

CONVERSATION GUIDE WITH YOUR MANAGER ABOUT FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Ways to Prepare

- Familiarize yourself with the Ohio State University Flexible Work Policy (HR policy #6.12).
- If anyone in your unit or college has a flexible work arrangement, ask if they would be willing to speak with you about it. Get ideas from colleagues who have a similar position in another unit. Having an idea of what already works may be helpful as you frame your request.
- Set a meeting with your manager, leaving plenty of time to have a conversation without being rushed. Notify your manager ahead of time that you want to talk about a flexible work schedule.

Meet with your Manager

- Bring a completed copy of the [Flexible work arrangement proposal](#) and read it in advance.
- Write and discuss a proposal with your manager.
 - Set a clear plan before the meeting about what your ideal flexible work schedule will look like. Present details to your manager about what your optimal schedule will be and how you will adjust your responsibilities to continue to be successful in your role.
 - Come to the meeting with suggestions for frequency and terms for evaluation of your flex work schedule. Outline how your performance objectives will continue to be met.
 - Share any needs you may have from your employer such as technology or equipment.
 - Anticipate questions that may come up and make sure you have an answer for them.
- Explain why a flexible schedule will benefit your unit/team, using data to make your case. ([Example](#))
- If your manager does not like your proposal, ask questions about other options that may be available to you. You may also consider offering a trial period; remember, this is a negotiation. You may need to be open to collaborating with your manager to find a solution that works for both of you.

If your Proposal is Accepted

- Create a communication plan to share your new arrangement with your colleagues. Identify potential challenges (like office coverage or meeting times) that may need further discussed.
- Continually touch base with your manager. Ensure they are comfortable with the arrangement, and if not, identify solutions to these challenges.
- Communication is key. Remember, you are proposing this arrangement, so it is important to be responsible for making it work with your manager and your office colleagues. Consider proposing a check-in one month after the flexible work arrangement begins.

If your Proposal is Denied

- Ask why your request was denied. Was it your proposal? Position? Current job performance?
- If possible, work with your manager to identify steps to take that would get you to the goal of a flexible work arrangement. Remember, this conversation does not have to be a one-time shot. It may take ongoing conversations with your manager to come to an acceptable solution for both of you.

EXAMPLES OF FLEX WORK SCENARIOS

This document is intended to provide staff with examples of how flexible work arrangements might be used, based on specific employee needs.

Sarah is a non-exempt staff member who serves as an Executive Assistant in the medical center. She recently gave birth to her first child and it is important to her to be able to spend time with her baby. By reducing her appointment to 80% she is able to work with her supervisor create a schedule that allows her to spend more time at home with her child and still meet the expectations of her job.

Fred is an exempt Program Coordinator on the academic campus, and a large part of his workday involves meetings with faculty members and planning programs. He and his partner recently adopted a child, and he requested some flexibility with work in order to meet the needs of his family. His partner is able to stay home with their child Monday-Thursday, but it is necessary for Fred to be home with his child on Fridays. Fred arranged a schedule where he works 10 hours a day Monday-Thursday so that he can be home one day a week. Faculty in his department are aware of his schedule, and they arrange meetings and special events to occur Monday-Thursday when Fred is in the office.

Jessica, a non-exempt employee in the medical center, has two middle-school aged children who ride the bus to and from school each day. She has established a flexible schedule with her manager that allows her to work Monday-Friday from 7:30am-3:00pm in order to get her kids on and off the bus each day. Jessica takes a 30-minute lunch break instead of an hour to accommodate for the extra 30 minutes per day and is able to meet the needs of her family and employer.

Paul is an exempt Academic Advisor who is excited to take advantage of the Ohio State tuition benefit and pursue his MBA. This semester, Paul has a required course that meets during the school day, so he requested a flexible work schedule from his supervisor. Paul's supervisor has allowed him to use a flexible schedule and work late two nights a week to make up the hours he missed due to class. Paul uses his Ohio State issued iPad at home to take academic advising appointments via Skype or phone, which has been a popular option for students who have trouble coming in to see an advisor during the typical 8am-5pm hours. This has been so successful, that Paul's manager plans to implement for other employees in the office as well.

Stephanie is an exempt Program Manager in the Medical Center. Her mother suffers from ongoing health issues that require regular appointments for treatments and check-ups 1-2 times a week for 2-3 hours at a time. Stephanie is her mother's primary care-giver, and is responsible for taking her mother to and from the doctor's office. Stephanie's manager noticed that she had depleted a large amount of sick time by taking her mother to and from appointments, so she brought up the idea of a flexible work schedule during their most recent meeting. Stephanie's manager suggested that she organize her schedule and notify clients so that she may take meetings while in the office and save any appropriate projects or email follow-up for the

waiting room during her mother's appointments or at home later in evening. Stephanie tracks her hours and takes advantage of downtime during her mother's appointments and in the evenings. She and her supervisor check-in bi-weekly to make sure the arrangement is still working for everyone involved and make any necessary adjustments. This flexible schedule has allowed Stephanie to save sick-time for the future, and allows her a better work-life balance while still meeting the expectations of her job and the care-giving needs of her mother.

