



HYBRID & FLEXIBLE WORKING FRAMEWORK

BACKGROUND

Arising from the pandemic most employers are re-imagining their workplaces and working patterns. Experiences of working from home during the pandemic have created the circumstances for a comprehensive re-think of what a modern and progressive workplace might look like. In the future it is likely that the degree of flexibility offered by employers will be an important factor in attracting job applicants and retaining talent. **Flexibility of the location from which work can be done may also result in the reconfiguration of some campus workspaces.** Employees and jobseekers now have an expectation that employers will offer a range of flexible working options. For these reasons, the University has developed a flexible and working framework.

The Framework is an umbrella document that sets out a direction of travel for the University and a menu of potential options for staff, which may be available where feasible and appropriate. As the Framework develops it may become appropriate to develop more detailed protocols which will fit within the umbrella of the Framework. An example of this is the flexitime scheme which is currently incorporated within the umbrella of the Framework as appendix one.

The University is introducing this Framework in order to create additional choices for staff that did not exist prior to the pandemic. The choices available will vary depending on the requirements of the role, however the University wishes to ensure that all staff are offered some options. Where staff do not wish to avail of the options, the default position will be the position stipulated in their contract of employment. Staff can also make a request to vary their contract through the University's existing Flexible Working Policy (also known as the Work-Life Balance Policy). It is anticipated that the majority of agreements made as part of this Framework will be non-contractual.

This Framework focuses on the location from which work is delivered and flexibility of hours and patterns of work. The University has taken a 'principle-based' approach to the development of this Framework i.e. it is a statement of the overarching principles that will inform decisions and its not intended to provide detail on every possible scenario that may be encountered. It may be counter-productive, in respect of some of the measures, to develop a framework on flexibility which sets rigid rules and regulation. Managers will be expected to exercise good judgement within the broad principles in this Framework.

All Managers must consider how they can make a range of options available to their staff. It is accepted that not all of the choices outlined in this Framework may be appropriate to every department and every post, but the starting point for all managers should be to consider whether and how each of the options might work in their area. Managers are encouraged to think creatively and explore with their teams how they might be able to adapt the options to suit the operating context of their department.

This Framework will also complement the University's 'green' sustainability agenda, reduce commuter traffic, reduce carbon emissions, reduce the carbon footprint of the University, as well as making a positive contribution to road safety for staff commuting to work.

This Framework is in four parts:

- **Part One:** The **overarching statement on** the Hybrid & Flexible Working Framework.
- **Part Two:** The **location from which work is delivered.**
- **Part Three:** Flexibility in the **pattern and distribution of working hours.**
- **Part Four:** Appendices

PART ONE: THE OVERARCHING STATEMENT ON HYBRID & FLEXIBLE WORKING.

The University is keen to seize the opportunity presented by the experiences of working lives during the pandemic to establish new, modern, and progressive ways of working and working environments. This will help to cement the University aspiration of becoming the 'employer of choice' for its staff and job applicants. **The University's approach is deeply rooted in our values and leadership framework. It will set the context for significant cultural change in the workplace and the working lives of our staff.**

This section of the framework addresses the following issues:

- What is the cultural change that the University is trying to achieve?
- How will our approach be aligned to our values and our leadership Framework?
- What are the principles that will underpin the University's approach?
- How will we determine the choices and options that are available across the University and in particular departments?
- What oversight arrangements will be put in place to ensure fairness and effective delivery of the commitments in the Framework?
- How will we equip managers to respond positively to requests from staff and to make arrangements to facilitate those requests where feasible and appropriate, while maintaining business continuity?
- How will we ensure that students and colleagues are well informed?
- What arrangements will be put in place to provide staff with appropriate equipment to work remotely?
- What are my rights as an employee and what are the responsibilities of the University?

1.1 What is the cultural change that the University is trying to achieve?

This Framework creates opportunities for significant cultural change in the workplace. It is very unlikely that workplaces and working lives will return to exactly the way they were before the pandemic. The University aims to see the following culture shifts arising from the Framework.

