responsive to these demands and challenges. The University expects that flexible work arrangements will increase retention and recruitment of highly qualified staff, maintain staff productivity, and promote employee engagement.

While not all positions will be amenable to flex work arrangements, consideration of flexible work schedules will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis taking into account the departmental needs and the employee's ability to maintain a high level of service. The University expects that implementation of flexible work arrangements will enhance the quantity, quality, and productivity of the employee's level of service. A flex work arrangement must be authorized in advance by an authorized official.

III. DEFINITIONS

Flex arrangement, flexible work arrangement, or flexible arrangement (collectively "flexible work arrangement" or "FWA") – work hours, work week that vary from the standard schedule of the department in which the staff member works. Flex arrangements include flex time, compressed work week, telework and reduced work schedules.

Flex time – agreed-upon starting and departure times that differ from the standard schedule for the department. The schedules may be fixed for a period or can vary from day to day.

Compressed work week – regularly scheduled hours worked are fixed over fewer than five days a week.

Telework – a flexible arrangement where employees perform job duties at an alternate location, such as a home office.

Reduced work schedule – either a reduction in regularly scheduled hours worked each week (i.e. 28 hours), or a partial year appointment (i.e. 9, 10, or 11 months) to permit a block of time off during a non-peak season for the department. The employee maintains full-time status and leave accruals are earned on a prorated basis.

Core office hours – a block of hours within the work day or work week, determined by the department based on their unit's business needs, during which all employees are expected to be at work and available for meetings and other departmental activities.

Authorized official – Cabinet members are responsible for approving flex work arrangements for their direct reports. Deans of academic units are responsible for approving flex work arrangements for staff in their schools/colleges. Direct reports to the cabinet are responsible for approving flex work arrangements for any staff member in their units. Please contact human resources to determine the authorized official in the affected department.

IV. POLICY

General Information and Guidelines for All Flex Work Arrangements

Flex work arrangements are discretionary based upon the operational needs of the department and must have the prior approval of the authorized official. Either the employee or supervisor may initiate discussion of flexible work arrangements. General factors to be considered when evaluating feasibility of flex arrangements include:

- Employee is maintaining satisfactory performance and attendance;
- Employee's ability to work independently, including desire to be successful in a flex schedule;
- Employee's communication skills;
- Nature of the work to be performed; and
- Impact on the department's operations and other employees.

If a flex arrangement is desirable, the employee and supervisor will jointly submit a written proposal to the authorized official which should include the following elements:

- The specific details of the flex arrangement;

- Duration of a trial period to determine effectiveness of arrangement; and
- Frequency of review (at least annually) of flex arrangement.

The Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form (“FWA Request”) should be used. The written proposal or FWA Request is reviewed by the staff member’s direct supervisor and submitted to the authorized official for consideration.

Flex arrangements may be modified or terminated for any reason or as needed to ensure that the arrangement does not negatively impact the employee’s or the unit’s work quantity, quality, or productivity.

All flex arrangements must conform to the overtime, record keeping, meal break and other provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and other relevant laws. Lunches and/or scheduled rest period are not eliminated when staff works a flex arrangement. An employee may not use the University’s grievance procedure to grieve a decision on a request for a flex arrangement.

In certain cases, taking family or medical leave is a more appropriate option than flextime, compressed work week or teleworking. For more information, please see the family leave and/or medical leave policies or contact human resources.

Guidelines for Flextime and Compressed Work Week

In addition to the factors listed in the general guidelines above, for compressed workweek schedules, supervisors should consult with human resources for changes in recording time on timesheets and impact on leave.

Guidelines for Telework

Not all positions are suitable for telework. A supervisor and department management are encouraged to consider the following in considering a request to telework:

- Positions have tasks which are portable and can be performed away from the main worksite;
- Employee demonstrates satisfactory performance;
- Employee does not need close supervision;
- Employee possesses a high degree of skill and knowledge of the job;
- Employee is computer literate and has a designated space at the off-site location;
- Work of the employee can be monitored with quantifiable tasks, quantity, and quality measures;
- Excellent level of service can be maintained without hardship on customers and co-workers;
- There are sufficient resources available for the work unit to support requests to telework; and
- Flexible work arrangement is a key factor in securing a desirable candidate.

Either an employee or supervisor may identify the need or opportunity for telework. Together they assess whether work can be performed via telework and determine whether telework is appropriate and will be pursued. An employee outlines an initial draft of telework agreement and discusses details and implications with the supervisor. This includes a review of the Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist to consider whether the proposed off-site work setting is conducive and appropriate to work requirements and meets accepted health and safety standards. Employees will be expected to ensure the confidentiality and security of all University data accessed from or transported to the remote work site. The remote work site should also be relatively free of distractions including demands on the employee's time and attention by dependents. The Office of Risk Management and Safety Services is available to help departments/units or staff with such questions or concerns including resolving matters of work related injuries at the remote work site. The University reserves the right to inspect the alternative work site designated in the employee's telework agreement.

Guidelines for Reduced Work Schedule

The primary factors that should be considered when reviewing a request for a reduced work schedule are the work load of the department and the impact an employee's reduced work schedule will have on other employees and customers. Reduced work schedules generally take one of two forms – either the employee reduces their regular work schedule to 80 % of their normal work schedule throughout the year or the employee moves to a partial year appointment and works 9, 10, or 11 months per year. In the second scenario, the time off is usually during the summer months.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

Several groups are responsible for ensuring the appropriate use of the Flexible Work Arrangement Policy. Those responsible and their duties are defined in this section.

- Staff members are responsible for requesting and participating in flexible work arrangement according to the procedures outlined in this document.
- Supervisors, deans, directors and department heads are responsible for recognizing the need for and thinking creatively about flexible arrangements.
- Authorized officials are responsible for determining when flexible work arrangements are appropriate and consulting with supervisors and staff members who request flexible work arrangements. They are responsible for approving, monitoring and discontinuing flex arrangements as outlined in this document.

- The Office of Human Resources is responsible for consulting with individuals and management requesting information about flexible work arrangements.
- The Assistant Vice President of Human Resources is responsible for the design and implementation of the flex arrangement policy in accordance with the general management philosophy of the university. The Assistant Vice President of Human Resources is responsible for developing and delivering strategies aimed at continually communicating, educating, gathering feedback and refining the policy as necessary to meet the needs of the university. The Assistant Vice President of Human Resources is responsible for reviewing the program to ensure fair and consistent application in accordance with the University's EEO policies.
- The Office of Risk Management and Safety Services is responsible for consulting with staff members and management requesting information about safety guidelines in the off-site workplace, conducting telework site inspections, when necessary, and consulting on insurance requirements of telework arrangements.

VI. **EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPROVAL**

This Policy is effective September 1, 2016. This Policy replaces all prior versions.