



University of Pittsburgh
Flexible Work for Staff, Student Workers, and Temporary Employees
ER 20

Implementing Executive: Senior Vice Chancellor for Business and Operations
Responsible Unit: Office of Human Resources
Category: Employment related
Effective Date: October 2, 2023

I. Purpose

Flexible work options demonstrate the University's commitment to supporting employees' work-life balance, efficient management of space and resources, employee recruitment and retention, sustainability initiatives, and financial management. This policy establishes the framework and requirements for the flexible work arrangements offered by the University, the responsibilities when offering and using flexible work options, and the responsibility for administering the approval process for Flexible Work Agreements. The development of this policy was guided by the following principles:

- The availability of, and process for authorizing, Flexible Work Agreements must be conducted in an equitable manner;
- Each Flexible Work Agreement will comply with all employment related regulations; and
- Approved Flexible Work Agreements will provide for the operational needs of the University while considering the employee's work-life balance.

II. Scope

This Policy applies to all full- and part-time staff employees, including temporary and student employees. This Policy does not apply to faculty.

III. Definitions

Unit – a department, school, office, or other reporting entity of the University that usually reports to the head of a Responsibility Center (RC).

IV. Policy

The University's core and support functions for teaching, learning and research are predominantly done in-person. The University also supports flexible work arrangements that promote a highly productive work environment, which enable employees to balance work and personal needs while also allowing the University to provide workforce stability, efficiency, and predictability in compliance with employment regulations.

A flexible work arrangement adjusts the employee's normal schedule, work location, or both, and documents when and where the employee will be completing their assigned job duties. The flexible work arrangement does not change the employee's job responsibilities, including following all applicable policies and procedures, and does not alter the employment relationship between the employee and the University.

A Flexible Work Agreement documents the flexible work arrangement between the University and employee. The process to establish flexible work arrangements can be initiated by either the supervisor or an employee, but the Flexible Work Agreement must be approved by the employee's supervisor. Such decisions must be made in an equitable manner by supervisors within units, consistent with operational needs of the unit. After an agreement is reached, the form is forwarded to the RC Head or designee who reviews it for RC level considerations. If approved, the Flexible Work Agreement is sent to the Office of Human Resources (OHR) for review.

OHR will provide guides, forms, checklists, and training to support implementation of this policy. RC heads or their designee should also provide supervisors guidance on what flexible work options are available to employees within their RC in order to guide Unit decisions on flexible work options and supervisor discussions with employees. Some Units will be able to provide more flexibility on schedules or locations than others depending on their operations. For example, a Unit may not be able to provide remote work locations because of the requirement of being on campus to address operational needs but may be able to provide flexible schedules.

A. Flexible Work Agreement Requests and Application

1. University Directed

The University reserves the right to direct an employee to operate under a specific flexible work arrangement, including adjustments to a normal schedule or work location, or both. If an employee is directed to operate in a flexible work arrangement, the employee will be notified by their supervisor and presented with a flexible work arrangement outlining the requirements and anticipated duration of the Flexible Work Agreements.

Employees who believe they cannot operate in a flexible work arrangement should consult with their supervisor about potential alternative arrangements as specified in the employee requested section of this policy. If there is a health-related reason to be considered, the employee can contact [Disability Resources Services](#) (DRS). Employees who otherwise refuse to operate in a Flexible Work Agreement as directed by the University and/or who fail to abide by the terms of their Flexible Work Arrangement may be subject to discipline, up to and including separation of employment.

2. Employee Requested

An employee can request a Flexible Work arrangement by contacting their supervisor. Once a request is made, supervisors must initiate a discussion of flexible work options available to the employee, as described below. Additionally, the Unit's operational needs, information from the RC Head, and any information, guidelines, checklists, and forms provided by the OHR must be considered.

Additionally, employees can request a flexible work arrangement for health-related reasons by contacting [DRS](#). These requests are outside of the scope of this policy and implemented in accordance with DRS guidance.

3. Unit Opt Out

A Unit is not required to provide flexible work arrangement options to its employees and can opt out of this policy if it determines its employees are unable to complete their responsibilities under a Flexible Work Agreement. Units that are excluded from this policy, must still comply with federal, state, and local laws governing health-related requests for accommodation, including but not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”).

To ask to be excluded from this policy, the supervisor must request approval from the appropriate RC Head, or designee, and from OHR by submitting a request that explains why application of the Policy is not possible in their Unit. Specifically, the supervisor must document: (1) why the employees in the that Unit cannot perform their job duties remotely; and (2) why the employees in the supervisor’s Unit cannot perform their job duties in a manner that deviates from their normal work schedule.

B. Flexible Work Arrangement Discussions

The following topics must be discussed between the employee and supervisor before a Flexible Work Agreement is completed. Additional detail on the topics listed below can be found on the Flexible Work Supervisor Checklist and Flexible Work Agreement Forms found at the [OHR Flexible Work Website](#).

The discussion must include:

- Flexible work arrangement options;
- Work schedule arrangement, including work hours/days and locations;
- Training on [remote work IT Security](#);
- Review of [workstation security standards](#);
- Dependent care arrangements are required to ensure those arrangements do not interfere with job duties and workplace safety obligations, if applicable;
- Determine the need for University equipment based on [data risk](#);
- Discussion of work area safety; and
- How to obtain, secure, and use University equipment and supplies.

C. Flexible Work Options and Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements are alternate work schedules and locations that differ from the standard work hours, University provided location, or both and can be initiated by the Supervisor or the Employee. Below are additional details regarding the types of arrangements that can be made and must be documented in a Flexible Work Agreement.