- The Framework will allow the University to re-calibrate the balance between an **'input focus'** towards more of and **'outcome focus'**. Many employers traditionally have an 'input focus' i.e. they are concerned about the volume and pattern of hours delivered by the employee. While this will always be important, we wish to achieve a greater focus on 'outcomes' i.e. the quality and quantity of the work produced.
- The Framework will help support appropriate **work-life balance and health and wellbeing**.
- The Framework will support the University's 'green' sustainability agenda in helping to reduce emissions related to commuting to work.
- The new approaches outlined in the Framework help consolidate and improve **'Trust'** between managers and their teams. New ways of working will require managers to move beyond outdated approaches based on *'needing to see staff to be able to manage them'*. Managers will need to establish **new ways of leading their team** which recognise that the vast majority of staff are deeply committed to delivering high quality work and should be empowered and trusted. Micro-management should not exist in our workplace.
- In a workplace with enhanced flexibility the University will seek to **maximise the potential of existing and new ICT**.

1.2 How will our approach be aligned to our values and our leadership framework?

The opportunities for culture change and changes in the ways of working will be deeply **rooted in the University's value statement and our leadership framework**.

Values

- **Collaboration** – the new ways of working will only be effective in the context of a collaborative approach within teams, where team members work together to ensure that student and colleague experiences are not detrimentally impacted by any new working arrangements.
- **Integrity** – the new culture which we are trying to create is built on trust, there is a close relationship between trust and integrity.

- **Enhancing Potential** – some people find the traditional work patterns to be stifling. The Framework will help to create the context in which innovation and creativity can flourish.
- **Inclusion** – The new choices made available may help retain staff who might otherwise leave the University.

Leadership

- **Empowerment and Trust**– each team will be encouraged to come together to co-create the flexible working environment which will be most effective and appropriate in the context of the service that the team provides.

1.3 What are the principles that will underpin the University’s approach?

As noted above, this Framework is not intended to provide prescriptive solutions to every possible scenario that may be encountered, rather we have taken a ‘principle-based’ approach which outlines broad parameters and is intended to facilitate teams to build their own solutions. The Framework is an umbrella document that sets out a direction of travel for the University. As we progress the Framework it may become appropriate to develop more detailed protocols which will fit within the umbrella of the Framework.

The University’s approach is based on the following principles:

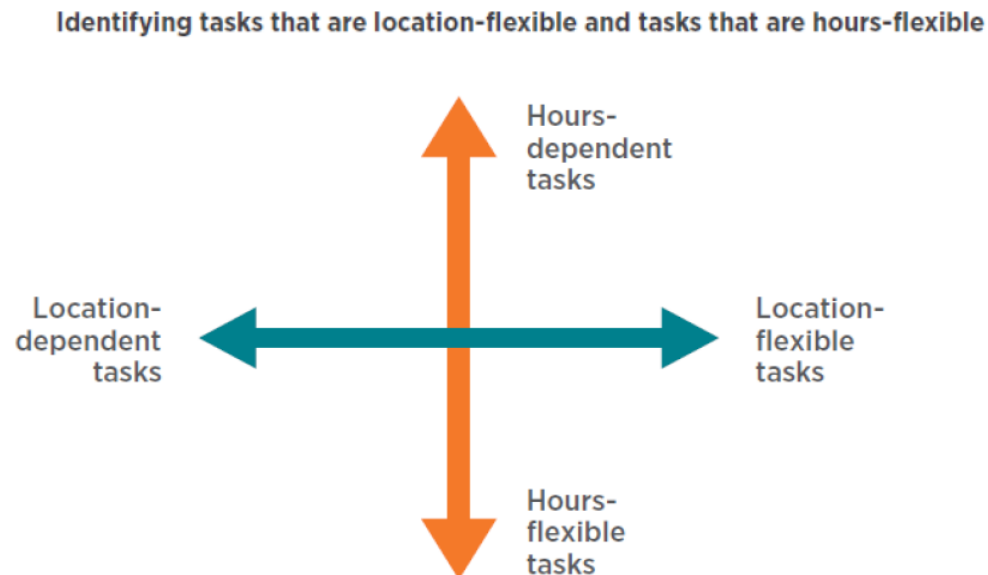
- The University values **hybrid or blended approaches** to the location of work and working patterns.
- A clear desire that any agreed approaches to the location of work and working patterns should achieve an appropriate balance between the ‘**wants**’ of the individual and the ‘**needs**’ of the service.
- The **needs of our students** will be core and at the heart of decision making, whilst equally respecting the needs and views of our staff.
- Our approach will be underpinned by **trust** within teams between a member of staff and their line manager.
- The University is committed to **give all staff some new choices**, however, not all of the choices outlined in this Framework may be appropriate to every Department and every post. Managers must however work with staff to maximise the choices available to all staff, taking into account the need to maintain service delivery. Managers should, however, be aware of the clear intention of the University to provide a range of choices for staff through the introduction of this Framework of flexible working arrangements, which will be available, taking into account the specific needs of the business across the University.

