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## Flexible Work Arrangement Guidelines

### OVERVIEW

Kent State University strives to create a culture of health and wellness for students and employees at all Kent State campuses. To that end, we are committed to fostering a workplace environment that is flexible and recognizes employees' ongoing navigation of career and life responsibilities. Kent State permits flexible work arrangements, at the discretion of campus Deans, department heads or their designees, to enable staff and management to meet university goals and help employees balance personal and professional responsibilities. Flexibility in the workplace, a business practice used to manage people, time, space, and workload more effectively, efficiently, and responsively, supports a variety of priorities and university-level initiatives related to recruitment and retention, sustainability, staff excellence, and employee well-being. These include our healthy campus initiative, Kent State of Wellness, and the Great Place Initiative.

Flexible work arrangements (FWA) at Kent State are designed to support work/life balance for employees and are to be used for related purposes, including, but not limited to, participation in university-sponsored wellness activities/events, physical activity, child care, professional development, and to more effectively perform daily job responsibilities. Please reference [policy 3342-6-01.2](#) for a definition of eligible employees.

Although not every position can take advantage of a FWA, there are a variety of ways that schedule flexibility can be customized to work for both the department and the individual. Departments are encouraged to have open dialogues regarding flexible work and integrate it as a standard business practice, where applicable. Employees may use the FWA Request Form to initiate such dialogue. The determination of whether an employee will be allowed to participate in a flexible work arrangement will be made on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the needs, requirements, and constraints of the department.

To ensure that management and staff members have a mutual understanding of the specifics of the flexible work arrangement, it must be documented using the automated Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form, which will guide supervisors and employees in specifying the details of the arrangement. If the arrangement becomes unfeasible at any time, it may be discontinued at the discretion of either the employee or management, with reasonable notice thereof. A Flexible Work Arrangement Termination Form must be completed if the employee is returning to their customary schedule or desires to request a new FWA.

Types of flexible work arrangements offered at Kent State include alternative arrival/departure time, extended lunch duration, and compressed schedule. Flexible work arrangements must not materially change the duties of the position and must be structured to maintain the equivalence of a full-time work schedule. Use of flex time should not result in overtime for classified staff members. This guideline is intended to assist administrators, supervisors, Human Resources (HR) representatives and staff members to create opportunities for optimizing performance and work/life balance through schedule flexibility.

## DEFINITIONS

Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA)	An agreement established between an employee and supervisor wherein the time of work performed is different from the customary schedule. Flexible work arrangements are not intended to be used as an alternative to, or in conjunction with, leave as provided for in Chapter 6 of Section 3342 of the Administrative Code. All FWAs must include at least a 30-minute lunch break for a workday of 8 or more hours. Skipping a lunch break is not permitted as part of a regular schedule.
Alternative Arrival/Departure	An arrangement that permits a variation from the employee's core hours in starting and departure times but does not alter the total number of hours worked in a day.
Extended Lunch Duration	An arrangement that allows employees to extend the duration of their lunch break (up to 150 minutes per week), but does not alter the total number of hours worked in a week. To accommodate this, employees must make up these hours by arriving at an earlier time, departing at a later time and/or shortening the duration of their lunch break on other workdays (lunch break must be a minimum of 30 minutes). Hourly employees must clock in and out accordingly.
Compressed Schedule	An arrangement wherein the total number of hours expected to work each week are conducted in less than five full workdays.
Continuing FWA	A flexible work arrangement that remains in place unless determined no longer feasible by the employee/supervisor or replaced by an alternative FWA. Designed for arrangements that are to remain in place 2 months or longer in duration.
Occasional FWA	A flexible work arrangement that allows employees to use flex time to accommodate work and life situations that come up and are often limited in duration (short term: 2 – 8 weeks) versus continuing in duration.
Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form	A form that asks employees specific questions intended to help supervisors determine how the request aligns with the employee's position responsibilities, their performance, and the business needs of the department. The supervisor and employee then work together to document the specific details of an arrangement and establish a record via electronic signatures of agreement.
Flexible Work Arrangement Termination Form	A form used to end a flexible work arrangement and specify the customary work schedule to which the employee will be returning.

