

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

Brief Description (max 50 words)	This policy supports staff in achieving a sustainable work-life balance by offering a consistent, fair, and objective approach to flexible working requests. It ensures that all staff have the opportunity to manage work commitments alongside personal needs effectively.
Version Number	3.2
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Policy Dept	People and Organisational Development (POD)
Equality Impact Assessment Equality Impact Assessment	This document has been assessed for equality impact on the protected groups, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. This Policy is applicable as outlined in the 'scope' irrespective of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage, or civil partnership.

Amendment History

Version	Date	Reviewer Name(s)	Summary of changes
3.1	Nov 24	Ataylia Clarke	Changed Template
3.2	Jan 25	Angie Smith	Updated Template

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1. Introduction

Our Flexible Working Policy is designed to enable all staff to manage their work commitments and to ensure a sustainable work-life balance.

The aim of this policy is to consider all requests for flexible working with a consistent approach, ensuring fairness and objectivity.

Please note that if you are an employee with declared disabilities and apply under the policy, we will take particular account of your disability as part of your application.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- University of Suffolk employees

Should service conditions apply to any part of this policy, this will be detailed as relevant.

3. Eligibility to request flexible working

Any member of staff can make a request to work flexibly at any time from day one of employment.

4. Entitlement to request flexible working arrangements

Staff may request:

- a change to the hours currently worked (e.g. part time, compressed hours)
- a change to the times of work
- Examples of working patterns include: part time working, annualised hours, term-time working, staggered hours, compressed hours, job sharing. People & Organisational Development can discuss with you a range of options that may be suitable according to the circumstances.
- Normally, you may make only two applications in any 12 month period.
- If you are only looking for an informal change to your working hours or other condition for a short period, for instance to cope with a bereavement or to pursue a short course of study, we may be able to agree to a temporary change for a specified period.

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5. Making an application for flexible working arrangements

You must complete the [Flexible Working Application Form](#). It should then be sent to your Line Manager and copied to the People & Organisational Development (POD) Team who will support the application process in accordance with the procedure. Details of the procedure can be found [here](#).

Your Line Manager will aim to conclude the process within 28 days of your request however the maximum period the process can take to be completed is 2 months including time for any appeal to be heard. However, if for some reason this is not possible an extension to this time limit can only be made with the agreement of the applicant.

Your Line Manager will arrange a consultation meeting to discuss your flexible working request. The consultation meeting will be held within seven days of receiving your request. However, if this is not possible, you will be informed of the reason for any delay. You are entitled to bring with you a work colleague or union representative (if you are a trade union member) to any of the meetings associated with your application. The consultation meeting is an opportunity for you to explain how the proposed working arrangements would benefit you and for us to consider and discuss any alternative flexible working options that may be available and suitable for you and the organisation.

If you require further clarification of the procedure, you may contact a member of the POD team.

6. If your application is successful

You will be informed of the successful outcome of your application by letter. The letter will detail the changes to your working pattern, which constitutes a permanent or temporary change to your terms and conditions of employment.

If your request has been agreed to on a trial basis, this will be for an agreed fixed period so that you and your manager have the opportunity to test whether the proposed pattern is workable. In this instance you will receive a letter confirming the length of the trial period and the associated temporary changes to your terms and conditions.

If, at the end of the trial period and after discussion with your Line Manager, the working pattern is deemed successful, you will receive a letter to confirm the changes are now agreed as permanent. If it is decided that the trial has not worked for the applicant or for the University of Suffolk due to one of the reasons stipulated in the next section, you will revert to the pre-trial terms and conditions immediately after the trial period expires. You have the right to appeal within 10 calendar days of receiving written confirmation that your request is rejected.

7. If your application is declined

There may be circumstances where, due to the University's business needs, we are unable to agree to a request for a flexible working pattern. One or more of the following business grounds may give rise to a legitimate reason to decline your application:

- burden of additional costs
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- inability to re-organise work among existing staff
- inability to recruit additional staff
- detrimental impact on quality
- detrimental impact on performance
- insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- planned structural changes

The appropriate business ground(s) will be stated in our letter advising you of the outcome together with a sufficient explanation as to why the business ground for refusal applies in the circumstances.

You have the right to appeal against the decision to refuse your request within 10 working days of receiving written confirmation.

8. Withdrawal of your Application

The University will treat your application as having been withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- you notify your line manager in writing (or email) that you wish to withdraw your application;
- if you have failed on one or more occasion to attend a meeting to discuss your application (or to hear your appeal) without reasonable cause;
- if you have refused to provide information required in order to assess whether or not your request should be granted without reasonable cause
- Should any of the above circumstances apply, your line manager will write to you to confirm that your application is deemed to be withdrawn and that no further action will be taken.
- A copy of this outcome will be held on your personal file.