- Staff have the right to “disconnect” from work outside of their agreed working hours and patterns of work.

1.4 How will we determine the choices and options that are available across the University and in particular departments?

Often in the past many employers introduced flexible work options based on reactive responses to individual requests for flexibility. In the University we wish to take **a more proactive approach to the implementation of our Framework with a view to maximising the options available to staff**. Teams will be encouraged to come together in workshops to co-create the best working arrangements for the teams in advance of any individual requests by staff. **While this will not in any way detract from individuals’ statutory rights to make an individual request for flexible working under the existing Flexible Working Policy, it will help inform the context of the request.**

The nature of the choices available to staff will depend to varying degrees on the nature of the service provided by the department in which the person works. The diagram below provides a helpful illustration of how the nature of the flexibility will be impacted by the nature of the service provide by the department.



Please see Appendix Two for examples of roles/activities that could fall into each of these quadrants.

For departments with activities in the lower right quadrant of this diagram, where tasks are not location dependent or hours dependent, it may be relatively easy to identify flexible options for the team and/or individuals. On the other hand, for departments in the upper left quadrant it may be more challenging to identify flexible options. That being said, as noted in the principles above, the University is keen to make available some flexible options for all staff. The diagram above may be a useful to support discussions at team workshops on the Hybrid & Flexible Working Framework.

1.5 What oversight and review arrangements will be put in place to ensure fairness in the approach taken by managers, including effective delivery of the commitments made to staff by the University in this Framework?

The University will put in place the following oversight and review arrangements for this Framework:

- The People and Culture Department will develop and deliver a comprehensive implementation plan.
- The implementation plan will make provision for direct support for departments in the co-creation of their team-based solution. An important element of the support will relate to fairness in the application of the Framework and ensuring inclusivity in the team-based discussions.
- Individual staff can seek support from their People Partner and/or their Trade Union representative.
- At any time, the department can seek support from People and Culture.
- Where concerns arise during the implementation phase or with the outcome of the team-based discussion, all parties will attempt to resolve the issue at a local level and can seek support from their People Partner and/or their Trade Union representative to find resolution. Where they cannot be resolved, any party to the discussion may refer their concerns to their Head of Department/Director (or to another appropriate senior manager within the line management structure). If the matter cannot be resolved it can be escalated to the Chief People Officer as a resolution mechanism.
- After three months of implementation there will be a formal review of progress and opportunity to address concerns, which will include People & Culture and the trade union representatives.
- 12 months after the implementation, People and Culture will, in consultation with the trade unions, conduct a review of consistency in the application and delivery of the Framework i.e. a review of its implementation in every department across the University. The maximum

surplus and deficit carry over in the flexitime policy (see appendix one) will also form part of the 12 month review of the Framework (specifically the review will consider increasing the maximum surplus and deficit). If as part of this review it is identified that particular departments are not fully implementing the Framework, or the commitment by the University to the new working arrangements, an appropriate action plan will be developed. The review, when finalised, will be subject to consultation and discussion at JUCNC.

Note: The existing Flexible Working Policy makes provision for an appeal where an employee makes an individual request for a contractual change (see appendix three attached).

1.6 How will we equip managers to operate in the new working context?

The University recognises that the introduction of this Framework will create a significant shift in the way in which managers will lead their teams. **Many of the traditional paradigms will be obsolete.** The People and Culture Department intends to put in place a comprehensive package of measures and interventions to support managers and their teams with the implementation of the Framework, including direct support for teams in co-creating choices for teams. This will relate both to the initial implementation approaches and the longer-term implication for leading teams.