*Note: All Flexible Work Arrangement forms are administered through DocuSign.*

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft a FWA proposal for the supervisor's review using the Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form.</li> <li>- Work with supervisor to document arrangement.</li> <li>- Maintain performance standards and correct any issues as they arise.</li> <li>- Understand and adapt to colleagues' various work schedules.</li> <li>- Review ongoing arrangement with supervisor routinely and at least annually.</li> </ul>
Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review flexible work arrangement proposals submitted by employees.</li> <li>- Make a determination whether the proposed arrangement fits with business needs, communicate the outcome to the employee (and other staff members as needed), and work with the employee to document the arrangement.</li> <li>- Be consistent in the review process when approving or denying flexible work arrangements, and make the decision process as transparent as possible.</li> <li>- In situations where a request may be determined infeasible, consult with HR Employee Wellness representative prior to issuing the denial. Consider alternatives to unfeasible requests.</li> <li>- Review ongoing arrangements with employees routinely and at least annually.</li> </ul>
Division of Human Resources/Employee Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consult with employees and supervisors on policy interpretation and best practices for integrating flexible work arrangements.</li> <li>- Consult with a supervisor who makes the determination to deny an employee's flexible work proposal, prior to the denial being issued.</li> <li>- Maintain records of all FWA Request and Termination forms.</li> </ul>

## INTENDED USE

Flexible work arrangements have the potential to improve work/life balance while also increasing productivity and job satisfaction for the employee, in turn creating a win-win for all. Possible benefits include better office coverage, extended service hours, enhancement of staff morale, reduced tardiness and absenteeism, increased productivity, alleviation of traffic concerns for employees, and the employee's ability to better manage his/her personal and professional responsibilities.

Kent State University's employees are a critical part of the university community and contribute significantly to the university's continued success and core values. That impact is greatly enhanced when staff are supported in personal and professional development activities that enrich their skills, assist in attaining performance and professional goals, and ensure continued success in their role. In addition, Kent State recognizes the role that wellness activities can play in fostering overall health and supporting a culture of well-being. The flexible work arrangement policy recognizes these values and is a significant step in promoting and upholding these values throughout the university community.

For the reasons stated above, flex time is intended to be used for purposes related to improving overall health and well-being and improved work/life balance, such as:

- Participation in university-sponsored wellness activities/events that extend beyond the one-hour lunch duration (i.e. faculty/staff exercise classes, etc.)
- Off-site physical activity or physical activity performed on campus
- Other purposes related to health and wellness
- Child care and family matters
- Professional development
- Other purposes related to enhancing work/life balance

The extended lunch duration option is specifically designed to allow employees to participate in university-sponsored wellness offerings or take advantage of physical activity during the workday, which is imperative to supporting physical and mental well-being.

Employees should use the Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form to propose why they are interested in a flexible work arrangement and specify reasons for which they intend to utilize flex time. It is ultimately up to the employee's supervisor to make a determination of whether they approve of the specified reasoning. Employees and supervisors are encouraged to have open and honest dialogues about work/life balance and how a flexible work arrangement might benefit the employee, both professionally and personally.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If an employee is participating in a Flexible Work Arrangement, any sick or vacation time taken during such arrangement will be deducted based on the FWA in place at the time used. For example, if employee is on a compressed work schedule working 10 hours each day Monday-Thursday and he/she is out ill on Monday, 10 hours of sick time will be deducted for that workweek.

## PROCEDURES

Outlined below are the basic procedures for proposing and managing flexible work arrangements. Regional campuses and departments may have additional procedures that must be followed, so check with your Dean or department head for unit-specific guidance. All FWA forms are administered through DocuSign.

### **1. Employee proposes arrangement using the Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form**

Any eligible Kent State University employee may submit a request form for a flexible work arrangement to their supervisor. It is important that employees wishing to utilize a flexible work arrangement consider the impact and benefit on position responsibilities, business needs, and impact on colleagues/customers. Generally, the most successful flexible work arrangements are those that have been established with thoughtfulness and a plan to address concerns in advance. Access the FWA Request Form via the [FWA landing page](http://www.kent.edu/hr/benefits/flexible-work-arrangement) at [www.kent.edu/hr/benefits/flexible-work-arrangement](http://www.kent.edu/hr/benefits/flexible-work-arrangement).

