

Oakland University Flexible Work Arrangements Manager Frequently Asked Questions

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) resource is for managers who are responsible for supervising exempt employees in non-represented (academic or non-academic) classifications. Collective Bargaining Unit employees (i.e., represented) must comply with rules outlined in their respective Collective Bargaining Agreements. Please review the [Flexible Work Arrangements Guidelines](#) for details.

ELIGIBILITY/PROGRAM

1. What are Flexible Work Arrangements?

Flexible Work Arrangements are work schedules that fall outside of a unit's usual work schedule and will have a plan, such as an expected start date or length of time.

Additionally, supervisors are encouraged to support reasonable, non-disruptive, and occasional Schedule Adjustments, at management discretion.

2. What types of Flexible Work Arrangements are available?

Oakland University offers the following types of Flexible Work Arrangements (refer to the Guidelines for details):

Term	Definition
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
Compressed Work Week	40-hour work week compressed into fewer than five work days 80-hour work week compressed into fewer than ten days
Flex Time	Fixed starting/ending in which the employee works a 40-hour work week on a schedule other than 8am - 5pm over a five-day week. Day-to-day start and end times may vary.
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.
Remote Work	All positions have a primary campus work location designation of an Oakland University owned or leased facility. Alternative locations may be supported for short periods and do not change the primary work location for a position. Employees may work from alternative locations, such as their home, for part of their regular work week.

3. Who is eligible for Flexible Work Arrangements?

All employees are eligible to apply for Flexible Work Arrangements. Collective Bargaining Unit employees (i.e., represented) must comply with rules outlined in their respective Collective Bargaining Agreements.

4. Are the Flexible Work Arrangement procedures different for exempt and nonexempt (hourly) employees?

No, arrangement procedures do not differ but some options do.

5. How far in advance should an employee formally request Flexible Work Arrangement?

Employees who would like to request a Flexible Work Arrangement should notify their supervisor a minimum of two weeks in advance of their need and complete the Flexible Work Arrangement Form.

6. If approved, when would the FWA commence?

It will vary based on the lead time necessary to review onsite project requirements, plan office coverage, and implement processes to handle job duties while not present during regular hours.

7. What if the employee wants to change an existing Flexible Work Arrangement?

The employee is required to complete a new Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form after discussion about department options with the supervisor.

8. How will I communicate with an employee who is on a Flexible Work Arrangement?

Communication with an employee who you may not always see can be accomplished successfully through email, telephone, and other agreed upon communication methods. Units may want to consider Google Chat or other comparable service. For employment duties to be completed as expected, open and regular communication is very important, as are clearly laid out work assignments and due dates.

SUPERVISOR CONCERNS

1. As a supervisor, how do I make the case for allowing an employee to utilize a Flexible Work Arrangement?

Answering the following questions when assessing whether the positions in your area are conducive to Flexible Work Arrangements and will help you make well-informed decisions:

- a. Will the department/office workflow be either neutrally or positively impacted by a Flexible Work Arrangement?
 - b. How will my team communicate during this time period to manage and fulfill the work duties of the employee requesting a Flexible Work Arrangement?
 - c. Has the employee satisfied the probationary, provisional or qualifying periods, prior to approval of the Flexible Work Arrangement?
 - d. Has the employee received a performance rating indicating positive performance on their prior year's annual performance evaluation?
 - e. Can Flexible Work Arrangements contribute to the overall effectiveness of the department and/or its workflow (e.g., could Flexible Work Arrangements extend your office's availability to provide quality service.
2. If Flexible Work Arrangements are available to all staff members, how will supervisors handle all of the requests and ensure adequate coverage?

Traditional schedules meet the needs of the majority of staff members. Staff members who do request Flexible Work Arrangements most often ask for slight changes in schedules, changes that pose the least challenge for a staff member's supervisor and co-workers. A supervisor must still assess the operational needs prior to approving a Flexible Work Arrangement.

3. What if there is only one staff member working in an office? Is it possible to even consider a FWA?

This may require some creativity. If there are several staff members in the same department or building who have an interest in a FWA they should be given an opportunity to propose how it could work.

4. If a CT submits a FWA request to the Manager, does next level supervisor get to approve as well prior to employee being notified of approval?

Supervisors will be working with their managers to ensure that operations are not affected by the change in hours. You should assume that your form is approved, you can adopt

5. Will there be notification or tracking for upper level supervisors to see a snapshot of their areas as a whole?

Information can be requested from UHR by upper level managers

6. How should multiple requests in a single unit be handled? Who will be given priority?

Management should ensure appropriate staffing exists at all times. Supervisors must ultimately evaluate whether a Flexible Work Arrangement is appropriate for their department and staff members. Each employee's case must be considered fairly and consistently; however, supervisors are not obligated to allow the use of or approve Flexible Work Arrangement.

7. There are currently established practices. If these individuals submit forms, will those current practices continue? What if the current flextime is denied?