1.7 How will we ensure that students and colleagues are well informed?

It is important that students and colleagues understand the working patterns of any individual or team in order to support the student and staff experience. This is important as the working patterns may vary to differing degrees between departments. Departments may wish to use the approach of describing 'working styles' for individuals or teams. These 'styles' could be used on virtual business cards, email signatures and team wall-charts and organograms. An example of how working styles can be illustrated on for example email signatures is shown in the table below.

The work styles outlined below are general in nature and included to provide a basis for discussion around what arrangements (flexible / hybrid) could be considered / discussed agreed / implemented and as a way to explain the styles to others. They are entirely optional

Work Styles



Campus work

- Work involves face to face interaction with students and staff and others
- The nature of the work means that all or almost all these activities would be done on campus.



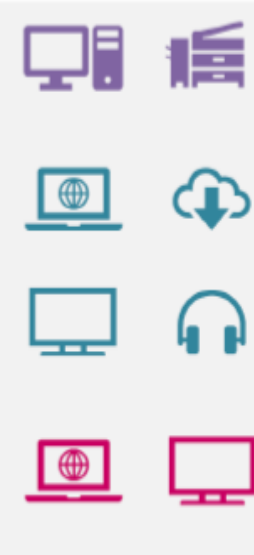
Hybrid work

- Work location is dependent on what suits the nature of the activity to be undertaken on a given day.
- Team activities, face to face demonstrations or pastoral/wellbeing support for students usually takes place on campus.
- Where direct social interaction is more effective, we meet, train or interact in person.
- Work involving the use of specialist equipment, technology or other resources that cannot be accessed remotely is also undertaken on campus.
- Work which needs to be completed without interruption or distraction is better suited to an off-campus location.



Offsite/remote work

- The nature of the work is that most of the activities can be done off campus
- The work is done using a range of digital tools and remote technology
- Campus presence would still be required for attendance at events such as team meetings, team away days, creative meetings.



1.8 Will staff have the appropriate equipment to work remotely?

While the University will aim to provide appropriate equipment to facilitate remote working, **it must be recognised that this may not always be achievable instantly.** The University is working toward providing staff, in areas where hybrid working is feasible, with appropriate equipment to do so in a timely manner.

Where appropriate resources are not immediately available and the absence of equipment may compromise health and safety, home working will not be permitted right away.

The University is mindful of its responsibilities in relation to Health and Safety while staff are working from home or from another remote location. A health and safety self-assessment checklist will be developed and where appropriate staff may request further support in assessing and reducing health and safety risks associated with homeworking including a full DSE assessment.

1.9 What are my rights as an employee and what are the responsibilities of the University?

It is important that all staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the choices made available through this Framework. The table below outlines some of the main rights and responsibilities.

	THE UNIVERSITY WILL	YOU WILL
Hybrid Work Location	<p>The University will facilitate discussions in all departments with a view to co-creating choices for staff.</p> <p>Place the student experience and colleague experience at the centre of our consideration of work location, whilst equally respecting the needs and views of our staff.</p> <p>Generally, the arrangements for hybrid working made available through this Framework do not involve a contractual change.</p> <p>The University will provide an appropriate on-campus workspace for all staff (in some cases this may be a shared workspace).</p> <p>As new working arrangements become embedded it may be necessary to change the configuration of office workspaces.</p> <p>Not use personal mobile phones for regular communication with staff – communication is expected to continue via work phone/work mobile numbers.</p>	<p>Work with your departmental colleagues to co-create options appropriate to your department.</p> <p>Place the student experience and colleague experience at the centre of your consideration of work location, whilst equally respecting the needs and views of other staff.</p> <p>Recognise that there is no automatic entitlement to work from home unless there is a contractual change.</p> <p>Recognise that there is clear benefit for the team in all staff being on-campus for some part of the working week.</p> <p>Recognise that as new ways of working become embedded the configuration of office workspaces may need to change.</p> <p>Follow the risk assessment and local control measures for the area if working alone on campus. For low risk areas (with no other local control measures) you should use the SafeZone app or inform security staff locally of your presence out of hours.</p> <p>Not conduct face to face meetings at home or use your home address for work related deliveries.</p>
Flexible Hours	<p>Will facilitate discussion in teams with a view to exploring options for flexible working hours.</p>	<p>Place the student experience and colleague experience at the centre of your consideration of flexibility of working hours, whilst equally respecting the needs and views of other staff.</p>

