Guidance document

Flexible working for staff in grade 6 and above
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1. **Introduction**

The University values the flexibility of staff within its workforce, and recognises the importance of supporting members of staff to achieve a work-life balance. The University is committed to ensuring that its policies, procedures and practices facilitate the achievement of a good balance between work and other interests and commitments, and recognises that staff who are able to successfully align the various demands on their time are generally more productive.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to members of staff and managers on the agreement and operation of flexible working arrangements for staff at grade 6 or above, who are working indeterminate hours.

The University has agreed policies and procedures associated with working hours, which include:

- [Flexible Working Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Indeterminate Hours Guidance for staff in grade 6 and above](#)
- [Job Sharing Guidelines](#)

This document provides additional guidance, intended to support a consistent and fair approach to the application of these policies and procedures.

The provisions of this guidance apply to all staff in grade 6 and above, as they are working to indeterminate hours. It is expected that members of staff will be available to undertake duties commensurate with their grade at such times as may be reasonably required. It is recognised that staff working at this level generally have considerable autonomy in the organisation of their workload and have a professional responsibility for the organisation of their own time.

Flexible working arrangements can take many forms within the University, including working patterns such as term-time only, shorter days and a reduced number of days, and it is important that work and meetings are planned to allow employees with flexible working patterns to participate as fully as the working pattern allows. Actual hours and days of work are normally agreed with the local management team, and should reflect the needs of the department, as well of those of the individual.

2. **Types of flexible working**

Flexible working arrangements include any agreed working pattern where the time or place that work is undertaken varies from the standard practice. All types of flexible working
arrangements should be agreed in accordance with the published Flexible Working Policy and Procedure.

The following section provides examples of different types of flexible working arrangements.

(a) Part-time

Part-time working refers to any arrangement where the contract is less than full-time (1.0 FTE). For the sole purpose of calculating pro-rata salaries and other pay-related benefits, 1.0 FTE (full-time) for staff in grade 6 and above is regarded as 37.5 hours.

Staff should not (and should not be expected to) consistently work in excess of their contracted proportion of FTE. If this occurs, the situation should be reviewed. In some cases, and subject to the availability of funding, it may be appropriate to consolidate the extra hours by way of an increase to contracted proportion of FTE. In other cases, it may be appropriate to review the member of staff's workload.

Specific guidance for staff and managers on part-time hours is detailed in section 7.

(b) Job-sharing

A job share occurs where two people are employed, at the same grade, to carry out the duties and responsibilities associated with one, usually full-time, post with salary and leave entitlement allocated on a pro-rata basis. Flexible working applications for a job-share arrangement will be considered, and may be supported, if operationally feasible. The University’s Job Sharing Guidelines should be referred to before making a request for a job-share arrangement.

(c) Condensed hours

This is where an individual works full-time, but over reduced days.

A normal working week for the majority of staff is Monday to Friday, and it is the normal expectation that full-time staff will be at work over the full working week. However, it is accepted that, in certain roles, it may be operationally feasible to support a condensed working pattern.

It is advised that for members of staff on a condensed hours working arrangement, their annual leave entitlement is converted to hours to ensure the correct time is deducted for leave days.
(d) **Working from home**

It is the normal expectation that all staff shall attend the workplace, and have a visible presence within their Departments/Offices in order to be readily available for consultation by staff and students, and to participate fully in the life and work of the University. However, it is recognised that, in some cases, the job role undertaken may support the option of sometimes working from home.

Where home working is agreed, this must be documented in an accessible MS Outlook calendar, with an indication of the nature of the work to be completed, and would not normally be a weekly occurrence on a set day, unless this is supported by timetabling.

The University’s Policy on Health and Safety at Work remains applicable to staff working at home. Staff will be required to carry out an on-line workstation assessment on their home workstation and take any necessary corrective actions, and failure to carry this out may result in the privilege of working from home being removed. Whilst working from home, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to care for their own health and safety, and make the University (via their line manager) aware of any issues that may have an impact on this. Accidents sustained by staff while working at home must be reported in the same way as if working from a University of Leicester base. Copies of the Health and Safety policies and procedure are available on the Safety Services intranet pages.

It is the University’s expectation that if home-working is agreed, the member of staff is fully engaged with their tasks. It would not be appropriate, for example, for a member of staff to undertake caring responsibilities during time which has been agreed as working from home. Staff should refer to the guidance relating to parental leave and time off for dependents.

