

3.29 Flexible Work Policy

Flexible Working Arrangements Policy

To attract and retain the best in our field we recognise that careers within our professional services firm must also be compatible with responsibilities and commitments outside of work. It is our intention that non-traditional work patterns do not form any barrier to a successful and fulfilling career with the firm.

Our Flexible Work Policy sets out the avenues open to those who would like to request a flexible work arrangement. It also provides guidance on common examples of flexibility and how these are typically managed by the firm. Effective flexible work arrangements are underpinned by trust, effective communication and good management. Therefore, our policy and practices for flexible work include consideration of how these aspects of the arrangement will be established and maintained.

The policy is relevant to those who wish to request a change to their usual work pattern, either on a permanent basis, or for a specified period of time. Situations where you may need to arrive late, leave early or work from home on a particular day form part of day to day management and should be discussed and agreed on a case by case basis with your RP or manager. For guidelines on doctor, dentist or any other personal appointments please also see 3.1(g) of the Office Manual.

Additionally, RPs and managers should encourage staff to start work later or leave early where possible if their staff member or team have been working extended hours and overtime is not payable.

Legislation

Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000 provides staff the right to request flexible work arrangements and sets out the criteria for handling formal requests for flexibility. Your HR Advisor can provide information on the legislation, or information can be found on the [Ministry of Business and Innovation](#) website (MBIE).

Guidelines

Flexible work encompasses a range of arrangements relating to your hours, days and location of work. Examples of common flexible work arrangements include (but are not limited to): changes to your usual work hours, part time hours, job-sharing and working from home. Your responsibilities and usual performance standards do not change under a flexible work arrangement. The exception to this is if your hours either increase or decrease. If this is the case your agreed workload will be adjusted to be commensurate with your usual work hours.

There are many reasons why a flexible work arrangement may be requested, however common examples include:

- where family responsibilities would be assisted by flexible hours
- where travel time would be significantly shortened
- where the arrangement will better meet departmental and/or client needs
- where you have a regular study, sporting or cultural commitment on a particular day

While the firm will try to accommodate any request, it may not be appropriate or possible in all departments or for all types of work.

Moving to a flexible work arrangement will not affect your continuous service with the firm and therefore will not affect your eligibility for long service leave or other entitlements based on length of service.

Flexible work arrangements make it particularly important to maintain regular contact and positive relationships with your RP or manager and colleagues within your team, your department and the firm. We will consider your work arrangements when scheduling meetings, team events and training sessions to allow you to attend (either in person or remotely i.e. by conference call). However, from time to time you may be asked to vary your arrangements to enable you to attend meetings and events.

To make a formal request for a flexible work arrangement, please do this in writing to your RP or manager, who will then consult with your HR Advisor about your request. In your written request please make sure you include:

- your name, the date that you made the written request and that the request is made under 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000
- details about the flexible work arrangement that you are requesting (relevant details are likely to include days of work, start and finish times, location of work etc.)
- whether you are requesting a permanent change to your work arrangements or a change for a fixed period of time
- the date that you would like the flexible work arrangement to start, and if it is for a fixed period of time, when you would like it to end
- in your view, what changes (if any) the firm will need to make if your request is approved

Approval may be given by the RP for legal staff and the appropriate manager for support staff (in consultation with the HR team). We will confirm our decision in writing within one month of receiving your request. If your request is not approved we will provide an explanation for this decision.

Review of Flexible Working Arrangements

A timeframe and process for review may be agreed with you as a condition of our initial approval. If this is the case we will include details of the review in your revised employment agreement or the letter confirming the variation of your employment agreement.

At the end of the review period, if the arrangements are not meeting your needs or the needs of the firm we will discuss possible alternative flexible arrangements with you. If it is not possible to agree an alternative flexible work arrangement we may require you to return to your previous working arrangements.

Common Flexible Work Arrangements

Change to your work pattern

You may request to change your daily or weekly work pattern. This may include irregular hours, earlier or later start and finish times or varied start and finish times to fulfil your agreed full-time or part-time hours.

We will give consideration to your work arrangements in planning meetings and training sessions. However, from time to time your RP or manager may request that you vary the agreed hours so that you can attend departmental meetings, complete tasks on time, or meet client needs.

Staff working changed work pattern will undertake their normal responsibilities. Conditions of employment, remuneration and benefits will not be affected.

Working from home

Working from home may assist with reducing travel time and meeting commitments outside of work.

A flexible arrangement to work from home will not result in a change to your employment status or job responsibilities, unless it is combined with a request to change other elements of your work arrangements such as reducing your hours.

In working from home your home becomes your workplace. We will assess your workspace at home before you regularly start to work from home and will provide you with the equipment you require to work effectively and safely.

Unless your request to work from home is combined with a request to change your work hours or work pattern you will be expected to be actively working and contactable during your usual working hours. If it is agreed that you will also work some days or hours in the office, we will take this into account when scheduling team meetings to enable you to attend if possible.

Working from home requires trust, good self-management and strategies/techniques to maintain relationships with your RP or manager and colleagues across the firm. As part of your request and planning to work from home we recommend you and your manager discuss expectations about maintaining contact and the most effective ways to

do this in person on a regular basis. This may include attending weekly team meetings (by phone or in the office in person), attending training sessions or other internal events and regular phone contact in addition to less personal methods such as e-mail, instant messaging or text.

Part time work

Part time arrangements may include:

- reduced number of days each week;
- reduced number of hours in the work day (but a schedule should be agreed which suits both the staff member and the firm); and
- working alternate days or weeks.

The workload should be commensurate with the hours worked, although (as for any role) there may be occasions where you need to work additional or varied hours according to workload. If you are a legal staff member your budgets will be pro-rated to the hours worked, and the mix of chargeable and non-chargeable units will be agreed between you and your RP.

Senior Associates working part time will still hold responsibilities such as business development, and staff supervision but the scope of these should be agreed with your RP and DL, and covered in your initial request for flexible work.

Job sharing

Job sharing operates when two part-time staff share one full time position. In a job-share key responsibilities are generally not divided and both staff members are familiar with, and perform all the tasks associated with the role. This type of arrangement requires a high level of communication and cooperation between the two parties and also with colleagues in your team and department.

Generally, job-share staff should work consecutive days and may or may not have any overlap in their hours of work. Working alternate weeks will be considered. Each parties' workload should be commensurate with the hours worked but will equate to one full time role between them. As much as possible the job-share holders should share tasks, and be able to liaise with all clients (external and internal).

Job-sharing works best when the two individuals know each other well and work in similar ways. Good communication between them, their RP or manager, the department, and support staff is essential. With agreement, the job-sharers may cover any absences of the other staff member.

Legal staff working in a job-share arrangement may share a joint budget or have individual budget targets. The scope of additional responsibilities such as business development and staff supervision responsibilities needs to be agreed as part of the application process.

While the job-share arrangement is in place, neither staff member may work elsewhere if this creates a conflict of interest. Any intention to work elsewhere must be disclosed and approved by the firm.