

Culture&

Flexible Working Policy

1. Flexibility at Work

Culture& values flexibility within its workforce and recognises the importance of supporting staff in finding a balance between their work commitments and personal life.

We recognise the positive impact that flexible working can have on business efficiency and productivity, in creating a positive and inclusive work environment, and in supporting staff to manage the balance between home life and work commitments, contributing to more effective recruitment and staff retention.

Whilst Culture& is unable to provide flexible working arrangements in all situations and must ensure that staffing levels are always in line with business need, efforts will be made to accommodate requests wherever it is appropriate to do so.

All requests for flexible working will be considered confidentially, fairly, and consistently through this policy and procedure. Every request will be considered, taking into account the unique circumstances of each case and the needs of the organisation.

Culture& offers flexitime to all employees when work commitments allow, as laid out in Section 3. An employee seeking additional flexibility on a short-term or infrequent basis may do so in accordance with Section 4. Where flexibility is required on a longer term or ongoing basis, a formal procedure is set out in Section 5.

2. Benefits of Flexible Working

Members of staff may have many reasons for making a request for either short-term or longer-term/ongoing flexible working arrangements, including:

- To deal with an unexpected or sudden issue involving a dependant
- To deal with the bereavement or serious illness/injury of a dependant
- To provide flexibility in managing an ongoing health condition or disability
- To undertake a period of study
- To pursue outside interests, such as charity work
- To spend more time with family members
- To undertake caring responsibilities for an ill, disabled, or older dependent relative/partner/friend
- To improve work-life balance

Flexible working requests which help staff to balance work and personal commitments are welcome, regardless of length of continuous employment.

Limitations

While Culture& is committed to considering all requests, staff need to recognise that not all flexible working options will be appropriate for all roles across the organisation. Each request will be considered on the basis of the particular work involved and with regard to any effect the change could have on individual, team, or business performance.

Any member of staff interested in flexible working is advised to speak informally with their line manager to discuss the options available and the possible impact of their proposed work pattern on colleagues and work delivery before submitting a statutory request.

3. Flexitime

Flexitime is a working arrangement that allows an employee to choose when to begin and end their work, within certain limits.

Culture& employees are required to work during core hours and must work an agreed number of hours each week, as stated in their contract.

Core Hours

Core hours at Culture& are between 10.00 and 16.00 each weekday. All employees working on any given weekday are expected to be active during those hours, except in cases of illness, annual leave, emergency, or where another flexible working arrangement has been mutually agreed upon.

Provided that employees are active during those core hours, they may choose to begin and end their workdays earlier or later to better accommodate their own schedules and personal commitments.

Employees must work their full number of contracted working hours each week, unless otherwise authorised, and should keep track of their hours in cases where they utilise this flexitime system to ensure that standard weekly working hours are not lost or overrun. Line managers may ask employees at any time to provide a tracked list of their weekly hours to ensure that contracted hours are being met.

Employees should communicate their working hours to colleagues and use 'out of office' facilities on email whilst inactive.

Culture& employees are encouraged to keep regular working hours, where possible, to avoid creating difficulty for colleagues or having a detrimental impact on business and operations. However, provided that staff allocate all contracted hours each week to their working days within that week, they are welcome to adjust their schedules outside of those core hours.

Business Needs

Managers will ensure that the needs of the organisation have priority at all times and that the organisation is adequately staffed when commitments fall outside of those core hours. They will communicate ahead of time with staff in cases where flexitime is not possible on a given day or week due to business need.

Culture& will make a significant effort to avoid scheduling staff meetings and other organisation-wide commitments outside of core hours out of respect for staff personal time and commitments. However, this will not always be possible and line managers will communicate as early as possible with staff when flexitime is not available due to business need.

Employees are expected to allocate their working hours responsibly and with business need in mind. Employees must allocate all of their working hours each week and cannot carry over hours into the following week, unless otherwise arranged through a pre-approved flexible working schedule.

