

Flexible Work Arrangements Policy

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) The purpose of this policy is to:

- a. establish an over-arching framework for flexible work arrangements, and to ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, the framework is consistently applied.
- b. promote and encourage flexible work arrangements to enable staff to successfully combine their life, family & personal responsibilities with work commitments.
- c. support VU's aim to be an employer of choice with regard to flexible work arrangements wherever practicable.
- d. ensure that the University is compliant with relevant Anti-Discrimination Law and the National Employment Standards; and
- e. ensure staff and supervisors/managers are informed of their rights and responsibilities in relation to requesting, considering and implementing flexible work arrangements.

(2) This policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Equity and Diversity Policy for Staff and the University's [Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and Management Policy](#) .

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(3) All staff of Victoria University are entitled to request a Flexible Work Arrangement, in accordance with this policy, other relevant policies/procedures, legislation and/or relevant Industrial Agreement.

(4) Flexible Work Arrangements refer to work practices and arrangements that allow for flexibility in the way staff undertake and complete their work. Specific types of flexible work arrangements include, but are not limited to, one or a combination of the following:

- a. [Flexible Employment cycle \(48/52\)](#)
- b. [Fractional Flexibility](#)
- c. [Flexible Working Hours & Rostered Day Off](#)
- d. [Leave Without Pay](#)
- e. [Working from Home](#)
- f. [Job Share](#)

(5) [Flowcharts for Flexible Work Arrangements Decision Making](#)

Section 3 - Definitions

(6) Nil

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(7) Victoria University is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to supporting staff to achieve work/life balance in accordance with our statutory obligations under anti-discrimination and employment law.

(8) The University recognises the organisational and personal benefits of providing flexible work arrangements to staff wherever practicable.

(9) All applications from staff requesting a flexible work arrangement/s will be considered, on a case-by-case basis.

(10) Staff who request or have a flexible work arrangement will not be disadvantaged simply by virtue of having requested or utilising the flexible arrangement.

(11) In determining whether to grant a flexible work arrangement, all relevant facts and circumstances must be considered.

Considerations in making flexible work decisions

(12) Relevant policy and interpersonal considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- a. the purpose/objectives of the Flexible Work Arrangements Policy, including the University's commitment to enhancing flexibility for staff where practicable;
- b. benefits such as retention, increased morale;
- c. the reason(s) for the request (for instance, elder care/childcare or a family member's ill-health) and the staff member's personal circumstances. (Please note that staff are not required to disclose the reason for their request or personal circumstances; however, staff should be advised that the reason for the request may affect the manager/supervisor's decision.)
- d. the consequences for the staff member of having the flexible work arrangement;
- e. the consequences for the staff member of not having the flexible work arrangement;

(13) Relevant work area considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- a. the nature of the staff member's role and the operational/business needs of the work area;
- b. the nature of the arrangements required to accommodate the staff member's responsibilities;
- c. the size of the relevant business unit or College;
- d. the ability to backfill the staff member's position where applicable/required;
- e. the opportunity this may present to provide development or career opportunities to other employees in the work area; and
- f. the impact on efficiency and productivity and customer service (both internal and external).

(14) Relevant financial considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- a. the financial circumstances of the business unit and/or University;
- b. the financial impact of accommodating the request; and
- c. if the request relates to a change in work fraction, the workload implications and how the role/workload could be redesigned.

(15) Relevant logistical considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- a. If the request relates to working from home; the appropriateness of the home environment (including physical

- workspace, access to relevant people and documents);
- b. how the arrangement will be monitored or reviewed;
- c. whether a trial period is required to assess the suitability;
- d. whether the request is for a fixed-time or a permanent variation to a staff member's employment;
- e. if the request cannot be accommodated, whether there are any suitable alternatives.

(16) If the reason for the request concerns a staff member's medical condition, the manager should consult the University's Disability and Medical Condition Support and Workplace Adjustment Policy for Staff.

(17) Requests for flexible work arrangements will only be denied where there are reasonable business grounds. A non-exhaustive list of reasonable business grounds for declining a request, according to the [Fair Work Amendment Act \(Cth\) 2013](#), is:

- a. The flexible arrangement sought would be too costly;
- b. The arrangements of other employees could not be changed, where required, to accommodate the flexible arrangement sought;
- c. It is not practical to change the working arrangement of other staff or recruit new staff, to accommodate the flexible arrangement requested;
- d. It would likely result in a significant loss in efficiency/productivity; or
- e. It would likely significantly negatively impact on customer service.

(18) Managers and supervisors should seek advice from People & Culture when they believe a request cannot be granted. Further, if a staff member discloses that the request relates to one or more of the following, advice must be taken from People & Culture, as these are specifically covered by Anti-Discrimination Law and the Commonwealth National Employment Standards:

- a. Parenting and/or carer responsibilities
- b. Staff members with a disability
- c. Staff members aged 55 years or older; or
- d. The staff member is experiencing violence from a member of the employee's family or provides care/support to a member of the employee's immediate family, or a member of the employee's household, who requires care or support because the member is experiencing violence from the member's family.

(19) Staff must be informed in writing of the outcome of their written request for a flexible work arrangement within 21 calendar days of the request being made in writing and if the request is refused, the business reason(s) should be clearly set out.

Appeal of Decision

(20) Where a staff member is dissatisfied with any matter arising under this policy or a related procedure (e.g. they believe their request for a Flexible Work Arrangement has been unreasonably refused) they may seek to have the decision reviewed by their senior line manager.

(21) For the purposes of this policy, a senior line manager will be a manager who reports directly to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or, where the decision was made by a senior line manager, a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

(22) When seeking an appeal, the staff member should ensure that they include sufficient detail to enable the senior line manager to review the decision.

(23) Senior line managers should seek advice from People and Culture when reviewing any decisions under this policy

or related procedure.

(24) If a staff member believes a decision was made based on an attribute that is covered by the [Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and Management Policy](#) , they may choose to make a complaint under that policy instead.

Section 5 - Procedures

(25) [Flexible Work Arrangements - Flexible Working Hours and Rostered Day Off Procedure](#)

(26) [Flexible Work Arrangements - Leave Without Pay Procedure](#)

(27) [Flexible Work Arrangements - Flexible Employment Cycle Procedure](#) (48/52)

(28) [Flexible Work Arrangements - Fractional Flexibility Procedure](#)

(29) [Flexible Work Arrangements - Working from Home Procedure](#)

(30) [Flexible Work Arrangements - Job Share Procedure](#)

Section 6 - Guidelines

(31) Flexible Work Arrangements Toolkit (located under 'Flexible work and parental leave').

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Responsible Officer	Simone Wright Chief Human Resources Officer 9919 5447
Enquiries Contact	Simone Wright Chief Human Resources Officer 9919 5447