1. Flexible work schedules

Flexible work schedules establish a typical schedule for employees that differs from the standard schedule but do not alter the standard number of hours an employee works in a workweek as documented in Policy ER 18, Time records/Attendance/Overtime and Compensatory Time.

2. Flexible work locations

Flexible work locations establish a standard place of work that is outside the campus office. Employees working fully at a remote location (remote work) or employees whose schedule includes working at times from the remote location and at times from the campus location (hybrid). Flexible work locations must be safe and provide for work activities to be completed at the same level and professional capacity as an on-campus location.

3. Flexible work locations outside of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

OHR must approve a remote work location outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania before an employment offer is made or a Flexible Work Agreement with such a location can be completed.

OHR will evaluate the request, considering the business need for the employee working from the proposed location and the organizational risk in doing so. OHR's review will be conducted in consultation with the Payroll Department, Tax Department, Office of Risk Management, Office of University Counsel, and the Global Operations Support within the University Center for International Studies (if an international location).

4. Disability-related accommodations

Disability-related accommodations are outside the scope of this policy. Employees requesting a flexible work arrangement or who are unable to work a university directed flexible work arrangement for disability-related reasons are to contact [DRS](#) for further evaluation.

D. Requirements for Flexible Work Agreement

1. Forms

OHR is responsible for establishing and maintaining forms and processes that support Flexible Work Agreements. All Agreements must consist of terms (duration, locations, schedule, University right to rescind) and employee acknowledgements. Acknowledgements must include acknowledging continuing compliance with University, RC, and Unit policies and procedures; maintaining professionalism; maintaining a safe work area; keeping University equipment safe and secure; and making any dependent care arrangements.

2. Agreement Duration

Agreements can be for any duration. Agreements must be reviewed and be updated as needed when the agreement expires, annually, or when there is a change as described in section IV. D. 3.

3. Agreement Changes

Location changes that would result in the employee working out of the United States require a new flexible work Agreement regardless of the time spent at that location.

An employee can request, and a supervisor can approve, a change in the Arrangement for a period of time less than 30 consecutive calendar days (including a change in their location within the United States) without altering their Flexible Work Arrangement. When a proposed change in the arrangement would last 30 consecutive calendar days or more, a new Agreement must be completed.

4. Agreement Revocation

Job performance or changes to employment responsibilities may impact the ability of employees with a Flexible Work Agreement to meet the operational needs of the University. The University reserves the right to revoke Agreements as needed. When an Agreement is revoked, supervisors must notify the employee, RC Head, and OHR as soon as operationally possible to provide the employee time to adjust to the revocation of the Agreement.

V. Noncompliance

University Community members who do not comply with this Policy may have their Flexible Work Agreement revoked, and be subject to other disciplinary action, as appropriate.

VI. Governance or Responsibilities

A. Employees governed by this policy are responsible to:

1. Engage with their supervisor to discuss flexible work arrangement options, in accordance with this policy.
2. Comply with the terms of their Flexible Work Agreement.
3. Immediately notify supervisors when seeking to change their Flexible Work Agreement.

B. Supervisors are responsible to:

1. Determine the flexible work options based on their Unit needs; RC guidance; and OHR provided checklists and guidance;
2. Facilitate the discussions about flexible work options with the employee and initiate the Flexible Work Agreement process, when applicable;
3. Review the Flexible Work Agreement with the employee when it is first created, and at least annually once in place, to be sure the employee understands the Agreement and their responsibilities; and
4. Determine if the employee requires University-provided equipment and keep an inventory of any equipment provided.
5. Account for the return of equipment when employees separates from the University.

C. Responsibility Center Heads are responsible to:

1. Provide guidance to the supervisors within their unit concerning available flexible work options that meet organizational needs
2. Review all Flexible Work Agreements for employees within their units for approval/denial and consult with Employee and Labor Relations as appropriate.
3. Review requests from Units in their RC to be excluded from this policy.

D. Office of Human Resources.

OHR supports the implementation of this policy and is responsible to:

1. Provide forms, processes, and training to RC Heads, Supervisors, and employees as needed to address operational and compliance requirements;
2. Review flexible work location requests outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for approval/denial;
3. Retain copies or information for reporting and audit purposes.
4. Provide information or completed forms to the Payroll Department, Office of Risk Management, Global Operations Support within the University Center for International Studies (if an international location), and the Tax Department for their review.
5. Review and approve requests from Units to opt out of this policy;
6. Evaluate and retain all Flexible Work Agreements for completeness and reporting requirements.

VII. Contact Information

This Policy is posted under Employment Related Policies on the Office of Policy Development & Management's website and can be found at: <https://www.policy.pitt.edu>.

This section provides the most appropriate contact information for those seeking information on interpreting the policy.

Subject	Department	Website/contact
Flexible Work Forms and Information	OHR	https://pitt.sharepoint.com/sites/human-resources/flexiblework/ https://www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr
Approved Remote and Hybrid Locations	OHR	https://pitt.sharepoint.com/sites/human-resources/flexiblework/
RC, Unit, Supervisor Training	OHR	Supervisor Support Training

VIII. Related Authorities

ER 18, Time Records/Attendance/Overtime and Compensatory time Policy ER 18

ER 12, Recruitment Requests

ER 19, Worker's Compensation

AO 10, Computer Access and Use

AO 11, Computer Data Administration

AO 18, University Wide Closure and Class Cancellation

AO 35, University Administrative Computer Data (UACD) Security and Privacy

FN 28, University Travel, Business Entertainment, Honoraria, and Miscellaneous Expenses