	<p>Place the student experience and colleague experience at the centre of our consideration of working hours, whilst equally respecting the needs and views of our staff.</p> <p>While it is hoped that departmental arrangements for flexibility of hours will be co-created by teams, the University has in place arrangements to facilitate individual requests.</p> <p>It should however be noted that individual requests will be considered in light of any team arrangements that may exist.</p>	<p>Recognise that you will need to reciprocate the flexibility shown by the University by showing flexibility to accommodate fluctuations in departmental workloads.</p> <p>Recognise that many pieces of work are time-critical and need to be delivered within certain hours (including 'normal office' hours). These should be fairly distributed among members of the team.</p>
Caring Responsibilities	<p>Will support employees who are facing an emergency situation regarding caring responsibilities through the Special Leave Policy.</p>	<p>Understand that it is a reasonable expectation that you will not undertake caring responsibilities whilst working remotely.</p> <p>That in relation to childcare responsibilities you have appropriate childcare arrangements in place, regardless of where you are working, and for the full duration of your contracted daily hours.</p> <p>You are responsible for assessing your own childcare needs and ensuring that you are able to fully undertake your duties.</p>
Extreme Weather situations	<p>Allow staff to request emergency home working or variation to working time in situations where an extreme weather event takes place and makes travel to campus difficult or hazardous.</p> <p>The home working option should be permitted where the facilities to work from home are available.</p>	

	<p>Consideration should also be given to whether the Emergency Special Leave arrangements could apply.</p>	
<p>Technology</p>	<p>While the University will aim to provide appropriate equipment to facilitate remote working, it must be recognised that this may not always be achievable instantly. The University is working toward providing staff, in areas where hybrid working is appropriate, with appropriate equipment to do so.</p> <p>Where appropriate resources are not available and the absence of equipment may compromise health and safety, home working will not be permitted.</p>	<p>Only engage in homeworking where appropriate equipment is available</p> <p>Where appropriate resources are not immediately available and the absence of equipment may compromise health and safety, home working will not be permitted right away.</p>

PART TWO: WORK LOCATION.

2.1 Our approach to hybrid working.

In developing this Framework, the University conducted a series of staff engagement sessions. These sessions and information from a broad range of employment sectors indicates that there is little appetite for exclusive home working with most people favouring a **hybrid approach in which most staff will work sometime on-campus and sometime at home.**

While there is a compelling case for increased homeworking, it is important that we do not lose the clear benefits that arise from some on-campus working. These benefits include:

- **The social aspects of working life.** Some 'in office' activity helps build social bonds and helps to address some of the mental wellbeing issues that can be associated with homeworking. This can be as simple as going for lunch and coffee breaks with colleagues.
- **Informal learning opportunities.** Many learning opportunities arise informally through people being in the same place at the same time. Staff can request 'in the moment' advice and support by simply speaking to the other people in the same office space. **This is particularly important for less experienced members of the team who learn for being in the presence of more experienced colleagues.**
- **Informal opportunities to conduct business.** In any organisation informal opportunities arise to conduct business. These often occur when colleagues meet in corridors or over a cup of coffee. Generally, there are fewer such opportunities when people are working from home.
- **Space for creative and innovative thinking.** Often people find that creative and innovation conversations are easier when people are in the same place at the same time. It is more difficult to enable that sense of creativity and innovation through online platforms.
- **Team-based activities.** There are many activities such as team meetings which **tend to be more inclusive and discursive when conducted 'in person'** rather than online.

For this reason, it is the University's view that in most cases exclusive home working is not appropriate, and all staff should have some on-campus working every week (i.e. a hybrid approach). There are different forms of hybrid patterns e.g. a 'four and one pattern' (i.e. four

days working remotely and one day on-campus), a ‘two and three model’ (i.e. two days working remotely and three days working on campus), a ‘three and two model etc.

The University considers that increased uptake of homework may facilitate some re-configuration of the on-campus physical environment in office spaces. Some work is already underway through the ‘path-finders’ project.

2.2 Main Feature of the University’s approach to work location.

Having carefully considered feedback from across the University, the main features of the University’s approach to flexibility in location from which work can be delivered are as follows.

