

Employee Wellbeing - Flexible Work Arrangements Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure describes the circumstances in which an employee may apply for a flexible work arrangement, and the kinds of arrangements the University may provide.

Section 2 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(2) HESF: 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety

(3) Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (Cth): Standard 8

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This Procedure applies to all employees of the University.

Section 4 - Definitions

(5) Nil.

Section 5 - Policy/Regulation

(6) [Employee Wellbeing Policy](#)

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Employee	Discuss need for flexible arrangements with manager Request flexible work arrangements in writing, providing any required evidence
Manager / Supervisor	Carefully consider employee requests Where a request needs to be denied on operational grounds, discuss alternatives with the employee If the request is based on carer needs, seek advice if there is a the need to deny the request from People and Culture Monitor any approved flexible arrangements on an ongoing basis to ensure they are still appropriate and functional
People & Culture	Provide advice to managers on flexible work arrangements and on particular requests

Part B - Flexible Work at VU

(7) VU recognises that the nature of work undertaken by employees will differ based on their roles and employment types.

(8) Academic and professional employees are equally eligible to request flexible working arrangements; however, it is noted that academic employees already have flexibility in their working hours.

(9) Flexible working arrangements will be considered by VU, however may be denied in circumstances where approving them would have significant operational disadvantages or where the role (or aspects of the role) cannot be successfully achieved within the requested flexibility. Examples include:

- a. requests to work from home in roles that are wholly or primarily student-facing;
- b. requests to limit teaching time availability in ways that impact negatively on timetabling, resource allocation and student experience;
- c. requests to adjust start / finish times in ways that render the employee unavailable for a portion of required customer service hours.

Part C - Applying for a Flexible Work Arrangement

(10) Any employee may apply for a flexible work arrangement.

(11) Employees' request for a flexible work arrangement will be particularly considered if:

- a. they are the parent of a school age or younger child;
- b. they are a carer;
- c. they are returning to work after having a child;
- d. they are 55 years or older;
- e. they have a disability; or
- f. they are experiencing family or domestic violence.

(12) VU will consider each request on a case by case basis.

Part D - Types of Flexible Work Arrangements

(13) VU may provide the following kinds of flexible work arrangements:

- a. part-time employment
- b. job sharing
- c. work from home
- d. flexible work hours (otherwise known as adjusted start-finish times) and rostered day off

(14) VU will also consider requests for other kinds of flexible work arrangements on a case by case basis.

(15) All flexible work arrangements, with the exception of a permanent move to a part-time position, may be approved for a period of up to 12 months, may include a short-term review period and must be reviewed at the end of the period.

(16) Flexible work arrangements do not automatically follow an employee to a new role in the University, and must be discussed with a new Manager in the context of the role and in line with the requirements of this Procedure.

Part-time employment

(17) VU will consider requests to vary the fraction of time worked to any fraction below full-time.

(18) While part-time work is not an automatic right, the University will not reasonably refuse any request that can be accommodated within operational requirements.

(19) The University has additional obligations to employees who are seeking to vary their work arrangements due to parenting or carer responsibilities. Requests for fractional flexibility from these employees must be discussed with People and Culture and only refused if there is a compelling business reason not to grant the request.

Purchased leave

(20) VU will consider requests to purchase between 1 and 6 weeks additional annual leave in a 12-month period.

(21) A Flexible Employment Cycle must commence at the start of a pay period/fortnight.

Job sharing

(22) VU will consider requests by employees to job share new or existing roles.

(23) Employees may request that a position become a job share arrangement on a fixed term basis. However, in the event that one job share partner ceases the arrangement and a suitable replacement cannot be found within a reasonable period of time, the other employee will assume the hours and duties of their job share partner. This must be agreed by both parties as part of the terms of approving the job share arrangement.

(24) The nature of some work will be more suitable or appropriate to a job share arrangement than others. Generally, a job share arrangement will be more suitable where:

- a. the work requires a broad level of supervision;
- b. the role requires intermittent interaction with colleagues, students or other stakeholders;
- c. the work is project-based or the work outcomes are easily identifiable and measurable; and
- d. necessary arrangements can be made to ensure suitable knowledge share between job incumbents and confidentiality of information is maintained.

(25) A job share arrangement may be subject to a trial period during which time the suitability of the arrangement for a longer period may be assessed by the supervisor/manager, the job share incumbents and/or other stakeholders.

(26) The nature and duration of the job share arrangement will be determined by the staff members involved and the supervisor/manager, and may include:

- a. Some overlap between the incumbents in order for the parties to meet to share information and plan.
- b. Splitting the job down the middle with the job sharers having equal responsibilities, performing similar tasks and, often, working the same number of hours.
- c. Dividing the tasks and roles between the incumbents with each having responsibility for distinct areas or portfolios.

