

Flexible working policy

Introduction

This policy aims to encourage staff to consider flexible working arrangements. College recognises that a better work-life balance can improve employee motivation, performance and productivity, and reduce stress. Therefore, College wants to support its employees achieve a better balance between work and their other priorities, such as caring responsibilities, leisure activities, further learning and other interests. The College is committed to agreeing any flexible working arrangements, provided that the needs and objectives of both the organisation and the employee can be met.

It is our policy to encourage open discussion with employees. An employee that thinks they may benefit from flexible working is encouraged to contact their line manager to arrange an informal discussion to talk about the options.

What is flexible working?

Flexible working is any type of working arrangement that gives some degree of flexibility on how long, where and when an employee works.

The following flexible working options are considered to be the typical arrangements that employees will request but College recognises that there may be alternatives or a combination of options which are suitable to both the College and the employee:

- Annualised hours
- Home-working
- Job-sharing
- Overtime
- Part-time working
- Term-time working

Types of flexible working

- **Annualised hours** where an employee's contractual working hours are calculated as the total number of hours to be worked over the year, allowing flexible working patterns to be worked throughout the year.

Usually the hours will be divided into rostered hours, which are set, and unallocated hours, when an employee can be called into work as demand dictates (and to cover unplanned work and employee absence). Payment will be in 12 equal instalments (although

arrangements may be permitted where the pay for the work actually done is in the period to which the payment relates).

- **Home-working** is when an employee regularly carries out all, or part of, their duties from home rather than the employer's premises. College has decided the line managers may agree up to two days of regular or ad hoc home working per week without the need for a flexible working request. Any request in excess of this must be approved in line with this policy.
- **Job-sharing** is an arrangement where a full-time post is divided into two part-time roles. The two job holders then share the overall duties and responsibilities. Their skills and the hours each employee wishes to work must be compatible, and meet the needs of the College. Pay and benefits are shared in proportion to the hours each works. Job sharing can be considered where the creation of a single part-time post is difficult, or where two individuals wish to work part-time. The suitability of posts for job-sharing will be stated in any internal or external advertisements.
- **Overtime** is when hours are worked in addition to the usual full time hours. Overtime can be agreed where the College would benefit from an employee working more hours. Overtime will be paid at rates in line with the Staff Handbook or your contract. Overtime is not paid for those of grade 6 or above in line with your contract.
- **Part-time working** covers any arrangement where an employee is contracted to work anything less than typical full time hours for the type of work in question. For example, an employee who only works Monday to Wednesday. The suitability of posts for part-time working will be stated in any internal or external advertisements.
- **Term-time working** is where an employee reduces their hours or takes time off during any school holidays. Any weeks above their annual leave entitlement will be unpaid. Salary can be paid in 12 equal monthly instalments (although arrangements may be permitted where an employee is only paid for the time worked and receive no pay during the holidays apart from their entitlement to annual leave).

The needs of the organisation

The College is committed to providing a range of appropriate working patterns. However employees and management need to be realistic and to recognise that not all flexible working options will be appropriate for all roles.

Where a flexible working arrangement is proposed the College will need to take into account a number of criteria including (but not limited to) the following:

- the costs associated with the proposed arrangement

- the effect of the proposed arrangement on other staff
- the need for, and effect on, supervision
- the existing structure of the department
- the availability of staff resources
- details of the tasks specific to the role
- the workload of the role
- whether it is a request for a reasonable adjustment related to a disability
- health and safety issues

Eligibility

Employees in all areas, and at any level, are entitled to submit a request for flexible working regardless of their length of service.

Submitting a flexible working request

An employee is entitled to submit a flexible working request in a 12 month period (an employee is entitled to additional requests if they relate to a statutory entitlement, for example the Equality Act 2010 right to request reasonable adjustments).

All requests must be made by email to your line manager, though College encourages individuals to have an informal discussion first as it may be that the employee's request can be accommodated without a formal change to working arrangements. Any request made must include:

- the date of the application
- the changes that the employee is seeking to their terms and conditions
- the date from when the employee would like the proposed change to come into effect
- what effect the employee thinks the requested change would have on the organisation
- how, in their view, any such effect could be dealt with
- whether this is a statutory or non-statutory request
- whether a previous application for flexible working has been made
- the dates of any previous applications

If the employee is making the request in relation to the Equality Act, e.g. as a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability, this should be made clear in the application.

Meetings regarding flexible working

Upon receiving a written request for flexible working the line manager will usually seek to arrange a meeting with the employee to:

- discuss the request
- find out more about the proposed working arrangements
- how it could be of benefit to both the employee and organisation

If a meeting is arranged it will usually be held within 28 days of the receipt of the request.

At the meeting the employee may, if they wish, be accompanied by a workplace colleague.

Where a request can, without further discussion, be approved as stated in the employee's written application a meeting to discuss the request may not be necessary. The employee will be informed of the College's agreement to the request by a confirmation letter as outlined in the section 'Responding to a flexible working request' within 28 days of the receipt of the request.

Responding to a flexible working request

Line managers will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements, looking at the potential benefits and adverse effects to the employee and to the organisation in implementing the proposed changes. Line managers are likely to consult with a member of the Senior Management Team in arriving at their decision.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

The request may be granted in full, in part or refused. The College may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period.

Right to appeal decision

The employee has the right to appeal the decision if their request is refused or is only agreed in part.

The employee may lodge an appeal within 14 days of being notified of a decision on their application. This should be done in writing to the Bursar and

clearly state the grounds on which they are appealing. The appeal will be heard within 14 days.

Trialling new working arrangements

Where there is some uncertainty about whether the flexible working arrangement is practicable for an employee and/or the College a trial period may be agreed. If a trial period is arranged the College will allow sufficient time for an employee and their manager to implement and become used to the new working practices before taking any decisions on the viability of a new arrangement.

Varying an employee's contract

Where flexible working practices are agreed as a permanent change, a variation will need to be made to the employee's contract of employment.

Complaints

The College is strongly opposed to any form of victimisation of individuals who work, or request to work under flexible working arrangements.

If an employee feels that they have been treated unfairly or are dissatisfied with any stage of the flexible process, they should raise their concerns informally with the Bursar