- While wishing to facilitate home working, the University would wish to note that there is **no legal entitlement to home working unless there is a contractual change.**
- Where staff wish to volunteer for home working there will be **no change to the employees’ contract of employment.** Where staff do not wish to request home working the default position will remain as on-campus working.
- The University favours a **team-based approach to the implementation of home working.** In advance of receiving individual requests for homeworking, teams will be encouraged to co-create home working patterns that meet the needs of the service that the department provides to students and colleagues.
- The University recognises the value of some on-campus experience and **all staff will be required to be on-campus for some part of the working week.**
- Any approaches developed for teams or individuals must achieve an appropriate balance between the ‘**wants**’ of the individual and the ‘**needs**’ of the service.
- In making decisions on facilitating flexibility, the University will place the **needs of our students** at the heart of decision making, whilst equally respecting the needs and views of our staff.
- Our approach will be underpinned by **trust** between a member of staff and their line manager.

The University also recognises that many staff currently live close to a campus which is not their base campus and often have to travel a considerable distance to reach their base campus. **The University will consider requests to allow staff to base themselves at the campus**

closest to their home address. It will not always be possible to grant such requests as many tasks are 'campus specific'. In considering such requests the University will be mindful of any Covid risks, particularly in regard to shared office spaces and equipment.

2.3 Why the University favours the 'team-based' approach to the implementation of hybrid location.

The University wishes to **empower teams to co-create the most appropriate working patterns for their teams.** The University believes that teams are best placed to understand the needs of the students and colleagues.

A team-based approach will also help **ensure an equitable distribution of tasks among the staff in the team.** We wish to avoid a 'first come, first served' approach to facilitating homeworking (i.e. we wish to ensure that the implementation of the Framework is based on **proactive consideration by teams rather than reactive responses to individual requests**).

PART THREE: FLEXIBILITY IN THE PATTERN AND DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING HOURS

3.1 Our approach to flexibility in the pattern and distribution of working hours.

It is clear from the staff engagements sessions that there is considerable desire for increased flexibility in the pattern and distribution of working hours. The main features of our approach to flexibility of hours will be as follows.

- Many staff do not wish to increase or decrease their contractual hours, rather they simply want more flexibility on the distribution of these hours and pattern of working. The University believes that such requests can be delivered through **a flexitime scheme** (i.e. a scheme which defines core hours and non-core hours, with staff having significant flexibility in start and finish times within non-core hours). **The flexitime scheme will be the primary vehicle for delivering flexibility in the pattern and distribution of working hours.** While flexitime may not be appropriate for all roles, a large proportion of non-academic roles are suitable for flexitime. The flexitime scheme is attached as appendix one. The starting point for Managers of non-academic staff should be to find ways of making the flexitime scheme work in their department. This may involve some adaptation to the scheme set out in appendix one. **Any decision not to implement the flexitime scheme in a particular department will require the approval of the Chief People Officer.**
- Similar to our approach to flexibility of location, the University favours a **'team-based' approach to flexibility of hours.** The University wishes to empower teams to co-create the most appropriate working pattern for their team, having due regard to the needs of students and colleagues. **Proactive consideration by teams is likely to create more equitable distribution of flexibility that would be achieved through reactive responses to individual requests.** The implementation of flexitime in particular departments will be a team-based decision.

- While the University favours a team-based approach, we recognise **the statutory entitlement of individuals to make a request** for flexible working. Such requests will be considered in line with the statutory three-stage process (i.e. all workers have an entitlement to make a flexible working request, where their request is not approved they have entitlement to a reasonable justification and they have the right to a formal appeal of any decision). This statutory process is outlined in appendix two. **Changes arising from a statutory request will lead to a change in the employee's contract of employment.**
- Teams will ensure effective communication of who will be on campus to deliver the on campus activity - such as sharing a rota on Microsoft Teams and/or SharePoint site.

3.2 The main types of flexibility in the pattern and distribution of working hours.

While the University will give due regard to all requests for any form of flexibility, it is likely that the main types of flexibility of the distribution and pattern of hours will be as follows.

