Flexible working: an overview for Education & Scholarship and Education & Research staff

Introduction

These guidelines provide information on flexible working arrangements for academic members of staff at the University in the Education & Research and Education & Scholarship job families. There is a separate guidance document available for staff in the Research job family and Professional Services staff.

It is recognised that Education & Research and Education & Scholarship academics in many cases already work in a highly flexible way to deliver the requirements of their roles in respect of their research, teaching and other important dimensions of the job. This is recognised in part through the contract of employment which does not normally specify hours of work or refer to a standard working day for an academic member of staff.

This document provides guidance on what flexibility means in practice, how to manage flexibility to support a positive work-life balance and how to be a successful and safe flexible worker.

The University will take account of its business needs, as well as an individual's request, in considering any application for flexible working.

If you would like to consider other ways of working not outlined here, please discuss with your Academic Lead or Head of Discipline initially and seek further guidance from your HR Business Partner/Advisor if needed.

Hours of work

Academic employees in the **Education and Research** job family have no specific hours of work and employees are required to work such hours as necessary to carry out the duties associated with their appointment.

Full time academic employees in the **Education and Scholarship** job family are contracted to work 1600 hours per year to suit the requirements of the College. The working hours for a part-time employee are specified in their letter of appointment.

Changes to the arrangements of hours

In general Education & Research employees and Education & Scholarship employees are able to arrange their own working hours in a way that allows them to best meet the duties of their role (within the limits of their teaching schedule and other duties/roles requiring presence at a particular place and time). The options below can provide further flexibility to the arrangement of hours.

Course of action	Summary	Benefits	Parameters*
Adjustment for peaks & troughs	The cyclical nature of the University can lead to peaks and troughs	• Helps to improve work-life balance, improve wellbeing	• The adjustment of hours in this way is controlled by those

	in workload; academic employees without fixed hours can choose to work shorter hours at times of lower workload.	and engagement. • Allows employees to manage peaks and troughs in workloads without a formal agreement put in place (for example peaks of work during term times compared to troughs during student vacation times).	duties/roles which must be carried out at a particular time and place (for example teaching, lab work or 'office hours' for students). • If you find that you are working very long hours and are unable to take breaks or holiday, you should speak to your Academic Lead or Head of Discipline about your workload in the first instance.
Annual teaching restrictions	Employees with teaching responsibilities who wish to restrict the hours they are scheduled to teach must use the annual teaching restrictions process in their College	• Helps to improve work-life balance, improve wellbeing and engagement • Allows requests for changes on a yearly basis rather than a contract change • Enables the timetabling team to incorporate employee needs in a timely way to avoid minimum disruption to students.	• Changes mid-academic year may need to be dealt with separately as arrangements may need to be made to cover existing timetable commitments. • A successful teaching restriction application does not reduce overall working hours and will have no impact on overall workload. • Not all requests may be accommodated, taking account of business needs. • Further guidance is available

where further guidance exists for a flexible working arrangement, you should refer to that guidance for the full list of parameters.

Changes to the overall number of hours

Option	Summary	Benefits	Parameters*
Reduction in hours	Employees reduce the number of hours worked (with a corresponding	• Helps to improve work-life balance, improve wellbeing and engagement	• If the role cannot be condensed into reduced hours, a replacement must be sought to cover the missing aspects of

	reduction in pay)		the role. The costs of meeting a reduction in hours should not outweigh the business benefits of reducing the hours and should not place burden on other members of the team. • Workload allocation models should ensure a pro rata allocation for part-time employees and, on agreement of reduced hours, the SWARM allocation should be adjusted. • There is a separate procedure for flexible retirement which also involves reduction in hours.
Job sharing	The duties of one full-time role are shared between two part-time people.	• Can help attract and retain diverse talent. • May mean that added experience and expertise is available.	• The usual share of workload is 50:50, although a 60:40 share may also be considered. • There must be a period of overlap for handover between the roles. • A formal job sharing contract must be in place. • Further guidance on job sharing is available.

where further guidance exists for a flexible working arrangement, you should refer to that guidance for the full list of parameters.

Changes to the location of work

Some of the duties of an academic role must be carried out in particular locations; most notably teaching and meetings with students, lab-based research or assisting recruitment of new students at Open Days. The Academic staff attendance and workload policy outlines the following expectations for attendance:

- Staff are required to attend to perform teaching, administrative and related duties as agreed with the College Dean.
- Staff should arrange any necessary non-availability (e.g. field trips, study visits etc.) with the College Dean.
- The nature of academic duties means that staff may not always be immediately available but they should be contactable within University office working hours and should leave details of their whereabouts with the appropriate Secretary.

- Reasonable availability to students should be arranged with the College Dean as part of teaching-related duties.
- Part-time staff availability and attendance should be arranged within the context of their contract.

It is recognised that many academics will conduct some of their research, teaching preparation or other duties from their home or another location away from the University. There is guidance on working effectively from home, including working safely in the Flexible Working Toolkit. Where employees are working regularly from their home, they should leave contact details and details of their whereabouts with an appropriate member of staff in the College administration team.

Being a successful and safe flexible worker

There is guidance available outlining best practice for flexible workers in the Flexible Working Toolkit. Some key aspects are outlined below:

Workload: Members of staff are expected to manage their workload to ensure that they take regular breaks and holiday. All members of academic staff should have an annual review to discuss their workload and the work expectations of them for the following academic year. The workload allocation for each individual academic should reflect these discussions and the requirements of the College.

Managing the 365/24/7 digital culture: The proliferation of mobile technology makes the boundaries between 'working' and 'not working' more fluid. This can be advantageous to people who are working flexibly, but a feeling of being always 'connected' can be a negative feature of flexible working. There is further guidance available in the working from home effectively and IT guidance for homeworking pages of the Flexible Working Toolkit.

Collaboration: Remember the importance of working with other members of staff at the University. It is important to make yourself available for activities such as discipline meetings, informal coffee catch ups and College activities.

Holiday: It is recommended that you use your full holiday allowance each year and that you use this time to take a full break from your work. Although it is not a requirement for academic staff to book their holiday using Trent Self Service system, you can use the system to record holiday to ensure you are actually taking your holiday entitlement. Whilst on holiday you should use the 'Out of Office' email function to alert people to a delay in response. It is reasonable not to check or respond to email whilst taking annual leave. If you find that you are working very long hours and are unable to take breaks or holiday, you should speak to your Academic Lead or Head of Discipline about your workload in the first instance and then your HR Business Partner should you need further advice.

Desk and computer set up: If you are working flexibly, it is likely that you will choose to work in more than one location. It is important that your workstation is set up correctly. Further information is available in the working from home safely guidance.

Further guidance available

Further guidance is available in the Flexible Working Toolkit. Please speak to your Academic Lead or Head of Discipline in the first instance to discuss your individual or team circumstances. Your HR Business Partner/Advisor is available should any further support and guidance be needed.