Yes, unless something regarding operations changes requiring a review of staff hours requests. Existing flextime arrangements are not expected to be denied.

8. If there is an adjustment to the FWA, do you have to give the employee notice of this? If so, how much?

Yes. The guidelines suggest two weeks, but if the employee is part of a collective bargaining unit the contract language needs to be followed.

9. As a supervisor, I am uncomfortable with the thought that I may be pressured by my staff to utilize a Flexible Work Arrangement. What is the best way for me to manage this?

It is the intention of the University to use Flexible Work Arrangements whenever possible. However, supervisors determine whether a Flexible Work Arrangement is appropriate for their staff. Each employee's case must be considered fairly and consistently, but supervisors are not obligated to approve an employee's request for Flexible Work Arrangement.

10. Is there a formal process for appeal? Can a union member grieve a denial of a FWA?

Flexible Work Arrangements are not mandatory, universal, nor an entitlement. There is no process for appeals, and denials cannot be grieved.

11. How will this process be standardized or made consistent if supervisors can still manage their departments deny requests?

This benefit is not an entitlement.

WORK HOURS

1. Can smaller units change their office hours to accommodate for the summer – say 8:00 am-4:30 pm?

Management should ensure appropriate staffing exists at all times. Supervisors must ultimately evaluate whether a Flexible Work Arrangement is appropriate for their

department and staff members. Each employee's case must be considered fairly and consistently; however, supervisors are not obligated to allow the use of or approve Flexible Work Arrangement.

2. Emergency closures – are those treated like holiday pay for 4/10? Can employees still claim 8 hours for the holiday or claim 10 hours for compressed work week?

No exempt or nonexempt employee is eligible for more than 8 hours of pay per holiday or day of University closure. If the holiday falls on the employee's regularly scheduled workday, the employee will be credited with 8 hours of holiday pay for that day.

Nonexempt employees may use annual leave to maintain their hours of pay for that day, or they may opt to work additional hours sometime during the workweek. For exempt employees, managers need to take into consideration the exempt employee's status of "paid to get the job done" when determining whether the exempt employee needs to utilize annual leave for the difference between the hours of holiday pay and their typical hours for that day.

3. Is there any consideration given to similar schedule like Student Services going to 8-6:30 pm on Wednesday - how does FWA affect that?

Any deviation from existing department hours requires a form.

4. Committee members indicated if you're working anything other than 8-5 pm, you should be submitting form for alternate hours outside of 8-5 so confusion for shift work. Shift hours outside of 8-5, such as 24 hours. What does that look like for staff who's normal hours are not within the 8-5 guideline. Do they need to submit the form?

Any deviation from existing department hours requires a form

5. Shift swap - Could a midnight shift swap with the afternoon shift if they agree on a short-term basis?

Yes, with manager approval- understand there is a shift differential pay

6. We have three employees who work at our front desk (they are CTs). We currently allow one person to flex and work 7am to 4pm (to cover early activity that we have taking place) and two employees to work from 8am to 5pm. All employees are interested in the early schedule so they are rotating. The schedule they developed was changing every two weeks. I'm not sure where this falls on the need to fill out paperwork. Each employee only has the flexible schedule for two weeks then it rotates to the next person but the flexible hours are occurring the entire year. We definitely do not want to have to fill out paperwork every two weeks when the flex hours rotate to the next person. How will this work under the new guidelines?

Fill out form and make comments in notes regarding rotation.

7. Can employees work more than a 10 hour shift? For example, 8 hours Memorial day, 3-10 hour shifts, Friday off - where do they make up that last two hours? Two hours vacation or can they work 11 or 12 hour days that week?

Manager discretion, based on contract language regarding OT.

8. Does the meal period have to be concurrent? It should or it HAS to be? Need clarification.

Expectation is employees will work 40 hours a week. A lunch/meal is not a part of this time. A lunch/meal is encouraged during the day. Managers have a final approval.

9. Any considerations about safety if an employee is coming in earlier than everyone else? For example, advisors stay late in the evening. There are concerns about having somebody else in the office during that time to ensure their safety.

If you are concerned about safety in your workplace, consult OUPD and your manager.

REMOTE WORK

1. Do you have to use an OU computer to work from home?

Some job roles support using a personally-owned computer, such as faculty positions. Other positions require protection for the type of data and the classification of the data involved in the job tasks, and as a result, a university-owned computer is required. Discuss with your manager and the designated area Data Steward, review Policy #860 Data Management and Information Security, review www.oakland.edu/uts/securityinfo, and have a plan for preserving university work products. Departments are not required to purchase laptops for all employees.

2. Are university employees required to support technology remotely?

University employees are not required to visit and provide technical support to any location other than Oakland University officially owned or leased facilities. Those participating in Remote Work are responsible for acquiring, paying for, and trouble-shooting their own ISP service. Those participating in Remote Work are responsible for acquiring, paying for, and trouble-shooting their own computing devices, unless the department can provide a laptop. University owned devices, such as an assigned university-owned laptop, are returned to campus for service or repair. Departments are not required to purchase laptops for all employees.