### **2. Supervisor reviews proposal**

The supervisor reviews the proposal and consults with others for guidance when necessary (i.e. department/unit head, manager, HR-Employee Wellness representative). Employees must be meeting workplace expectations in order to be considered for a flexible work arrangement. Additionally, employees should demonstrate strong communication skills and the ability to perform work independently and accomplish tasks as assigned in a timely manner to be considered.

### **3. Supervisor and employee review the proposal together and make any adjustments as needed**

To answer remaining questions and address any concerns, the supervisor and employee review and discuss the proposed arrangement. Particularly, they should discuss the employee's duties and the expected results, including deadlines to complete tasks, expected quality and other criteria that might affect the successful completion of duties. The supervisor should also ask for clarification on the employee's request if it is not specific enough.

### **4. Supervisor makes a determination and communicates decision to employee**

The supervisor makes a determination. If the determination is to deny the request, the supervisor must first consult with an HR-Employee Wellness representative for review and guidance before issuing the denial. Once a decision has been reached, it is not grievable by the employee. An employee whose request is denied should ask questions to understand the reason for the decision and learn what adjustments may be needed in terms of work or performance, if applicable. The supervisor may set goals for the employee to reach and/or a timeframe to wait before submitting another request for review.

### **5. Supervisor and employee document the arrangement by finishing the Request Form in DocuSign**

The supervisor and employee work together to complete the Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form in DocuSign, including indicating the employee's new schedule. Both the employee and supervisor will provide electronic signatures and may print the final FWA for their records. An automated copy of the FWA will also be uploaded to the employee's personnel record. If the employee is classified staff, the supervisor must update the [timekeeping system](#) to reflect their new schedule.

#### **a. Continuing Arrangement - designed for ongoing/continuing schedule change**

The supervisor and employee should consistently review the arrangement and make adjustments to address challenges. Establish regular intervals to evaluate the effectiveness of the arrangement. Schedule regular meetings to assess needs, discuss concerns and make any necessary adjustments. These reviews must be scheduled routinely (no less than annually) and

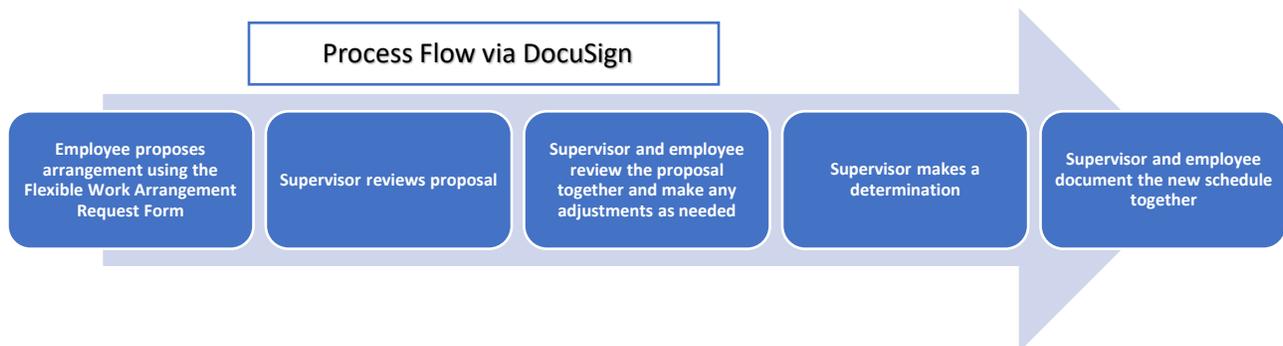
may occur more frequently at the beginning of an arrangement. The arrangement may be discontinued at any time.

**b. Occasional Arrangement - designed for short term schedule change of 2-8 weeks**

Occasional use flexibility is critical in supporting the work/life navigation of employees.

**Example:**

- Employee is interested in a special lunch and learn program offered as a four-part series that meets every Monday from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm for four weeks. Employee requests an extended lunch duration FWA for a four-week duration. Employee uses 1-hour lunch plus 30 min extended lunchtime each week for the duration of the four-week program. After four weeks, the employee and supervisor end the arrangement with the termination form.