3. **Core hours**

Core working hours should reflect the local needs of the department or working area, but are normally defined for agreeing flexible working requests and part-time hours agreements only as starting no earlier than 8.00 am, and finishing no later than 6.00 pm.

The main period when office-based functions are operational is typically between the hours of 8.30 am to 5.30 pm on Monday to Friday each week, whereas teaching normally takes place between 9.00 am and 6.00 pm on Monday to Friday during University semesters. In order to ensure inclusivity, key meetings should be scheduled to maximise attendance of
part-time staff. For example, departmental meetings and seminars should, wherever reasonably possible, be scheduled between the hours of 10.00 am and 4.00 pm.

Working full-time (1.0 FTE) indeterminate hours should normally involve working Monday to Friday each week, unless there is a demonstrable requirement for weekend working.

Any agreement must include time for breaks, and once a working day is greater than six hours, it must include a 30-minute unpaid lunch break. This break cannot be split, or taken at the start or end of the working day. There must also be a minimum of eleven hours rest between working days.

Line managers should be mindful of the University’s statutory obligations and commitments, such as employment legislation and health and safety.

4. Proposing and agreeing a flexible working arrangement

Agreements to any flexible working arrangement need to consider the requirements of the job role and work area, whilst supporting, wherever possible, the preferences of the post-holder.

Indeterminate contracts do not have hours of attendance that are rigidly fixed. Hours may vary according to operational requirements, and may extend, as necessary, for the performance of duties.

There is an expectation that members of staff will be available to undertake duties commensurate with their grade at such times as may be reasonably required for the fulfilment of those duties.

Where an agreement is made to support an individual’s work-life balance via the facilitation of a flexible working request, it remains subject to the principles of indeterminate hours. However, it should be acknowledged that fixed personal commitments may limit the flexibility of individuals, and the flexibility of their post. Therefore, the line manager should discuss the impact of a flexible working arrangement on the role with the individual before a request is made.

As with all members of staff, working patterns will be subject to periodic review to ensure that the arrangement is working both for the individual and the Department, and may be subject to change depending on operational requirements, or changes to personal circumstances. Changes may be driven by external factors such as courses, student numbers or changes to funding, and any proposed changes would be subject to consultation in the normal way.
5. **Guidance for managing employees on flexible working arrangements**

**Manager Guidance**

Details of the days/times that part-time colleagues work should be circulated by the department at the start of the year, to improve awareness of different individuals’ working patterns.

Managers should ensure that staff are not treated less favourably, or suffer a detriment, as a result of working a flexible working arrangement.

When advertising for a new post, a flexible approach to work patterns can achieve a more diverse candidate pool. In accordance with the [Job Sharing Guidelines](#), the default position is that all posts should be advertised as a job-share.

Line managers are encouraged to discuss and consider workload and working patterns during regular 1:1 meetings with the members of staff, and when setting objectives as part of Performance Development Discussions (PDDs).

**Staff Guidance**

Members of staff who are working a flexible arrangement, including part-time, should ensure that their contact details, for example their auto-signature, include details of their working pattern.

If a member of staff has concerns regarding their overall workload, they should raise this with their line manager. Additionally, Human Resources are available to provide advice and support, which may include working with the member of staff and their line manager to find a satisfactory resolution.

6. **Carers’ Conference and Training Fund**

It has been identified by staff that attendance at external conferences, events and training can pose difficulties for those with caring responsibilities. With this in mind, a fund has been identified to which those with caring responsibilities can apply for a small budget (£100 maximum) to fund, for example, additional childcare costs incurred by attending an external training event (which impacts their usual caring responsibilities).

[Further information](#), including how to apply to this fund can be found on the University’s intranet pages.
7. **Specific guidance for managing part-time staff**

The department must ensure that part-time staff are given workloads that are commensurate with their contracted hours, and proportionate to their full time colleagues. Workload allocation should be reviewed regularly, and all duties allocated proportionally – for academic staff, this should include teaching (e.g. lecturing, marking, moderating, exam invigilation etc), administrative (e.g. committee roles, UCAS days, training events etc) and research activities (e.g. research funding/output expectations, PhD students, etc). For staff in professional services, this should be pro-rata to that expected of full-time comparators.

To ensure equality with respect to research and/or professional development opportunities, staff on fractional contracts should be allocated a proportionate amount of time for these areas of work to that of a full-time equivalent member of staff.