3. Can we transfer phones to our cell phones or set up notifications for voicemail to talk to our Google email?

Check with University Technology Services for information about current voicemail options.

4. Remote work - can it be used for half a day and not the full day?

Yes.

5. Why is remote work limited to one day?

Positions cannot be designated as telework or work from home. Events that are less than 2 weeks do not fall under these guidelines. One day remote work was suggested to begin with, however, discuss with your manager.

6. Is it ok to give approval to work from home sporadically for sick child, etc.?

This is not a FWA request. Events that are less than 2 weeks do not fall under these guidelines.

7. What are the reasons why it would be appropriate for an employee to work from home and are there additional parameters as to why you would allow this as a supervisor?
This could be subjective from department to department.

No reason is needed. Department needs may vary.

8. How is it verified that you put in your 8 hours while you were working remotely?

We expect managers to focus on a results-oriented work environment and consistent communications to verify work.

9. Did the committee look at any research on productivity for remote work?

Yes.

10. If your work schedule calls for excessive hours, can they 'bank' them and use them later for comp time?

No, work with your manager to adjust your schedule within that week.

11. We have a service area that is open 7 am - 6 pm. Are you required to cover those hours or are we just required to cover the 8-5 pm hours?

We suggest discussing with your supervisor.

12. We need to look at comp time and summer hours and ensure coverage in areas. A lot of hotline calls come in where people complain over the way comp time is handled and supervisors not ensuring it follows contract. This needs to be looked at and addressed by the committee. Summer hours need to ensure customer needs are still being met.

Regardless of the FWA the University expects office coverage and work results. For specific information regarding contract interpretation, please feel free to contact your Association Representative.

FORM QUESTIONS

1. How do I initiate a Flexible Work Arrangement?

An employee must complete the Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form prior to beginning the proposed arrangement.

2. What if I want to change an existing Flexible Work Arrangement?

The employee is required to complete a new Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form after discussion about department options with the supervisor.

3. Flexing your hours seems less than a flexible arrangement than the other choices. Do you really want a form for each of those?

You should only need to complete one form as you will identify what days, start and end times you want to flex. The form is designed to capture only your flexible time other than 8 to 5 pm. Choose the primary option and add the secondary option in the employee and supervisor comments.

4. Can they request more than one type of arrangement? Can they choose multiple options in a defined time period?

Separate forms may be needed and approved by your supervisor.

5. Is it ok to fill out form on a semester by semester basis?

Yes, anything more than 2 weeks.

6. Do employees complete the form if schedule changes occur?

Unexpected changes if less than two weeks do not require a new form.

7. Do you fill out a form to stop the arrangement?

Yes, submit a new form. This is similar to completing a form for requesting access for a banner account and another one to delete access.

8. How do you know your FWA has ended?

This is still to be addressed but the intention will be to send a notice to supervisor and employee.

9. The form itself seems to be making this inflexible. For a FWA, this form is inflexible in how it works. (Particularly around not having two options to choose from.)

The form is designed to capture your flexible time other than 8 to 5 pm. Choose the primary option and add the secondary option in the employee and supervisor comments.

10. When an employee on FWA wants to be cancelled, how do they notify us? Is there a form?

Submit a new form. This is similar to filling a form for requesting access for banner account and another one to delete access.

11. Does the employee need to follow the two-week notice to change the agreement?

It is recommended that the employee should follow the two-week notice to allow the supervisor to plan coverage. If a change is urgent, discuss options with your supervisor.

12. Can you edit form or route the form back to the employee approving adjusted times? Example: request for 7:00-4:00 schedule but you approve 7:30-4:30 access and want them to change. Can the supervisor adjust this time on the form or does it have to be routed back to the employee?

The supervisor can choose to adjust the time or route it to the employee. The employee gets an email when a decision is made by the supervisor

13. If the whole shift time schedule moves for the summer hours, is a form needed for each individual?

Yes. We ask for a form for each individual so that we can fully measure participation and evaluate the success of the program.

14. Can you alternate shifts among employees? One week, I'm 8:00-5:00, one week, I'm 7:00-4:00.

Add to comment box on the Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. There is a need to address cities with income taxes and the University's obligation to withhold and report to those cities.

Employees that live in a city with an income tax have always been liable for the income taxes in that city regardless of their actual work location. With remote workers in cities with an income tax OU may be obligated to begin withholding taxes from residents of those cities. At this time, positions are not designated as telework positions and the primary place of employment is the university campus or official university location.

2. Is there a way to use the information from the FWA forms submitted to prove that we are a flexible environment?

Yes, we can create reports to analyze the data.

3. Are we just documenting what we're already doing? Or are all departments not currently doing this?

We will be documenting as well as encouraging or accepting new flexible work schedules.