**6. Procedures for terminating a flexible work arrangement or requesting a new arrangement**

If an arrangement becomes unfeasible at any time, it may be discontinued at the discretion of either the employee or his/her supervisor, with reasonable notice thereof. An employee may also request to end an active FWA and begin a different flexible work arrangement.

**a. Terminating a flexible work arrangement**

If an employee or his/her supervisor makes a determination that the employee should return to the customary schedule for his/her position, a Flexible Work Arrangement Termination form must be completed in DocuSign to establish a record of this change. If the employee is classified staff, the supervisor must update the [timekeeping system](#) to reflect the customary schedule.

**b. Requesting a new arrangement**

If an employee wants to switch to a flexible work schedule differing from their current arrangement, they must end the current FWA by completing a FWA Termination Form and then submit a new Flexible Work Arrangement Request Form, following steps 1-5 above.

**SAMPLE SCENARIOS**

**Alternative Arrival/Departure**

A new mother just returned to work from being on maternity leave. Her retired parents have agreed to care for the baby on weekdays but are only available until 4:00 pm. The employee requests a continuing alternative arrival/departure FWA to work from 6:30 am to 3:30 pm.

An employee is an active member of a community organization that meets on the first and third Wednesday of every month. The meetings run late, and the employee has a long commute to work the next morning. The employee works with their supervisor to establish a continuing arrangement to arrive and

depart later than their typical hours on the first and third Thursday each month. The numbers of hours worked for the day does not change, just arrival/departure times. If the department schedules an important meeting for a Thursday morning, the employee is still required to be there.

### **Extended Lunch Duration**

An employee leaves the office at 12:00 pm every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday and returns at 1:30 pm. During that time, the employee travels to the Student Recreation and Wellness Center, changes, participates in a 45-minute group exercise class from 12:15-1:00 pm, changes, and returns to the office. The employee then has a quick lunch and starts working again at 1:30 pm. One hour was the employee's lunch break, and the remaining 30 minutes was flex time. To compensate, the employee adjusts their schedule to make up for the extended lunch breaks (e.g. arrives at work earlier, leaves later, and/or shortens duration of their lunch break on other days of the week. If classified, the employee clocks in and out accordingly).

An employee and supervisor establish an extended lunch arrangement for the employee to participate in physical activity up to three days per week. The employee uses flex time responsibly and maintains work performance. Leading up to the department's busy season, the supervisor notifies the employee that the arrangement needs to be temporarily discontinued to meet business needs. The supervisor and employee terminate the flexible work arrangement using the FWA Termination Form. Once the unit's busy season concludes, the employee may request a new flexible work arrangement and work with their supervisor to complete a new agreement per the Flexible Work Request Form.

### **Compressed Schedule**

An employee is interested in a four-week training series that is not affiliated with the university. The trainings take place from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm one day per week. While the supervisor cannot allow the employee to participate in the training during paid time, they believe it is a beneficial professional development opportunity for the employee. The supervisor and employee work together to establish an arrangement for the employee to work 9-hour shifts the other four days of the week to accommodate the half days being missed for the training series. Once the training series concludes, the FWA Termination Form is used to show that the employee is returning to their customary work schedule.

A divorced parent cares for their child on weekends. They work with their supervisor to establish a continuing Compressed FWA in which the employee works four 9-hour shifts Monday through Thursday and a half-day on Friday every week so they can leave in time to pick up their child from school on Friday.

### **Misc. Examples**

A department has a busy season in the fall. All staff in the unit may request flex time; however, it is only granted between January and August to meet the business needs of this unit. A similar department is typically swamped with calls first thing in the morning and at the end of the day. Employees in this unit may only request to participate in wellness activities between 10 am and 3 pm to meet business needs.

A busy office has several employees wishing to take advantage of flex time for wellness. They are sensitive to the office needs and work together to come up with a schedule that the supervisor approves. One employee takes a spinning class from 7-7:45 am and arrives at the office by 8:15 am. Two employees are already at work by 8:00 am, when the office opens. At 11:00 am, another employee leaves for a 45-minute yoga class. Another employee schedules her lunch and workouts so that they do not interfere with anyone else's lunch/exercise schedule. In this environment, all staff encourage each other to stay active and support a healthy and productive work team.