- **Flexitime.** The University anticipates that the widespread roll-out of the flexitime scheme will address most requests for flexibility in the pattern and distribution of hours.
- **Compressed Working Patterns.** Such approaches are most appropriate in departments where there are significant fluctuations in the volume of work. Again, the University favours a team-based approach. There are a number of different forms of compressed working patterns including:
 - **Annualised hours.**
 - **A compressed working week** (i.e. the employee works their contractual hours in less than five days e.g. 'the four-and-a-half-day week' with staff taking Friday afternoon off)
 - **A compressed working fortnight** (e.g. the 'nine-day fortnight'). Departments that introduce a 'nine-day fortnight' may wish to have a rota for which days staff will take off, so as to ensure service cover throughout the fortnight.
 - **A compressed working year.**

With all compressed working patterns, the University will ensure adherence to the statutory Working Time Regulations.

- **Requests for a contractual reduction in hours.**

Requests for a compressed working pattern will normally be contractual unless this is a short-term arrangement that emerges as part of the team-based discussion.

It should be noted that the University has separate policies on Career Break and Job-sharing.

The appendices below provide further detail on the University's Hybrid & Flexible Working Framework.

APPENDIX ONE: FLEXI-TIME POLICY

Many staff do not wish to increase or decrease their contractual hours, rather they simply want more flexibility on the distribution of these hours. The University believes that such requests can be delivered through **a flexitime scheme** (i.e. a scheme which defines core hours and non-core hours, with staff having significant flexibility in start and finish times within non-core hours). **The flexitime scheme will be the primary vehicle for delivering flexibility in the pattern and distribution of working hours.** While flexitime may not be appropriate for all roles, a large proportion of non-academic roles are suitable for flexitime. The starting point for managers of non-academic staff should be to find ways of making the flexitime scheme work in their department. This may involve some adaptation to the scheme set out below. **Any decision not to implement the flexitime scheme in a particular department will require the approval of the Chief People Officer.**

FLEXITIME POLICY

Introduction

The University's flexitime policy offers staff the opportunity to benefit from an improved work-life balance which can have a positive impact on wellbeing and job satisfaction. Increased flexibility can offer greater scope to structure work around personal circumstances and ultimately enhance equality of opportunity for all staff.

The flexitime policy allows staff flexibility with their start times, finish times, and lunch periods within the limits set out below without any formal change to their contract of employment. It also allows for some carry over or deficit at the end of each accounting period.

Flexitime Hours

This flexitime policy centres around staff working at set core times during their agreed working days. Whether working remotely or on campus, there are obligatory periods and either side of the core times staff can choose their start and finish times provided they meet their work requirements. As such, the standard core hours are between the hours of 10:00 and 12:00, and 14:00 and 16:00. Where staff avail of the flexitime arrangement it should be noted that there may be occasions when a manager may require all or some of their team to work specific hours on a specific day due to a particular business need. It is expected that this would be infrequent, but where this is required the team will be provided with as much advance notice as possible.

Under this policy, it is recommended that working patterns should be arranged between 08:00 – 18:00 with core working hours set as 10:00 – 16:00. Flexible lunch breaks are set between 12:00-14:00 and full-time staff are obliged to take a minimum break of 30 minutes up to a maximum of 2 hours during this time. A break does not count towards working hours.

There may be specific roles or individual circumstances where a minor modification to working hours outside the 10:00-16:00 core hours can be accommodated – these are best agreed at a local level and should only be implemented where the service provided, or the stakeholders engaged with, are not compromised.

Where there are teams who do not currently work the normal 08:45 – 17:00 pattern of work, consideration must be given as to how the flexi-time scheme can operate (as part of the team discussion which includes all staff) and give some thought to creative solutions that may allow some flexibility noting this may not fully align with the “normal” arrangements.

Staff working flexitime can work above or below their contracted hours each week in line with the agreed scheme parameters.

The flexitime policy enables eligible staff to accrue additional hours which may be used either during a normal working day or, alternatively, it can be used to take up to one full day off per month which must be agreed with their line manager. Staff may carry over a maximum of 8 hours at the end of any calendar month and this is not cumulative.

Staff are responsible for ensuring that a deficit no greater than 4 hours is accrued in any calendar month and this is not cumulative.

If a staff member finds that in using the flexitime system, they are accruing excessive hours or a deficit in contractual hours, they should discuss this issue in the first instance with their line manager.

