

Flexible Working Patterns Policy Work Life Balance (WLB)

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hefcw

Title	Flexible Working Patterns Policy Work Life Balance (WLB)
Reference	HRP016
Version	2.0
Date	February 2008
Author	HR
Approved by	HR Committee
Impact assessment date	5 February 2008
Classification	UNCLASSIFIED
Revision Date	October 2008

Version	Date	Description
0.1	20/09/2006	Presented to Management Board for initial approval – agreed
0.2	20/10/2006	Presented to HR Committee for ratification – ratified
1.0	26/10/2006	Presented to Works Council for ratification – ratified
2.0	Feb 08	Policy updated to reflect OD, style guide and EIA

1. A guide to organising time

In line with its commitment to valuing diversity, HEFCW recognises that flexible working hours brings benefits to both employees and the organisation. The Flexible Working Patterns policy outlined in this document provides arrangements for a flexible system of attendance to help employees manage their patterns of work to suit their individual needs and the needs of HEFCW.

2. Aims of the Flexible Working Patterns policy

The aims of the policy are to:

- i. enable employees to achieve better work-life balance
- ii. enable employees to utilise their full potential at work by achieving a better relationship between their personal and professional lives;
- iii. provide a focus on the achievement of agreed objectives and targets rather than time sat at a desk;
- iv. maximise use of resources and match working patterns with the needs of HEFCW
- v. help HEFCW retain trained employees with experience and expertise;

- vi. give HEFCW access to a broader cross section of potential employees when recruiting.

This policy should be seen as part of a suite of policies and initiatives providing a range of options for flexible working, details of which are summarised in HEFCW's statement on Work-Life Balance.

3. Equality of opportunity

Line managers responsible for employees participating in the policy must ensure there is no discrimination, direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional against any group or individual employee. HEFCW has a number of policies to support and encourage diversity within the workplace.

4. Compressed hours

Compressed hours is a form of flexible working which can assist employees in achieving a work-life balance. This pattern of working allows employees to reduce the number of days worked by extending the number of hours they work during each day. An example could be:

37 hours over a 4 day week; or
74 hours over a 9 day fortnight

On completion of the application form to request to work compressed hours and prior to approval, the employee, line manager and Head of Team must discuss and determine whether this form of working pattern is appropriate to the nature of work with which the employee is involved. It may be attractive to an employee only to work a 4 day week without any loss of salary but there may be an adverse impact on other employees who will be covering when they are on compressed working and not in attendance. Before agreeing compressed hours working, line managers and Head of Team must assess the likely impact upon the remainder of the team and on service delivery.

On occasions, an employee may reasonably be requested to alter their non-working day where the needs of the business demand.

This application is required to be renewed annually.

4.1 Annual leave

Annual leave entitlements are calculated on the assumption that an employee works 5 days a week and 7.4 hours (7 hours 24 minutes) a day. Any variation to this form of working pattern will require annual leave to be recalculated.

For an employee working compressed hours, annual leave will be expressed in hours to take account of the fact that the working day is longer than normal. The following formula should be used to calculate annual leave in hours:

Number of hours worked per week x Normal annual leave allowance
5 days

4.2 Public holidays

As with part-time working, the entitlement for employees working compressed hours should be expressed in hours to allow for holiday that might fall on non-working days. This allowance should be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of hours worked per week}}{37 \times 77.7} = \text{Public Holidays per annum}$$

The employee must determine, with line management's agreement, in advance of commencing their new pattern of work, which day will be their non-working day. This will ensure that adequate arrangements are made to cover the employee's absence from the office and ensure that no undue pressure is placed on other team members. Requests to vary working days should be discussed with line management and if mutually agreeable, the working day can be varied in order to meet the needs of the employee or team.

4.3 Sickness absence

If an employee falls sick on one of their working days, the absence will be recorded as sick leave. However, if the employee falls sick on a non-working day, the absence will not be recorded. Please refer to the Sickness Absence policy for further information.

5. Term time working

Term time working is an option for which all permanent employees are entitled to apply. It allows an employee to take regular, planned unpaid leave for all or some of the school holidays. To avoid financial hardship, the employee can apply for their pay to be averaged over 12 months, i.e., from September to the following August (this is optional). If pay is averaged over 12 months at certain points in the year the employee will be in an underpaid or overpaid situation. Agreement to rectify this, if the need arises will form part of the application.

5.1 Eligibility for term time working

There is no automatic entitlement for an employee to be approved for term-time working. Each request and its possible effects of delivery of business must be considered by line management and Head of Team.

5.2 Duration of application for term time working:

Because term times and the employee's needs may vary in each academic year, the application must be renewed annually. The application will run per academic year, ie, September to August. Applications should be made as soon as the next academic year plan is known. If the employee commences adoptive, foster, maternity, parental leave, or has a period of long term absence, the employee would revert to normal pay arrangements to ensure the correct levels of pay in each circumstance.

5.3 Effect on pension for term time working:

Reckonable service is not accrued whilst taking unpaid leave. Averaging the hours over the 12 months of a term time application for payroll processes, will accrue exactly the same amount of reckonable service over the period of each application. The Pension Administrators for HEFCW will be notified of any altered working pattern.

6. Procedure for requesting flexibility in patterns of work

The employee must complete the application form and following endorsement by the line manager and Head of Team, it should be passed to HR, together with the employee's annual leave record. The application form should contain the employee's proposed working pattern, how this pattern may be accommodated within their team and the impact it would have on the delivery of business.

By signing the form, the employee undertakes to repay HEFCW any monies owed if they resign. HEFCW also undertakes to repay any monies owed at resignation, dependent on option chosen.

All requests for flexibility of hours or working patterns (including ones not set out in this policy) will be given serious consideration.

HR will contact the employee confirming the outcome of the application and advising on pay, annual leave etc.

Employees will be issued with new Terms and Conditions of Employment which they are required to sign prior to any change taking into effect.

7. Criteria in considering requests for patterns of work

In agreeing to exercise flexibility in patterns of work, line managers and employees have an obligation to assure themselves that a request to exercise flexibility will not affect business effectiveness. Examples of aspects to consider are:

- will there be sufficient coverage of any absence by other members of the team?
- will there be a detrimental impact on quality, performance or ability to meet customer/stakeholder demand on account of exercising flexibility?
- can workload be temporarily reorganised amongst existing employees without detriment to themselves?

8. Abuse of the policy

The success of the policy depends on trust and any employee found to be deliberately abusing this trust will be dealt with under HEFCW's dismissal and disciplinary procedure.

9. Working time

The Working Time Regulations and the Young Worker Directive ensure that employees under the age of 18 do not work in excess of 40 hours per week for HEFCW. All other employees whose working hours breach the 48-hour rule must sign a waiver in accordance with the Working Time Regulations.

10. Interpretation of the rules of the policy

Any questions on the operation of the policy should be addressed in the first instance to your line manager. If further clarification is required, please contact HR.

[Link to application form](#)