



Ways of Working Policy

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Policy Statement

UKRI believes that flexible working can help increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity. All employees, irrespective of length of service, have the right to request flexible working and UKRI will, wherever possible, accommodate such requests, taking operational needs into account.

This policy provides line managers and employees with information on how flexible working requests should be made and how they will be considered.

Before following this policy, please consult the HR Policy Framework.

Management Statement

The Ways of Working Policy has been agreed with the Trade Union Side and goes beyond the minimum requirement of statutory legislation.

For the purposes of this policy the use of the word 'employee' covers UKRI employees, including those employed on temporary or fixed term contracts. It may also apply to non-UKRI employees such as visitors, agency staff, and students. For advice on the application of the policy contact HR.

References

UKRI Sickness Absence Policy
 UKRI Managing Performance and Conduct Policy
 HR Policy Framework

Version Number	Status	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
Version 1.0	Complete	January 2020	New Policy Created.
Version 2.0	Complete	March 2024	Updated to reflect employment law changes relating to flexible working.

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1. Principles

- 1.1 UKRI recognises that flexible working arrangements bring many benefits to employees and to the organisation.
- 1.2 All employees are eligible to make a request for flexible working, regardless of their length of service.
- 1.3 Normally two requests for flexible working can be made in any 12-month period. Exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis.
- 1.4 Requests are subject to line manager approval in consultation with HR. All requests will be given full consideration.

2. Delegation

- 2.1 For information on the delegated authority, please refer to the Appropriate HR delegation framework.

3. Flexible Working

- 3.1 Flexible working can be any working pattern other than the normal working pattern of an establishment and incorporates a wide variety of working practices. These include (but are not limited to) part time working, job sharing, annualised hours and home working. For more guidance, see [Appendix B](#).
- 3.2 An employee who wishes to apply for flexible working arrangements should use the procedure outlined in [Appendix A](#).
- 3.3 Any employee returning from maternity/adoptive/parental/maternity support leave has the right to make a request for flexible working, that may be implemented from the time that they return. In these circumstances, the application must be submitted at least 14 weeks before the scheduled return to work date, to allow time for processing.
- 3.4 The consideration of flexible working requests will need to balance the employee's wishes against UKRI's operational requirements.
- 3.5 If it is mutually agreed that a trial period is appropriate, the procedure and timetable for dealing with a flexible working request shall be suspended. A decision on whether to approve the request will be made at the end of the trial period.
- 3.6 Once the decision is confirmed, it will become a contractual change to the employee's terms and conditions of employment.
- 3.7 Where a trial period is agreed between the parties, the employee must also provide agreement to the suspension of the statutory timetable for dealing with a flexible request in writing. The employee must be provided with details of the length of the trial period, the review dates and the success criteria. What happens at the end of the trial period should also be made clear.
- 3.8 Where appropriate, and at the discretion of the line manager and the employee, a review period may be set for any changes to working patterns to ensure the new arrangements continue to meet employee and business needs.
- 3.9 If the trial period finds that the new working arrangements are not meeting business

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needs, the employee will return to their previous working arrangements.

4. Remote working arrangements

- 4.1 Remote working is an ad hoc arrangement away from an employee's contracted place of work. This can be agreed with line management from time to time as determined by business need.

5. Working patterns

- 5.1 UKRI provides employees with the option to change their working pattern to enable them to meet the requirements of their role, and balance their personal responsibilities outside of work. For more information, please see [Appendix B](#).

Appendix A – Flexible Working Procedure**A1. Flexible working**

A1.1 Flexible working includes a variety of different ways of arranging working hours, including:

A1.1.1 Compressed working week(s)

A1.1.2 Flexible hours

A1.1.3 Job sharing

A1.1.4 Part-time working

A1.1.5 Staggered hours

A1.1.6 Term-time working

A1.1.7 Home working

A2. The application

A2.1 The employee should make an application in writing to their manager. All requests for flexible working arrangements must state:

A2.1.1 The date of the application.

A2.1.2 The changes that the employee is seeking to their terms and conditions.

A2.1.3 The date on which the employee would like the terms and conditions to come into effect.

A2.1.4 That this is a statutory request.

A2.1.5 Whether or not the employee has made a previous application for flexible working; and

A2.1.6 If the employee has made a previous request, when the employee made that application.

A2.2 The manager, who may be accompanied by a member of HR, will meet with the employee within 20 working days of receiving the application unless the manager, in conjunction with HR, agrees to the proposed flexible working arrangements.

A2.3 The employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative at the meeting. If the colleague or representative is unable to attend the meetings, management must suggest a new time within five working days of the original date. If this is also not possible the employee must consider being accompanied by an alternative colleague or representative, so that the timeline may be maintained.

A2.4 From the point the application is made UKRI has two months in which to review and notify the employee of the decision.

A3. Withdrawal of an application

A3.1 Applications may be withdrawn by the employee in writing.

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- A3.2 Management may withdraw an application if the employee fails to attend any two meetings arranged in accordance with this policy, without reasonable cause.
- A3.3 Employees can normally make up to two applications within a rolling year. The withdrawal of an application will normally still be counted as one of the available submissions.

A4. The decision

- A4.1 If a decision is taken to accommodate flexible working, details of the agreed arrangement will be notified to the employee in writing by HR normally within 10 working days of the meeting.
- A4.2 If the line manager is not able to approve the request based on the written application, they will invite the employee to a meeting to discuss the request further (seeking HR support where necessary). This should aim to be within 10 working days.
- A4.3 If the decision is taken not to allow flexible working as requested, this decision will be notified to the employee in writing with reasons as soon as is practicable after the meeting has been held but no later than two months from the date of the application. This decision may formally be appealed. For details of the Appeals procedure, please refer to the HR Policy Framework.
- A4.4 Requests for adopting a flexible working pattern may only be declined using one or more of the following reasons:
 - A4.4.1 Inability to rearrange work among existing staff.
 - A4.4.2 Burden of additional costs.
 - A4.4.3 Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer/stakeholders demand.
 - A4.4.4 Inability to recruit additional staff.
 - A4.4.5 Detrimental impact on quality or performance.
 - A4.4.6 Insufficiency of work during the periods that the employee proposes to work.
 - A4.4.7 Planned structural changes.
- A4.5 Employees may have other requirements: for example, caring commitments or the desire to observe religious practice. As an employer, UKRI is obliged to cater for such needs in compliance with statutory legislation.
- A4.6 Both employee and employer should be prepared to be flexible over working patterns with the aim of reaching agreement about flexible working arrangements.

Appendix B – Flexible Working Hours (FWH)

B1. Where operational arrangements permit at UKRI sites, Centres, Institutes and Units, a system of Flexible Working Hours may be introduced.

B2. The Structure and Operation of FWH

B2.1 Where an approach to FWH has been agreed, it will be site-specific and subject to local guidance.

B2.2 Conditioned hours for employees participating in a FWH Scheme are expressed as net hours, exclusive of rest breaks.

B2.3 Overtime working should be accounted for separately from FWH. The normal annual, sick and special leave rules, training time concessions etc. are not affected by any FWH Scheme.