Seattle University Guidelines and Considerations for Supervisors Related to Flexible Work Arrangements

Step 1: Focus on the primary mission of care for our students and determine what work or jobs could still be accomplished with a flexible work arrangement. Some jobs may be readily adaptable to a flexible arrangement while others will not be based on the nature of the work.

Step 2: Examine various flexible work options and determine which could be feasible given service and job requirements. Explore each type of arrangement to consider which might be feasible to still deliver essential functions yet provide flexibility for employees:

Several alternative or flexible work schedule options are available to consider for employees:

- Flextime, in which an employee works a full schedule per workday, but there is flexibility in an employee’s set scheduled starting and ending times. Some employees, due to family or personal obligations or preferences, work very early in the morning and leave earlier in the afternoon. Other flextime employees may prefer or need to start later in the day and work into the evening.
- A compressed or altered work week is another option. For example, a four-day workweek, in which an employee works additional hours per workday, reducing the workweek to four days a week. Another example might be a slightly longer work day for four days with a ½ day off in the same week. For exempt employees only, working slightly longer daily schedules for 9 days with a 10th day off is another possible option.
- Job-sharing, in which two part-time employees are assigned to the same job equivalent to one full-time employee. The position is shared between the two employees. Job-sharing, as an alternative work schedule, must ensure the continuity of the work being done at the same workstation, with two individuals working as a team to accomplish one full-time position’s duties.
- Telecommuting or working from home as a regular work option.

Identify if any of the staffing options are workable within the department. This may include determining if the entire department or an entire shift must convert to one or more of the above alternative scheduling options. Make sure to factor in any work flow, technological or systems limitations that could impact success.

Step 3: Determine what alterations to department structure or process might be needed.

- Timing of department meetings and events.
- Time card approvals and time tracking for those who submit time cards.
- Overall security and access to the work space.
- Availability of supervisor(s) while work is being performed.
• Availability of necessary materials and systems.
• How to onboard and train new employees.
• Requirements or business needs to revert back to a traditional schedule...department meetings, events, emergencies, training, etc.

Step 4: In the case of an individual employee’s request for an individual alternative or flexible work schedule, here are key factors to consider when determining if it is appropriate:

• Is the employee fully trained and fully functional in performing the key aspects of the job?
• Is the employee a good performer with a demonstrated ability to work without constant manager direction/interaction? Employees with current (or even a recent history of performance issues including absenteeism should not be approved.
• Are expectations and goals clearly established for the position?
• Is the flexible arrangement in the best interests of the employee, students, university and department?
• Is there a different option than the one asked for that might be more feasible?
• Consider all existing flexible arrangements and how the requested schedule interacts with these. For example, not all employees can likely be out on a Friday or Monday.

Step 5: Consult with human resources and engage with the department or area vice president. If a consensus is reached to establish a flexible work arrangement, follow the following process:

• Document the decision in writing outlining expectations, rules etc.
• Establish a trial period that is of reasonable duration with the understanding that the arrangement will be reviewed, altered or cancelled.
• After the trial period establish an annual check in to review, ideally at performance appraisal or goal setting.