



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Flexible Working Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

The University is committed to helping its employees balance their personal and work commitments. This policy explains your right to request a change to the working pattern or location as detailed in your contract of employment.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, regardless of length of service.

If you are interested in flexible retirement you should refer to the [Flexible Retirement Policy](#).

If you wish to request to work your current working hours and pattern but with a combination of on and off-campus working, you may refer to the [Hybrid Workplace Policy](#). Please note, requests agreed through the Hybrid Workplace Policy will not be permanent nor contractual.

### 3. Definitions

**Flexible working** is a way of working that suits your personal needs and can be met by your business area. For example: reducing your hours, having later or earlier start and finish times, working compressed hours, job sharing, working off campus on particular days or working annualised hours.

**Rolling year** is the 12 month period preceding the date you make your flexible working request.

### 4. Principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

4.1 Requests will be considered promptly, fairly and with sensitivity.

- 4.2 Each request will be considered in line with the needs of the business area. (This will include impact on other staff and service provision.) In some cases this may mean that it will not be possible to agree to a request.
- 4.3 If a request cannot be accommodated, your line manager will discuss alternative options with you before a final decision is reached.

## **5. Entitlement**

You may make up to two requests for flexible working within a rolling year.

The process for considering and confirming the outcome of your request (including any appeal) must be completed within two months.

## **6. Impact on Contract of Employment**

Requests for flexible working may be for a temporary or permanent arrangement. Unless specified it will be assumed the request is for a permanent change in your role.

Where a request is for a change in work location e.g. to work from home or other suitable off campus location on set days, the work location detailed in your contract of employment will remain the University's Edinburgh based campuses. You will receive a supplementary outcome letter confirming the agreed arrangement and it will be guaranteed whilst you remain in the same post.

If you are working off campus, you must remain accessible and contactable, and you are expected to respond to communications in the same timescales as you would when working on campus. While this is important for all staff, it is vital if you are a sponsored worker (i.e. you require a Skilled Worker visa to work in the UK). You may find it helpful to denote your work location in your calendar so that others can locate you if required e.g. if requested by the Home Office. More information can be found in the [Recording Where You Are Working FAQs](#).

If you subsequently change roles, your flexible arrangement may not automatically transfer with you. You must discuss your flexible working arrangement with your new line manager and any contractual changes to what is already in place will be confirmed to you in writing by HR.

## **7. Links to Other Relevant Policies and Guidance**

You may find it useful to refer to the University's other policies and guidance which you can find on the [HR web pages](#):

- [Flexible Retirement Policy](#)
- [Hybrid Workplace Policy](#)

## **8. Policy History and Review**

Approval Date: April 2023  
Approved By: University Executive  
Year of Next Review: 2026

## Flexible Working Procedure

### 1. Requesting a Flexible Working Pattern

If you wish to make a flexible working request:

- you should discuss your proposed request informally with your manager in the first instance
- you must complete the [Flexible Working Request Form](#) and send it to your manager. You must indicate if you would like the arrangement to be for a limited period only, otherwise it will be assumed that you are requesting a permanent change. You must send in your request at least two months before you wish the change in working arrangement to take effect.

If you have a disability your request may be considered as a reasonable adjustment. The University has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to any elements of the job which place a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people. The limit on the number of flexible working requests in a rolling year and the 2 month timescale for submitting your request before you wish the change in working arrangement to take effect, do not apply for disability reasonable adjustments.

Guidance on reasonable adjustments and supporting disabled staff can be found at: [Reasonable adjustments](#). If you are completing your flexible working request as a reasonable adjustment in relation to a disability, you should have an initial conversation with your manager before submitting the form. The [Workplace Adjustments Form – guide for staff and managers](#) is available to support this conversation.

If you already have a flexible working arrangement and are applying for a new role you must ask the recruiting manager if it is possible to retain the arrangement if you are appointed. The recruiting manager will consider your request in line with the procedure below.

### 2. Considering your request

If your manager is satisfied that your request can be met they may agree to it without having to hold a further meeting with you i.e. after the initial informal discussion you had prior to submitting your request in writing.

If your manager wishes to find out more about your request and how it will affect the needs of your business area, you will be invited to attend a meeting. A meeting will normally take place within two calendar weeks of submitting your request. You may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague if you wish. Your manager may be accompanied by a representative from HR.

At the meeting your manager may ask you to consider an alternative arrangement or modifications if your original request cannot be accommodated.

You and your manager may agree to a new arrangement on a trial basis to assess any impact on you and/or the needs of the business. A trial period would normally last for no more than six months.

If the trial period is successful your working arrangement will be made permanent. If the trial arrangement has not been satisfactory your manager may discuss alterations to the arrangements, or you may need to revert to your previous working arrangement.

A request for flexible working may only be declined for one or more of the following reasons:

- the burden of extra costs
- your work can't be reorganised among other staff
- additional staff can't be recruited to do your work
- the quality of your work or performance, or the business area's work or performance will be affected detrimentally
- the business area won't be able to meet customer demand
- a lack of work to do during your proposed working times
- planned structural changes.

### **3. Outcome of Request**

If your manager agrees to your request they will complete the approval section of the [Flexible Working Request Form](#) and submit it through People and Money. They will also send a copy to you for confirmation. Any contractual changes will be confirmed to you in writing by HR.

If your manager does not agree to your request they will discuss this with you and seek to agree an alternative arrangement. You will be notified in writing within one calendar week of the meeting, giving you the reason(s) for the outcome.

### **4. Appeal**

If you are not happy with the outcome you may make an appeal in writing to your manager's manager. You must do this within two calendar weeks of being notified, explaining your reasons. An appeal meeting will be arranged either with the manager who received your appeal notification or with a different manager from your business area, who will be at a grade equal or more senior to the manager who dealt with your request originally. You may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague if you wish. The manager hearing your appeal may be accompanied by a representative from HR. The meeting will normally take place within two calendar weeks of submitting your appeal.

You will be notified of the outcome of your appeal within one calendar week of the meeting.