

SEATTLEU

STAFF FLEXWORK PROGRAM

Staff Flexwork Supervisor Discussion Guide

Seattle University is reopening our campus for the fall academic term. As the campus has been closed for over 16 months, reopening will may present challenges for staff who have become accustomed to working at home. To best address this change, we recommend that all work units begin transitioning back to campus in advance of the Fall academic term to achieve full readiness for campus activities. Supervisors and direct reports will develop a transition plan which best supports their respective work unit.

In addition, we are undertaking a flexwork options pilot during the fall and winter quarters and supervisors will be leading the implementation of the pilot. We recommend that staff colleagues review the below criteria and flexwork options to prepare for a conversation with your supervisor. Work group plans are subject to review, and the final decision will rest with the senior Cabinet Leader.

Criteria for Staff Work Plans

Work plans must ensure we achieve and maintain service and operational excellence while delivering a thriving and vibrant campus experience in keeping with the University's Jesuit character and the expectations of our students for the work unit regardless of which flexwork options are approved.

Flexwork Options

Supervisors may utilize the following flexwork options to staff their work units:

- A preapproved number of workdays per week off campus.
- Flexible hours outside the core business hours of 8:00AM - 4:30PM.

There may be some circumstances and/or roles where the following options may also be considered:

- Compressed workweek, e.g., 37.5 hours in 4 workdays.
- Reduced workweek, i.e., less than 37.5 hours in a workweek if the work unit can maintain the same or better levels of quality and service.
 - Note: If approved, an individual's pay, benefits and vacation accrual will be impacted based on a reduced work schedule. Please keep in mind that SU benefits are only available to staff working 20 hours/week or more.

Purpose

The following guide is intended to be a non-exhaustive guide for supervisors to consider when discussing if a Staff Flexwork Program option is appropriate for a staff position. Supervisors are encouraged to retain notes of the discussion for the purposes of agreement review.

How to Discuss Staff Flexwork Program with Staff Colleagues– Communicating What is Possible

Supervisors have a responsibility to achieve the goals of their units, and to provide the guidance, support, training and organization for their staff to ensure that staff colleagues can do their jobs. Supervisors are responsible for using University resources wisely to deliver results in the most efficient and effective manner. The implementation of flexwork options can help supervisors meet their goals in many ways.

All jobs are not amenable to all types of flexibility, and this can be a part of your dialogue with your staff as you explore flexibility for your team. Positions that are largely based on computer transactions would be most easily adapted for a flexible schedule or location, but what about positions that rely on teamwork, or require an individual's presence to provide services to customers? With a little creativity, a surprising number of jobs can be performed in new ways that may not be evident at first glance. Much of this determination will depend on the size of the staff and the nature of the work.

Some supervisors may be uncomfortable broaching the topic of flexibility openly with their staff colleagues. They may fear that they will encourage high expectations that they will not be able to meet, or that they will create conflict between staff colleagues, or that their team's ability to reach goals will be compromised.

However, supervisors that embrace non-traditional work arrangements attest again and again to the vitality, productivity and loyalty that comes with setting an expectation of flexibility with their staff colleagues. A discussion of what may or may not be possible in any given work setting can help to head off unrealistic expectations. It allows the whole group to weigh the pros and cons of given options, and to problem solve together how they might work as a team to create a flexible work environment for all.

Discussions like this also help each team member buy into the process and provide input into how flex work might be tracked or assessed as different arrangements progress. Finally, such discussions often take the burden of creating shared expectations off the manager alone, creating an environment where all team members expect high levels of productivity, communication and problem solving from each other.

A primary goal is to be clear about your expectations with staff colleagues for maintaining their current work schedule or if considering a flexible schedule based on operational needs. Supervisors are encouraged to consider a variety of options to allow staff colleagues to manage their personal commitments and work responsibilities. This may be especially important when supervising parents of young children or online learning for school aged children. This may include implementing nonstandard schedules – such as an early or delayed start, a split-schedule workday, or a compressed or extended workweek.

A positive attitude and a willingness to trust staff colleagues to effectively work in a flextime environment is key to making such arrangements successful and productive. Working remotely/hybrid presents an opportunity for supervisors to become better supervisors. Instead of focusing on how many hours your staff colleagues are working, re-emphasize a focus on measuring results and reaching objectives—regardless of work arrangement. The staff colleague's completed work product is the

indicator of success, rather than direct observation. By focusing on the staff colleague's work product, supervisors will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing by objectives.

Fall 2021 is the beginning of the pilot period of the Flexwork Plan and is a time of re-opening the campus to greater in-person functioning following the COVID-19 Pandemic. Staff colleagues and the entire SU Community may have significant concerns about reacclimating to on-campus work or, for those who continued to work on campus during the pandemic, they may have fears about more people now being on-campus with them. As a campus community we must be cognizant that comfort levels will vary and that Fall 2021 is to be the most flexible term yet.

Considerations Prior to Meeting with Staff Colleagues

- Does the workload need to be rebalanced? Are there staff colleagues who have more available time to accomplish tasks and should work be reassigned accordingly?
- Connect with other supervisors within your division regarding workload and transferrable tasks/skills. How can staff colleagues assist others in the department/division/college to complete necessary tasks?
- Identify staff colleagues who may need special requirements or currently have work accommodations, and plan accordingly
- What guidelines are needed for measuring productivity and completion of tasks, projects, and assignments during a remote work assignment?
- What circumstances require on-site attendance?
- Have resources ready to provide for technical support
- Identify staff colleagues who will have access to the building, labs or facilities

Questions to Direct Conversation with Staff Colleagues

- What routine responsibilities/tasks cannot be fulfilled while working remotely and how will that impact operations or other people? What are ways to reduce the impacts?
- What routine responsibilities/tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Proactively contact each staff member to confirm how you will communicate if/when someone is working remotely.
- Often staff experience fewer interruptions while working remotely. Are there any special projects or tasks that you can work on in advance while working remotely?
- What events or meetings are scheduled during the time in which the remote/hybrid work arrangement is in place? Will they be postponed or canceled, or will they take place using technology? What follow-up needs to occur due to postponements or cancellations?
- Remote/hybrid work may provide the perfect opportunity for a staff colleague to accomplish a few development goals. Are there any developmental goals that can be worked on at this time? Are there any [LinkedIn Learning pathways](#) that the staff colleague could benefit from?
- Are there cross-training opportunities to identify backup staff colleagues who can do critical work within or between departments? Plan for staff colleague absences.
- Does the position require the transportation of documents containing highly restricted data? If so, what is the protocol to handle that.
- What changes to departmental operations, if any, would be required to support the request?

- Are there critical work activities that are vulnerable to the absence of a small number of key staff colleagues?
- What key processes have been identified for each area/or department? Will there be specific platform access necessary to fulfill these processes?
- What level of contact with students, faculty, staff, or visitors does this position have?
 - Can this contact be successfully completed in a virtual format?
- Can position tasks be clearly defined with measurable work activities and objectives?
- Would approval of this remote work request have a detrimental impact on the ability of other positions to satisfactorily perform their position?
- How will the staff colleague maintain regular contact with colleagues and supervisors?
- Does the staff colleague have other arrangements for childcare or dependent care during the hours requested to work remotely/hybrid?