

Recommended Flexible Work Arrangements Guidelines  
Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences  
College of General Studies  
*Updated April 16, 2021*

The following flexible work arrangement guidelines have been developed in accordance with University of Pittsburgh policy ER 18 Time Records/Attendance/Overtime and Compensatory Time (formerly 07-04-01). Among other things, the policy states the following: *A variety of flexible working schedules, altering starting and quitting times, lunch hours, days of the week worked, or number of hours worked per day, may be initiated at the discretion of the department administrator. Schedules may be arranged to allow employees to attend classes. In all cases, full-time exempt and non-exempt employees are expected to work a total of 37 1/2 hours per week.*

This document describes the flexible options available to units and departments in the Dietrich School and College of General Studies and the way in which unit supervisors may initiate flexible work arrangements. In all cases, specific arrangements must be approved by the Division Administrator, senior staff leader, and/or the Dietrich School Dean's Office prior to the start of the arrangements.

These guidelines are subject to change based on changes in University policy, applicable laws, or Dietrich School requirements.

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The Dietrich School recognizes that flexible working arrangements may offer a variety of benefits to both the School and to individual staff members. Potential benefits include improving recruitment and retention of staff; reducing sick time; increasing productivity; increasing the overall availability of staff to serve department or unit needs; and improving morale.

Supervisors are responsible for administering flexible work arrangements for those staff members who report to them. The types of flexible work arrangements offered to staff in any unit must align with the unit's needs. Supervisors are encouraged to think creatively and to take advantage of technological resources when considering ways to ensure that needs will be met. Requests to accommodate flexible work arrangements must be reviewed and approved in a manner that is fair and transparent among staff in the unit, and they cannot be guaranteed to any staff member. Supervisors and employees alike will be responsible for ensuring that faculty, students, and other staff members have confidence that a flexible work arrangement is not negatively impacting productivity or service.

Flexible work arrangements can take a number of forms which are not mutually exclusive:

- *Flex time*, where the hours worked in a day are shifted earlier or later than the standard 8:30am to 5:00 pm schedule; the workweek is shifted outside of the standard Monday through Friday; and/or the lunch period is reduced from one hour to one-half hour.
- *A compressed work week*, where an employee shifts from a traditional 5-day work week by compressing hours into a shorter number of days while maintaining the required 37.5 minimum hours;
- *Remote Work*, where an employee spends part or all of their standard schedule working from home.

## General guidelines on flexible work arrangements

Units that wish to offer flexible work arrangements to their staff must adhere to the following general guidelines:

- Units wishing to offer flexible work arrangements must develop a plan for offering, implementing, and assessing the arrangements. The plan should be developed in conjunction with the appropriate Dietrich School Senior Staff leader for the unit and must describe how the requested arrangements will meet the guidelines outlined in this document. The plan must be approved by the Dean's Office in advance of implementation.
- Appropriate leadership stakeholders, including supervisors, Directors, Chairs, and/or Division Administrators, must be supportive of the proposed flexible work arrangements.
- The primary consideration in offering flexible work arrangements must be ensuring that the support requirements in the units served will not be negatively impacted by the arrangements. Optimally, flexible work arrangements should improve productivity.
- Units must maintain sufficient support coverage during standard University business hours. Conflicts in choice of individual schedules will be resolved by the supervisor. Collaborative arrangements among two or more units and technological solutions may be considered to provide sufficient coverage.
- Staff members wishing to take advantage of flexible work arrangements must have approval from their supervisor in advance of starting any new arrangements.
- If a staff member is placed on a Performance Improvement Plan, their eligibility for flex time or remote work will be at the discretion of the supervisor.
- A staff member's schedule should be transparent to constituents they serve and to colleagues within their unit.
- Staff members requesting flexible work arrangements in order to accommodate taking or teaching courses during normal University business hours must seek appropriate approval prior to registering for any courses.
- Requests for flexible work arrangements are not guaranteed to be approved. Approval will be based on a variety of factors, including the unit's needs and an employee's responsibilities, past performance, and need for close supervision. Staff members should not make scheduling plans that require a particular flexible arrangement until after that arrangement has been approved by their supervisor.
- Flexible work arrangements may be altered or revoked at any time based on unit needs or employee performance. When a schedule needs to be altered based on unit needs, the supervisor should make a reasonable effort to provide advance notice to the employee.
- Staff members must demonstrate technological proficiency in Outlook, Teams, and Zoom, as well as any other applications or technology relevant to their position. Minimally, staff members must be available by phone and direct messaging in Teams and by email during their work hours. They must be able to schedule meetings using Outlook calendars and set up and conduct meetings via Teams and Zoom.
- There will be an initial probationary period for any flexible work arrangement of six months during which the new work arrangement will be closely monitored. If for any reason the work arrangement does not meet the unit's needs, adjustments will be made or the arrangement will be terminated. Following the probationary period, the arrangement must be assessed at least annually and adjustments made as necessary. Changes may be made at any point based on support needs, staff performance, and unit priorities.

- Employees who are new to their position and in their probationary period may have more limited flexible work options due to training and onboarding requirements defined by the supervisor.
- Supervisors will be held accountable for monitoring flexible work arrangements (including relevant implications based on the exemption status of their staff), making adjustments as appropriate to meet support needs, and immediately and effectively managing any performance problems associated with flexible work arrangements.

### **Guidelines for Flex Time**

- Regardless of an employee's start and end times, the overall standard work hours for University employees may not be reduced.
- Employees may request to reduce the standard lunch period from one hour to one-half hour. Employees may not request to eliminate the lunch period.

### **Guidelines for Compressed Work Weeks**

- Regardless of an employee's start and end times, the overall standard work hours for University employees may not be reduced.
- Employees may request to reduce the standard lunch period from one hour to one-half hour. Employees may not request to eliminate the lunch period.
- Employees who work a compressed work week are responsible for determining how inquiries and issues related to their areas of responsibility will be addressed on regular workdays when the employee is not available. This must be approved by the supervisor.
- Sick, personal, and vacation time must be taken in hours equivalent to the employee's approved schedule (i.e. if an employee's approved schedule is 4 days x 9.375 hours/day, then any sick, personal, or vacation day must be reported as 9.375 hours). When partial days are taken, appropriate hours should be recorded based on work time missed.
- When a University holiday falls on a designated workday, the employee is granted only the standard 7.5 hours for the holiday. Vacation or personal time must be used to supplement a full day off. When a University holiday falls on a designated non-workday, full-time employees are granted 7.5 hours as a floating holiday that may be used within one week before or after the scheduled holiday, with the supervisor's prior approval. This applies only to University holidays and not to recess days.

### **Guidelines for Remote Work**

- Remote work arrangements should be approved only after careful consideration of an employee's responsibilities and performance. Staff members who are offered the option of working remotely must be highly motivated, self-directed, and able to work independently.
- Staff members who work remotely must be accessible during a standard set of work hours via phone, direct message, email, and other appropriate methods of communication.
- Staff members who work remotely may be required to attend meetings or events in person based on unit needs and at the discretion of the supervisor. The supervisor should make a reasonable effort to provide advance notice to the employee.
- Staff members who work remotely and their supervisors must be especially cognizant of University policies and guidelines on maintaining the confidentiality of information.

- Staff members who work from home are responsible for ensuring that they have space to carry out their responsibilities. The University will not be responsible for home operating or maintenance costs associated with working remotely (including internet service and other utilities).
- Staff members who receive approval from their supervisor to work remotely must sign a Remote Work Agreement before the arrangement can begin.