

Decision-Making Criteria for Flexible Work Requests

April 2021

Overview

Ohio State faculty and staff are a vital part of supporting the mission of the university and the experience of students, patients, and visitors. To support recruitment and retention efforts of faculty and staff while supporting our core services to these constituents, flexible work arrangements, including but not limited to remote work, can be a viable workplace option. Leaders and managers are encouraged to look broadly at their organization to identify what is appropriate for individuals and/or teams. Managers should ensure that they offer flexible work arrangements in a non-discriminatory manner and that their decisions do not adversely impact protected classes of employees. Managers should consult with their unit Human Resources representative if they have concerns or questions. The below considerations can assist in identifying options and resources when considering flexible work arrangements while maintaining excellent operations, performance and a collaborative team environment.

Flexible work arrangements may be appropriate for staff and faculty in some positions and departments but may not be possible for all. Managers reserve the right to require, deny, alter or cease flexible arrangements based on the unit's business needs, the individual's work performance or other factors. Managers should still work through needs that might be individual based while also evaluating entire teams. The approval of a remote work plan and other flexible work arrangement is not a right of an employee or faculty member and it also does not change the terms and conditions of employment with Ohio State. While acknowledging that not every position is appropriate for a remote work model, HR and colleges/units should strive to ensure reasonable and equitable access to flexible work arrangements.

Request Considerations

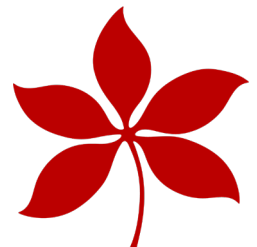
The following are decision-making criteria to consider for individual requests and/or when implementing a team approach.

- Essential Functions of the Work Unit:
 - What functions are essential to be performed in a traditional way?
 - Can any of the functions of this work unit be performed in a non-traditional way?
 - What are the best methods for accomplishing this work, and what methods **should** continue to achieve the best results?

- Measuring Success:
 - Is the work unit currently meeting or exceeding operational expectations?
 - What measures are in place that evaluates team performance?
 - How do the measures differ amongst team members who have different roles (transactional vs. strategic/conceptual)?
 - Are tracking resources necessary and available to monitor productivity in a flexible environment where some employees may work remotely?



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- Data Security:
 - Can the unit exercise flexible work options and still ensure compliance with Ohio State data policy and governance?

- Innovative approaches to the work:
 - What are creative ways in which the work can be performed?
 - Who else performs this work?
 - Are the job functions shared by others in the department?
 - Can work be tackled by a group of individuals within the department so that these onsite responsibilities are shared, or is this truly an individual contributor?
 - Do any position descriptions need modification?
 - What ideas does the team have about incorporating flexible work and balancing operational expectations? Can the team create a mechanism to meet operational requirements?

- IT Equipment & Other Resources:
 - What tools/equipment/resources will be necessary for work off-site?
 - What tools/equipment/resources should the work unit provide for employees?
 - What will employees be required to provide to benefit from flexible work?

- Office Space and Employee preferences:
 - Can employees opt out of team flex work if their preference is to remain in the office?
 - Are “hoteling” options available or necessary to reduce real estate costs?
 - Are there costs to renovate space?

- Alignment with Existing Policies, Laws and Agreements:
 - Does the flexible work request violate any university or department policy, federal or state law, or collective bargaining agreement?

Non-Exempt Employees

- All flexible work requests must fall within the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and shall not deviate from a 40-hour workweek for a full-time employee.
- All flexible work requests are subject to the parameters outlined in Ohio State Policy 6.10, Scheduling Work and Overtime Compensation.
- All flexible work requests are subject to the attendance parameters outlined in the college or unit Attendance Policy (if one exists)
- Ensure that employee is aware of the above and can appropriately meet timekeeping expectations and perform timekeeping processes.
- Safety work protocols should be followed and worker’s compensation policies apply.