Work from home / offsite

(27) VU will consider requests from professional employees to work at home or offsite to the University on an ad hoc or regular basis.

(28) Employees working from home must complete a Working from Home Assessment and provide appropriate OHS

documentation ([HSW-F-020 Home Office OHS Checklist](#)) before commencing the working at home arrangement, whether on an ad hoc or regular basis.

(29) Employees wishing to work from home on ad hoc occasions must:

- a. request permission on each occasion from their manager as soon as reasonably practicable; and,
- b. provide any required documentation to support their request.

(30) Employees wishing to work from home on a regular basis must document an agreed flexible work arrangement plan with their manager, detailing the day/s they will work from home in a typical week.

(31) Employees with regular work at home arrangements may be required to attend campus on a day when they normally work at home if required to attend training, development or other group scheduled activities.

(32) The nature of some work is more suitable or appropriate to a working from home arrangement than others. Normally, a working from home arrangement will be more suitable where:

- a. the work requires a broad level of supervision;
- b. the work requires intermittent or a low level of face-to-face team, colleague, peer, student or other contact;
- c. the work requires minimal use of University hard copy records/files (particularly where the contents of files are sensitive, confidential, difficult to replace or require dual access) and other resources located in the University ;
- d. the work is project-based or the work outcomes are easily identifiable and measurable; and
- e. necessary arrangements can be made to maintain confidentiality of information.

Flexible work hours and Rostered day off (RDO)

(33) VU will consider requests by employees to nominate their own start / finish times and to work additional time on standard work days to accrue time for fortnightly or monthly rostered days off.

(34) The right to request flexible working hours applies to all employees.

(35) The right to request an RDO cycle applies to all continuing and fixed-term professional employees up to and including those at a HEW 7 level. An RDO working cycle is not available to academic employees, casuals, shift-work or fractional (i.e part-time) employees, or employees who have purchased leave.

(36) Where the request relates to an RDO working cycle, the request should outline the following:

- a. proposed days, dates and/or hours of the cycle (where relevant);
- b. anticipated commencement date, review date and finish date, if applicable;
- c. any anticipated interruption to customer service, supervision or other communication or cost implication and how that may be mitigated.

Part E - Requesting a Flexible Work Arrangement

(37) Employees should discuss their need for a flexible work arrangement with their manager in the first instance. If the reason for the request relates to domestic and family violence, alternative methods of initiating the discussion are also available (see Domestic and Family Violence Support Procedure).

(38) Arrangements are subject to the operational needs of the University and mutual agreement between the employee and their supervisor, and may be refused on reasonable business grounds.

(39) After an initial discussion, employees must put their request for the flexible arrangement in writing and submit it

to their manager / supervisor, unless the reason relates to domestic and family violence (see Domestic and Family Violence Support Procedure).

(40) Managers / Supervisors must provide a response to the employee within 21 days of receipt of the written request. Managers may:

- a. Approve the request without amendment;
- b. Approve the request but with amendments;
- c. Propose an alternative arrangement; or
- d. Deny the request.

(41) Approved requests must be forwarded in writing to People and Culture for processing.

Part F - Evaluating a Request

(42) Managers must give serious consideration to any request for a flexible working arrangement and are encouraged to consider the following factors:

- a. The reason(s) for the request and the employee's personal circumstances. Please note that employees are not required to disclose the reason for their request or personal circumstances; however, employees should be advised that the reason for the request may affect the manager/supervisor's decision.
- b. The consequences for the employee of having the flexible work arrangement; and
- c. The consequences for the employee of not having the flexible work arrangement

Part G - Refusing a Request

(43) If a Manager intends to deny a request for a flexible working arrangement, they are strongly encouraged to discuss the matter first with the relevant People and Culture Business Partner.

(44) Requests for flexible work arrangements will only be denied where there are reasonable business grounds. This includes but is not limited to:

- 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.

(45) Managers and supervisors should seek advice from People & Culture when they believe a request cannot be granted.

(46) Further, if an employee discloses that the request relates to a reason as set out in (a) to (d) below, advice must be taken from People & Culture, as requests for these reasons are specifically covered by anti-discrimination law and the National Employment Standards:

- a. The employee has parenting and/or carer responsibilities
- b. The employee has a disability
- c. The employee is aged 55 years or older; or

- d. The employee is experiencing violence from a member of the employee's family or an ex-partner, 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 or ex-partner.

Part H - Review of a Decision

(47) Where an employee is dissatisfied with any matter arising under this 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 next most senior manager.

(48) When seeking a review, the employee should ensure that they include sufficient detail to enable the senior manager to review the decision.

(49) Senior managers should seek advice from People and Culture when reviewing any decisions under this procedure.

(50) If an employee 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.

Status and Details

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Accountable Officer	Lisa Line Deputy Vice-Chancellor Enterprise and Digital Lisa.Line@vu.edu.au
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