The spirit of the policy is based in trust and positive working relationships within the organisation to ensure effective delivery of our work and programmes. It is the employee's responsibility to be transparent with their line managers and colleagues about any changes or flexibility in their schedules, so that teams can plan accordingly and set realistic expectations each week, and so that Culture&'s business needs can still be met.

4. Informal or Short-Term Flexibility

Culture& recognises that members of staff may occasionally require further flexibility to help manage personal commitments. Where flexibility is requested to address a short-term/immediate need, the employee should discuss their request with their line manager, who will determine whether the request can be met.

In considering requests for flexible working, the line manager will need to assess the impact of agreeing to the proposal. In some cases, the impact may be deemed to be wholly positive, e.g. a one-off day of home working may enable a staff member to complete a job task more efficiently. However, more regular home working could have a negative impact on other colleagues depending on the specific context. It is therefore at the line manager's discretion as to whether a request can be accommodated.

Culture& encourages managers to operate flexibly in support of staff members, where it is appropriate to do so. Where informal arrangements are agreed, for example, finishing work early one day and making up the time throughout the week, there is no contractual change. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure they fulfil their role fully and effectively. Where this is not the case, the line manager will discuss this with the individual.

Culture& has specific provisions for requests for short-term flexibility relating to overtime work (please see Culture&'s TOIL Policy) and in cases of emergency or medical need.

Emergency Leave for the Care of Family Members/Dependants

Culture& recognises that staff may require time off at short notice to deal with an emergency involving a family member or dependant. Culture& will support staff to deal with an unexpected or sudden problem and allow them the time to make longer term arrangements, if necessary.

Circumstances which may require emergency leave might include:

- a family member/dependent falling ill or being involved in an accident or incident, including where the dependant is hurt or distressed rather than injured physically;
- to make longer term care arrangements for a family member/dependant who is ill or injured;
- to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements for a family member/dependant; for example, a child minder failing to turn up due to illness;
- to deal with an incident involving the individual's dependent during school hours; for example, if the child has been suspended from school.

A dependant might be:

- A spouse or civil partner, child, parent, sibling, or someone who lives in the same house (excluding lodgers/tenants) or
- Anyone who reasonably relies on the individual for assistance, for example where a member of staff is a primary carer and is responsible for making arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury.

In most cases, one or two days will be sufficient to deal with the emergency, but this will depend on individual circumstances. For example, if a dependent falls ill, the emergency leave should allow the individual to cope with the immediate crisis, such as visiting the doctor and then make longer term care arrangements.

Emergency leave is unpaid, however Culture& recognises that in some circumstances, depending on the nature of the work of individuals and the area in which they work, some flexibility may be possible. With joint agreement from the individual and line manager, it may be possible to negotiate a short period of work from home or for the employee to make up lost hours at another time.

Staff should inform their manager as soon as is possible of their need for emergency leave. They must explain the reason for taking the leave and how long they expect to be away from work. Line managers will then pass the details of the individual's emergency leave to Payroll so that their pay can be adjusted accordingly.

Leave for Medical Appointments

Where it is not possible for staff to arrange routine medical appointments outside of core working hours, or in the case of emergency or hospital appointments over which the employee has no control, they may take up to an equivalent of 3 days (pro-rated for part-time employees) paid leave per year to attend medical appointments.

Please note that this does not apply to antenatal or postnatal appointments, nor to medical appointments related to long-term health conditions or disabilities.

Provided that the employee notifies their manager in advance, time off for these appointments will be treated as paid time off.

If an employee needs to attend further appointments, these must be taken as unpaid leave, or the employee must make short-term flexible working arrangements with their manager to cover any lost working time. If an employee is receiving ongoing medical treatment, they should seek advice from their line manager, bearing in mind that they are not required to disclose their illness or disability if they do not wish to do so.