Exempt Employees

- All flexible work requests are subject to the parameters outlined in Ohio State Policy 6.10, Scheduling Work and Overtime Compensation.
- All flexible work requests are subject to the attendance parameters outlined in the college or unit Attendance Policy or guidelines (if exists).
- Safety work protocols should be followed and worker’s compensation policies apply.

- Operational Requirements: What operational requirements must be met to ensure student, patient and other stakeholder needs are met? What must the function/work area/role accomplish? How is success currently measured?
 - What are the Core Business Hours (CBH) and will they be appropriately covered?
 - Will this flexible work request negatively affect business performance or customer needs in any way? If so, how? And are there solution-based options that can implemented?
 - How will this flexible work request impact customer service or a customer's expectations?
 - Would measures need to be put in place to ensure stakeholder accessibility to team/employee? If so, what are those measures?
 - How will collaboration between the team/employee and other university colleagues and stakeholders be maintained?
 - Does the flexible work request align with our business strategies? If not, why?
 - Are there any potential financial costs incurred or savings expected?

- Core functions of the job: Flexible work may not be suitable for every job, as some jobs cannot be performed off-site or during non-traditional hours.
 - Review the position description to ensure it accurately reflects the current duties, and review for possible flexible work opportunities.
 - Management
 - Does the job have any supervisory responsibilities?
 - Does the job require constant on-site supervision?
 - Can the on-site management responsibilities be shared by other leaders?
 - On-site Work
 - Does this job require an employee's physical presence for optimal performance?
 - Does the job require working with equipment or other resources that is either only on-site, or can be kept at an alternative site (if applicable)?
 - Can the on-site responsibilities be shared?
 - In the event of an emerging crisis, are other resources available when the employee is not available on-site?
 - Work during core Business Hours:
 - What percentage of the work is required to be done during core business hours?
 - What percentage of work should be done during core business hours to achieve the best results?
 - Can the remaining % be done outside of core Business Hours without having a negative impact on operations?
 - Can the work be "scheduled" or otherwise handled differently for a period of time?
 - Who else performs this work?
 - Are the job functions shared by others in the department?
 - Can work be tackled by a group of individuals within the department so that these on-site responsibilities are shared, or is this truly an individual contributor?

- Employee Work/Life Alignment:
 - Does the requested flexible work request assist the employee with wellness needs and personal demands?
 - Does the flexible work request involve the employee utilizing the university's wellness resources (such as Your Plan for Health and the Employee Assistance Program), and activities during core business hours?
 - Does the flexible work request involve the employee utilizing the university's education benefit?
 - Does the flexible work request involve supporting an employee's existing or upcoming child care, eldercare needs (non-medical)?

- Performance Management & Productivity: Individuals who meet or exceed performance standards are typically good candidates for flexible work arrangements. Individuals in corrective action or on a performance improvement plan may not be eligible for flexible work arrangements. It will be important to set clear expectations at the outset of any flexible work request and reiterate throughout the arrangement to ensure success.
 - Does the position have clearly defined and measurable goals/tasks?
 - Is the employee currently meeting or exceeding performance expectations?
 - Has the employee demonstrated the ability to work independently and produce results?
 - Does the employee have proven organizational and time management skills for a flexible work arrangement?
 - Does the employee maintain close and frequent communication with stakeholders (e.g., management, co-workers, customers, etc.) to ensure operational needs are being met?
 - Is the employee self-motivated?
 - Would measures need to be put in place to ensure appropriate reporting and communication with employee and vice versa?

- Employee Equity:
 - Are there existing flexible work arrangements in the work unit that makes the current request prohibitive? If so, do they need to be revisited to ensure everyone has an opportunity to consider flexible work?

Compliance

Under Development

Resources

[Flexible work policy 6.12](#)

[Flexible work definitions](#)

[Return to campus manager considerations](#)

[Flexible work agreement](#)

[Flexible work manager guidelines](#)

[Flexible work employee guidelines](#)