Bobby is an exempt employee who does data analysis for the medical center. A large part of his day-to-day work involves him pulling/analyzing data and writing reports for his supervisor. Bobby lives an hour away from Ohio State, and spends over 2 hours driving to and from work each day. He began to express stress around the commute to his manager, and because Bobby has reliably demonstrated his ability to get his work done his manager suggested that he work from home 3 days a week on his university issued computer to support his work-life balance. Bobby is able to join any necessary meetings via Skype for business, but most of his meetings are planned during the time he physically in the office on Mondays and Thursdays. This arrangement has allowed the university to retain a talented staff member like Bobby, while allowing him the ability to better balance his life.

Physical space is an issue in the IT department that Marcus manages. Many employees are required to share office spaces, and this can cause problems with productivity and when private meetings need to occur. In order to provide employees with a more conducive work environment, Marcus requests that all employees (exempt and non-exempt) work from home two times a week utilizing technology like Skype for Business and university issued iPads/laptops. Due to the nature of their work, all staff are required to be available during the "core hours" of 10am-3pm, but are given the flexibility to work their additional hours in the morning, afternoon, evening or some combination. These hours are established at the beginning of each semester and revisited prior to the start of the next semester so that any necessary adjustments can be made, and changes can be communicated to clients.



Flexible Work Info Sheet



What is flexible work?

A work arrangement that falls outside of a unit's usual work schedule and lasts longer than two months. Ohio State supports flexible work arrangements to achieve a reliable and productive work environment that enables staff to balance work and personal needs.



Who can use a flexible work arrangement?

All Ohio State staff members are eligible to request flexible work arrangements. However, not all positions lend themselves to flexible work.



How do I know if I am eligible?

Discuss **Ohio State's Policy 6.12 Flexible Work** with your supervisor or your unit's human resources professional.



Where can I get more information?

For employees: Office of Human Resources website at go.osu.edu/flex-work

For managers and units: See go.osu.edu/flex-work-manager



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Flexible Work Awareness

An overview prepared jointly by the
University Staff Advisory Committee and
President and Provost's Council on Women



Both USAC and PPCW advocate for awareness of Ohio State's Flexible Work Policy.

This presentation can be used by unit staff advisory committees and leaders of department staff meetings.



What is Flexible Work?

- A flexible work arrangement falls outside of a unit's usual work schedule and lasts longer than two months.
- Examples of flexible work arrangements include a compressed workweek, telecommuting or starting/ending times that change periodically.
- Flexible work arrangements are fully described in Policy 6.12 Flexible Work.



Why Flexible Work?

Workplace flexibility provides a way to successfully manage people, time, space and workload.



Who can use a flexible work arrangement?

All Ohio State staff members are eligible to request flexible work arrangements. However, not all positions lend themselves to flexible work.



How do I know if I am eligible?

To determine eligibility and feasibility of a flexible work arrangement for your position, please discuss the policy and specific process information with your supervisor or your unit's human resources professional.



What is the supervisor's role in flexible work arrangements?

- Per Policy 6.12 Flexible Work, supervisors should look for ways to implement flexible work in their units.
- Flexible work arrangements must be considered regardless of the reason for the request.
- Decision-making processes regarding flexible work arrangements must be transparent.



Other considerations in Policy 6.12

- Family and medical leave or a reasonable accommodation for a disability may be more appropriate than flexible work.
- Supervisors cannot take adverse action against staff for asking for a flexible work arrangement.



What are benefits of flexible work policies?

- 95% of companies said employee productivity increased or stayed the same after implementing flexible work arrangements ¹
- 95% of workers with flexible work arrangements said communication with their colleagues improved or stayed the same ²
- 60% of workers say they're more productive with flexible work arrangements ²
- 71% of Ohio State staff overall say their unit provides work-life balance. Rates at the college/VP unit level vary from 50% to 95%. ³

¹ Society of Human Resource Management, 2016

² Flex Strategy Group, 2018

³ Culture Survey, 2014



Where can I get more information?

For employees:

- Your supervisor or human resources professional
- Office of Human Resources website at go.osu.edu/flex-work
- USAC/PPCW flexible work toolkit at usac.osu.edu

For managers and units:

- See go.osu.edu/flex-work-managers
- Policy consultation with Employee and Labor Relations in the Office of Human Resources, 614-292-2800, email: hr-elr@osu.edu, web: hr.osu.edu/services/elr