

**Manager Toolkit  
for Flexible Work Arrangements  
at Oakland University**

## I. Supervisors considering flexible work arrangements (FWA) should:

- A. Consider the potential improvement of business/department needs when assessing flexible schedule proposals from employees.
- B. Consider each proposal on its own merits, while keeping the needs of the team in mind.
- C. Ask for assistance or guidance from Human Resources.
- D. Carefully think through the rationale when denying FWA requests. Have employee explore other FWA options or reassess at a later date.
- E. Seek feedback from colleagues experienced with supporting flexible work options.
- F. Clarify all expectations with the employee before implementing a flexible work schedule and discuss any questions or concerns. Consider adopting the new schedule as a temporary arrangement with a timeline.
- G. Evaluate the arrangement periodically, and have regular discussions with the employee.
- H. Communicate the new arrangement to other staff in the department and appropriate administrators.
- I. Think through which flexible schedule options will meet both your needs and the needs of your unit.
- J. Monitor the successes and challenges.
- K. Alternative work arrangements may require some adjustment in management style and may also require adjustments in communication to maintain accountability.
- L. Develop systems and structures that allow employees to respond to ever-changing work demands, such as having a back-up plan for coverage and communication when unexpected situations arise.
- M. Communicate explicitly and consistently about standards for accountability, quality and timeliness.
- N. Create a comfortable environment where employees can share concerns and creative ideas with you.
- O. Be open to experimenting.
- P. Support, whenever possible, requests for Flexible Work Arrangements to take a university course or otherwise participate in professional development activities during their regularly scheduled work hours.
- Q. Ensure FMLA guidelines are followed.
- R. Implement Flexible Work Arrangements consistent with the Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination/Harassment policy.
- S. Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) employees (i.e. represented) must comply with rules outlined in their respective Collective Bargaining Agreements.

## II. Evaluation Suggestions for Supervisors

Supervisors should evaluate each flexible work arrangement periodically and have regular discussions with the employee.

Things to consider:

- Effective communication
- Effective customer service

- Other employees and how they've been affected
- Successful work assignments
- Safety of employee and maintenance of company equipment
- Timely problem solving
- Arrangement beneficial to workplace

### III. Benefits and Challenges of Flexible Options

#### A. Adjustable Meal Period

Using up to two hours of a meal period to take care of personal business while still working a full work day. Adjustable meal periods should be on an as-needed basis, if they become a standing recurrence a Flexible Work Arrangement Form needs to be completed.

Benefits:

- This approach can assist, for example, to handle personal business that is difficult before or after normal work hours

Challenges:

- May be disruptive to the department if limited notice is provided

Adjustable meal period proposals should address:

- Need to be pre-approved by supervisor to effective communications with other employees so there are no misunderstandings and necessary coverage is provided

#### B. Compressed Work Week

Benefits:

- Employees retain full pay and benefits
- May reduce commuting time and costs
- May reduce childcare and elder care costs
- Provides a low cost employee benefit
- May provide extended service hours

Challenges:

- Employee may not be as productive
- The employee must work longer days
- Employee may not receive supervision at all hours
- May create challenges related to hours of child & elder care availability
- May cause understaffing at times

Compressed work week proposals should address:

- How appropriate department coverage will be maintained
- Definition of tasks when supervisor is absent
- How to coordinate schedules and communication

#### C. Flex Time

Benefits:

- Employee retains full pay and benefits

- Employee's working and time off hours more closely meet their needs
- May facilitate recruiting and retention

Challenges:

- May not provide supervision at all hours
- May cause understaffing at times
- May create difficulty in keeping track of hours

Flex-Time proposals should address:

- How appropriate department coverage will be maintained
- How work hours will be tracked
- Definition of tasks when supervisor is absent

#### **D. Shift Swaps**

Employees can exchange shifts with each other and exercise some control over when they work. In some cases they may also be empowered to take extra shifts and/or give shifts away.

Benefits:

- Ability to handle personal needs
- Flexibility in shift preference

Challenges:

- May be difficult to find someone willing to change shifts
- Shifts can change due to operational needs

Shift-swap proposals should address:

- Ensure no CBA violations

#### **E. Remote Work**

Benefits:

- Employee saves commuting time and costs
- Enhanced productivity
- May assist employees with disabilities

Challenges:

- Less face-to-face interaction with coworkers and supervisors
- Not all employees may work productively in this arrangement
- University equipment must be used which may have cost implications
- Not all jobs can be performed off-site

Remote work proposals should address:

- How communication with coworkers and supervisor will continue

Considerations for Working Remotely:

- What elements of the job can be performed off-site? Which cannot?
- Where will the work be conducted?
- What tools, equipment and technology are needed for work to be completed?
- Have arrangements been made for dependent care?

- How will privacy requirements be met? Do you have access to University computer software, hardware, databases and other technology to ensure the security and protection from use by other individuals?
- How do you intend to resolve any obstacles that arise as a result of your Remote Work Flexible Work Arrangement?
- List all goals, work assignments, metrics and/or other issues that will require consideration or change if the Remote Work Flexible Work Arrangement request is approved.

### **III. Tools to Get Started**

You may consider asking your employees to complete the following worksheets for discussion with the Flexible Work Arrangements Form.

**Employee Worksheets for Proposing a Flexible Schedule**

List out your job responsibilities and other important features of your position.

	Employee Perspective	Supervisor Perspective
Responsibilities (Include time %s)		
Time Distribution		
Deadlines		
Key Interactions		
Key Meetings		

**Benefits and Challenges of Flexibility in my Unit**

List the positives and negatives for you, your co-workers and your supervisor or department.

Benefits (+) or Challenges (-) to the Employee	Benefits (+) or Challenges (-) to Co-workers	Benefits (+) or Challenges (-) to the Supervisor or Department

**Employee Worksheets for Proposing a Flexible Schedule**

Consider three flexible work arrangement options in case your first choice is not approved.

Schedule Choice/My Needs		Scheduling Options	Employee Concerns	Department Barriers
	1			
	2			
	3			