

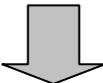
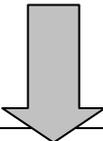


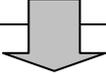
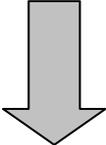
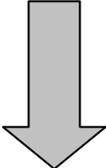
DEVELOPING GOOD
MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

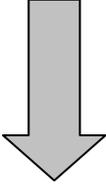
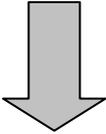
A HEFCE Initiative

MAKING FLEXIBLE WORKING OPTIONS A SUCCESS - An 8 point plan

Flexible options represent a different way of working that challenges many traditional assumptions about how, when and where work gets done. However, the following tips have proved successful in other organisations and may help:

 1. Consider the nature of the job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In general, jobs with greater autonomy are more suitable for flexible working. Jobs involving intensive client contact or a high degree of team interaction tend to require more careful planning to make flexible arrangements work. Many jobs include at least some time-intensive, concentrated work that requires little interaction and is suited to flexible working. ▪ All requests for flexible working should be considered on their own merits based upon meeting the needs of the organisation and/or department or service. This will ensure a consistent approach and avoid claims of discrimination being made. Flexible policies should apply to all employees and not just women with children. This approach will promote a fairer working environment for everyone. ▪ If a request cannot be met in full consider a compromise that does not impair service. ▪ The impact on business is the appropriate standard for considering flexible working not the reasons for the request. Use business reasons to justify any refusal of a request to work reduced hours as recent case law has shown that employers may be accused of indirect sex discrimination if they fail to justify why a role must be done on a full-time basis. ▪ There may be unforeseen benefits from the proposed changes such as increased service cover, reduced payroll costs, or staffing patterns more closely aligned to seasonal work patterns. ▪ Ensure that information is available to staff on the implications change. This is particularly important in the case of reduced hours, which will impact upon both current income and future pension entitlement. HR will be able to help with details and operational advice.
 2. Concentrate on achievements rather than hours worked.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective flexible working is based around a focus on results. Managers and staff need to work together to establish clear, measurable objectives. Effective measures include quality standards, setting and meeting deadlines, financial objectives and customer service.

<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>3. Determine the impact of the new working on colleagues and customers</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A new arrangement must be acceptable to both colleagues and customers if it is to be supported by the business and is to be successful. ▪ Staff should reach a mutual agreement with anyone potentially affected by their new arrangement. For instance, a client may be happy to rely on a backup contact or have access by telephone and/or e-mail in an emergency. Colleagues may be willing to act as backup in order to develop new skills or to trade off for backup when they need it. If possible, try to involve the whole team in decisions relating to changing work patterns, in order to avoid accusations of favouritism or bias. Such an approach also ensures that the team is likely to have sufficient “buy in” to make the new arrangements work. ▪ It is also good practice to consult your own line manager and the Personnel Department.
<p>4. Communicate the new working pattern to everyone who needs to know</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When staff are in the office at different times, communication is vital. Shared diaries, departmental white boards, e-mail and voicemail can all be used to ensure that staff can reach one another. ▪ Do not forget that staff working in other departments or services, and both internal and external customers may also need to know how and when a particular member of staff is available.
<p>5. Do not allow flexible workers to become isolated</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is sometimes difficult to ensure that flexible workers, particularly those on extended leave, part-time contracts or working from home, feel as fully integrated into the work place as other colleagues. ▪ Make sure, if possible, that important meetings are held at times when flexible workers are available. Ensure that they are kept up-to-date with current events and issues, and are included in any social activities. ▪ Establish regular, clear communication channels (possibly in the form of team or departmental meetings) to ensure that staff feel supported and any issues or problems that have arisen can be aired and tackled at an early stage. ▪ Remind employees that it is in his/her interest that the flexible working arrangement is successful, and ensure that all parties deal with any issues that arise promptly and openly.

<p>6. Deal with any abuses quickly</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If you suspect that an employee is abusing the flexible working arrangement (e.g. by being absent more often than they should), then you should deal with the problem immediately and firmly. Flexibility is not an excuse for lack of self-discipline and an employee who is working flexibly should be treated in exactly the same way as one who is working a traditional 9 to 5 pattern. ▪ Gather the evidence and discuss the situation with the employee. Remind them that flexible working has been agreed as a win-win situation, and that their part of the agreement is to co-operate fully. Flexible working is a condition of work and not an entitlement. ▪ Failure to address any disciplinary issue is poor management and will make other employees resentful.
<p>7. Allow a review period for fine tuning -</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amended working patterns should ideally have a built in review period to allow both managers and staff to evaluate the success or otherwise of the new arrangements. ▪ During this time, staff and managers can evaluate what is working and what is not, and adapt the arrangements where necessary. At a minimum, it is necessary to build in a check-in period after a month or three-month period. ▪ In addition to the initial assessment, all alternative arrangements should be review periodically to ensure long-term success.
<p>8. Working a flexible working arrangement should not limit career opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An individual on a work option should be considered for the same tasks and career opportunities as any other member of staff. Staff on reduced hours should be aware that they may take longer than full-time staff to become suited for promotion as they may need more time to acquire the necessary skills and experience.

If you are new to flexible working there is a list giving a brief summary of various working patterns on FEO website - www.staffs.ac.uk/feo/practicalhelp