5. Formal and Long-Term Flexibility

Where an employee seeks to formally change their working arrangements, they may make a request in line with their statutory rights. This can include a request to change their number of contracted hours, a request for a change to the pattern of hours worked, and a request to perform some or all of the work from the employee's home.

Staff who are members of a pension scheme should be aware that where a request for a reduction in hours is agreed, there will be an impact on the value of their pension benefits. Staff are advised to take advice regarding this impact prior to making a request for a

reduction in hours. The next section sets out the arrangements for dealing with statutory requests for changes to working arrangements.

Procedure to Request Flexible Working

Application

Applications for flexible working arrangements under this procedure must be submitted in writing (including by e-mail) using the Flexible Working Request (FWR) Form, which should be sent to the appropriate line manager and copied to the CEO.

Applications must:

- be dated;
- state that the application is being made under the statutory right to request flexible working;
- specify the flexible working arrangements that the member of staff is requesting;
- specify the date on which it is proposed that the change should become effective;
- explain what effect, if any, the member of staff thinks making the change applied for would have on the University and how, in their opinion, any such effect might be dealt with;
- state whether a previous application has been made by the member of staff to Culture& and, if so, when.

Fully completing the FWR form will ensure that all the above information is provided.

Consideration of the Request

As soon as is practical, and within 28 calendar days of receiving a fully completed request, Culture& will hold a meeting with the member of staff to discuss the request. The meeting will be conducted by the member of staff's line manager and the CEO. Staff may be accompanied to all meetings under this procedure by a colleague, if they wish.

At the meeting, the proposed working pattern will be discussed and all relevant issues will be explored. Where there is a potential problem with the member of staff's request, it may be necessary to explore alternative arrangements that might suit both the member of staff's personal needs and the needs of the organisation.

In cases where the adjustment is minor, such as a staff member requesting to start and end their workday one half hour later, the line manager and CEO can approve the request without holding a meeting. In these cases where it is clear that the adjustment can be accommodated, a written approval by the line manager, with the CEO in copy, will suffice.

In considering the request, Culture& will need to take into account a number of criteria including, but not limited to, the following:

- the cost of the proposed arrangement;
- the effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff;
- the level of supervision that the post-holder requires;

- the structure of the staff member's team and staff resources;
- other issues specific to the individual's working team;
- an analysis of the tasks specific to the role, including their frequency and duration;
- an analysis of the workload of the role.

Within 7 calendar days of the meeting, the line manager will write to the member of staff with a decision. Culture& will either approve the member of staff's request, specifying the new working arrangements and effective date; refuse the request, giving the reason for refusal; or offer an alternative working arrangement which can be accommodated. This may include an agreement to a temporary change and/or the offer of a trial period.

Every request will be considered based on its merits and with consideration of the impact on the organisation.

If multiple requests are received from staff within the same team/working area, they will be considered in the order that they are received.

If it is the case where there are a number of staff who are already working flexibly and the team is unable to accommodate any further flexible arrangements, line managers may consider calling for volunteers from within the area to review their working arrangements in order to create capacity for further flexible arrangements to be considered.

Approval of the Request

If Culture& is able to approve the request or offer an alternative flexible working pattern, the employee's line manager will write to the member of staff to detail the new working pattern and confirm the date on which it will commence.

Once agreed, the new working pattern will be a permanent change to the member of staff's terms and conditions of employment, unless a trial period or time-limited period has been agreed.

Refusal of the Request

Whilst reasonable attempts will be made to explore and accommodate requests, there will be occasions when a request cannot be agreed. Culture& may refuse an application for flexible working if one of the reasons listed below applies in the particular case. If an application is refused, the individual will receive, in writing, the business ground(s) on which the request has been declined. This will include an explanation of why the business reasons apply in the circumstances, and will also inform the member of staff of their right to appeal the decision.