Flexitime workers are required to record their hours and share this record with their line manager on request. Staff can use the Flexitime Calculator to record their hours of work. This tool can help staff to make sure that they balance the hours they work with any accrued time off to ensure that they do not work excessive hours in any calendar month.

Parameters of this Policy

The flexitime policy applies to those departments where the system has been agreed between managers and members of staff. The University wishes to empower teams to co-create the most appropriate working patterns for their team. Teams will come together to decide how the flexitime policy can operate in their area.

In the interest of collaboration and team working, it is suggested that flexitime workers work with their key colleagues so that they are aware of any fluctuating working patterns, for example by sharing an agreed rota. Flexitime workers should remain flexible to attend meetings or events that could fall outside of their usual or preferred working pattern, given reasonable notice.

Some departments may operate flexitime working patterns that are different from the standard core hours and bandwidth set out in this policy. Any variations should be agreed with the Head of Department and Chief People Officer. Please note that any pre-existing flexitime arrangements in place prior to the introduction of this policy do not need to be revisited.

Wellbeing is important and staff should advise their line manager if flexitime arrangements are not working for them. The University offers a number of different flexible working opportunities including contractual flexible working options which may not be compatible with this flexitime policy. Therefore, staff should consider the most suitable flexible working options that will enable them to balance work duties and responsibilities with personal commitments.

Part-time staff may have contractual start or finish times which have been agreed as part of their working arrangement. Should a part-time colleague wish to apply to work flexitime hours, they should discuss this with their line manager and/or People Partner in the first instance. This may result in a pro-rata arrangement being agreed.

If possible, an initial trial of this policy is recommended to ensure that it meets the needs of staff members as well as the needs of the University. In circumstances where flexitime arrangements are deemed to be having a negative impact on commitments to staff, students, clients or research excellence, any issues should be discussed in the first instance at local level and efforts should be made to resolve them. Ultimately, if the issues cannot be resolved, the flexitime policy may need to be amended, suspended, or withdrawn with a minimum of three months' notice.

The decision to withdraw the availability of the flexitime policy is the joint responsibility of the Head of Department and Chief People Officer. Consultation with the unions will take place if this is to happen.

APPENDIX TWO: UNIVERSITY FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY (currently referred to as Work-Life Balance Policy)

Requests for individual contractual changes will be made through the University's existing Flexible Working Policy (also known as the Work-Life Balance Policy).

This Policy, which has been in place for many years, fully complies with the statutory three stage process.

A copy of the Policy is available at <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/peopleandculture/policies/worklife-balance>

APPENDIX THREE

Examples of activities which fit with the quadrant diagram on page 6 of the framework document

Upper Right Quadrant – (hours dependent but location flexible)

An example of this would be a colleague who, prior to the pandemic, worked full-time in a client services role. Their client base expects a service during normal office hours, but most of the service is provided by email/online or over the telephone/video call.

As part of the team-based discussions, the team could for example consider working a significant part of the working week from home. While the service requires cover during normal office hours, the team could develop a rota to facilitate flexitime.

Lower Right Quadrant – (hours flexible and location flexible)

An example of this would be a colleague who, prior to the pandemic, worked full-time in an office supporting long-term projects. The client base needs work to be delivered by a certain deadline, but it can be done at any time of the day and at any location.

For roles of this kind the full range of flexible working options outlined in this Framework could be facilitated.

Lower Left Quadrant – (hours flexible but location dependent)

An example of this would be a person who works exclusively on a large piece of equipment which is on campus. Their only duties relate to working on that large piece of equipment. As there is a large team working on this piece of equipment it is possible to develop rotas to facilitate significant flexibility on hours of work.

While flexibility of location may be difficult for a post of this kind, there is significant scope for flexibility on the pattern and distribution of hours e.g. flexitime (enabled by a team rota), compressed working hours etc.

Upper Left Quadrant – (hours dependent and location dependent)

An example of this would be a person supporting physical equipment or infrastructure and that support needs to be delivered during normal teaching hours.

This is perhaps the most challenging quadrant, however as part of the team-based discussions the team may consider building rotas to facilitate flexibility on hours or moving to a compressed working pattern such as a nine-day fortnight (on a rota basis).

Note: these examples are presented for illustration only. They must not be used to constrain or predetermine the outcome of a team-based discussion. With any of the examples there may be other contextual factors which may impact on the discussion.