The University of Leicester is aware that speed of response might be slowed for part-time staff. For example, responding to emails/actions/last-minute planning decisions may take longer for part-time staff. Attempts will be made to avoid last-minute planning of meetings/teaching/events that leave no time for part-time workers to adequately prepare/respond. Similarly, meeting times will be planned to try to ensure that part-time staff can attend. Consideration should be given to alternating or rotating the days and times of regular meetings to ensure that all have the opportunity to attend.

If a part-time member of staff attends a scheduled event such as a meeting, conference or mandatory training session during their non-working day or non-working hours, the individual should be given the opportunity to take back the time, which must be agreed in advance with their line manager.

Part-time and sessional workers should be considered within communication plans to ensure that information is not inadvertently missed.

Many activities cannot be moderated according to the fraction, such as email flow, marking turn-around time etc. The time allowed for these tasks should be proportionate to the time required.

There is a cultural commitment within the University of Leicester that part-time staff are considered active members of the University and for academics, there is a local and central commitment to promoting policies that will enable them to continue their research, as well as teaching. Expectations of research publications, grant income and impact for REF (or associated research regulation) will normally be reduced proportionally, according to the fraction worked, as per University policy.
Part-time staff will normally be considered for academic promotion on the basis of their pro-rata contract, not in terms of a comparison with full-time workers.

8. Monitoring and review

Departments should record and monitor the working patterns of all staff to ensure that they are given a proportionate workload.

9. FAQs for individuals

Q **Can I work from home as part of my agreement?**
A It is the normal expectation that all staff shall attend the workplace and have a visible presence within their Departments/Offices in order to be readily available for consultation by staff and students, and to participate fully in the life and work of the University but, sometimes, the job role undertaken may support the option of occasionally working from home. Where home-working is agreed, this must be documented in an accessible MS Outlook calendar, with an indication of the nature of the work to be completed, and would not normally be a weekly occurrence on a set day, unless this is supported by timetabling.

Q **Can I condense my hours over a shorter number of days and remain at 1.0 FTE?**
A The working week comprises Monday to Friday for the majority of staff to whom this guidance refers, and the normal expectation for a full-time employee (1.0 FTE) is that they will be at work across the full working week. However, it is accepted that in certain roles, it may be operationally feasible to support a condensed working pattern, which will need to be requested and approved through the University’s Flexible Working Procedure.

Q **Can I routinely work from home whilst supervising my children?**
A No, it is the University’s expectation that whilst you are undertaking University work, you are fully engaged in your tasks. You should refer to the guidance relating to parental leave and time off for dependents.

Q **Can I be asked to attend the workplace on the day(s) it has been agreed for me to work from home?**
A Your place of work remains the University, and you would be expected to attend your workplace on request. You may, therefore, be required to attend the workplace during your normal working hours, even if you would normally work from home, provided that appropriate notice is given.
Q  Can I be asked to attend the workplace on days/times that I would not normally work?
A  There are times when you may be asked to attend the workplace outside your normal hours or days. Any requests should normally be made with reasonable notice, to allow you to make alternate arrangements, if required. Where requirements to attend fall at times you do not normally work, then you cannot usually be obliged to attend, unless the requirement for flexibility has been discussed as part of the arrangement.

Q  Will I have the same opportunities as my colleagues who work a normal, full-time week?
A  Staff who have a flexible working arrangement, including part-time working, should be offered the same opportunities for development and involvement in wider departmental and university activities, even if these do not always fall on normal working days.

Q  My contract is 1.0 FTE, and I wish to work set hours each day, for example 8.00 am to 4.00 pm.
A  Where possible, a regular working pattern may be agreed, but it is subject to business needs. You will need to follow the Flexible Working Procedure in order for your request to be considered. However, you should be aware that the principles of indeterminate hours is that you are expected to undertake the hours required to carry out the assigned tasks, so working hours cannot be defined in this way for individuals employed on indeterminate hours contracts. It is quite clear that the reference to 37.5 hours is intended for the purpose for calculating part-time equivalents only.

Q  Can I count my commuting/travel time towards my working hours?
A  No, this would not be acceptable although, where possible, the University will consider accommodating early starts and late finishes to assist a member of staff as part of an individual’s contracted hours and agreed working pattern.

Q  Can I work a 7 day week?
A  From time to time, it may be necessary for staff to work continuously for extended periods, for example on field trips, overseas work assignments, attending weekend events, or on distance learning programmes. In these instances, the Head of Department/Division will agree adjustments to normal hours of attendance with staff in order to achieve an overall balance of workload over a reasonable period of time, for example, one or two months, or an academic term.