Reasons for the refusal of a flexible working request include:

- the burden of additional costs
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet business demand
- a detrimental impact on quality
- a detrimental impact on performance
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff

- an inability to recruit additional staff
- insufficient work during the periods the member of staff proposes to work
- planned structural changes

Appeal

A member of staff may appeal against the decision to refuse a flexible working request where they believe their request was not handled reasonably and in line with this policy and procedure. Any appeal must be submitted within 14 calendar days of the date on which notice of the decision is given. Notice of appeal must be in writing, be dated, and must set out the grounds for appeal. The appeal notice should be made to the CEO. The member of staff will be invited to attend an appeal meeting and Culture& will give the member of staff written notice of the decision on the appeal within 14 calendar days of the appeal meeting.

Time Limits

Decisions on flexible working requests (including the appeal process) will be made within 3 months from the date of application. The time limits in this procedure may be extended by agreement and/or for reasons relating to the absence of the member of staff presenting the application, the manager making the decision regarding the application, or other staff who may be affected by the request.

Withdrawal of Application

Staff wishing to withdraw an application must do so in writing to their line manager.

Culture& will consider a member of staff as having withdrawn an application where, without reasonable cause, they fail to attend a meeting or an appeal meeting more than once, or where, without reasonable cause, the member of staff refuses to give Culture& information that is required to assess whether the contract variation should be agreed to.

6. Flexible Working Around Religious Holidays

Culture& is committed to equity and inclusion in the workplace and recognises that staff may have religious and cultural commitments or celebrations that fall within their regular working hours, whether on a daily, monthly, or annual basis. Culture& will seek to provide flexible working accommodations in these circumstances, where possible, to avoid cases where employees must disproportionately use their annual leave time to be able to observe their religious or cultural traditions and celebrations.

Employees may request time off during religious holidays to participate in activities such as private prayer, charitable projects, and celebrations with their families and communities. However, flexible working may be more appropriate in these cases and should be explored with a line manager and on a case-by-case basis.

Similarly, if Culture& is unable to grant religious leave requests due to business needs, flexible working arrangements may allow the organisation to provide appropriate accommodations with minimal disruption to business.

For example, if an employee observes the Sabbath each Friday, it may be possible to adjust their working hours to accommodate an early start and finish on that day each week. Likewise, if an employee is fasting as part of a holiday, it may be possible to arrange an

earlier or later start and finish to their workday, or a period of working from home during that time to accommodate religious observance.

In all cases, the employee who wishes to make the request should follow either the short or long-term flexible working request procedures, as appropriate.

Additionally, Culture& recognises that UK bank holidays solely provide time off for British Christian holidays, which will not be relevant to every Culture& employee. Should an employee wish to work on one of these bank holidays (i.e. Christmas, Boxing Day, or Easter), they may do so with a line manager's approval and apply their unused bank holiday leave to another day during the financial year, subject to leave request approval. This should be prearranged with a line manager at least one month in advance of the bank holiday.

September 2025

Culture&

REQUEST FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Members of staff who wish to request flexibility in or changes to their working arrangements should complete this form and send it to their line manager, with a copy to the CEO.

Before completing this form, you should first read Culture&'s Flexible Working Policy. Please note that it may take up to 2 months to consider a request before it can be implemented and possibly longer where difficulties arise. You should therefore ensure that you submit your application well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect.

It will help Culture& to consider your request if you provide as much information as you can about your desired working pattern.

Employee Name:

Job Title:

Line Manager:

Please provide details of your current working pattern (*days/hours/times worked/location*):

I wish to request consideration of the following change(s) to my working arrangements:
(*Please provide full details of your request for flexible working arrangements*)

Have you made a previous application for flexible working arrangements? If so, when?

What date would you like this working arrangement to commence?

What date would you like this working arrangement to cease? (*If applicable*)

Signed: Date:

Following receipt of a fully completed form, your request will be reviewed and discussed with you in more detail. If your request is approved, this will be a permanent change to your terms and conditions, unless otherwise agreed.