

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Background

In response to the growing interest in work/life integration, workplace flexibility, and employee wellbeing, Harvard offers staff employees the opportunity to propose Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs), which include work schedules that fall outside of traditional 9-5 office hours, working from locations other than the office, and compressed work weeks.

In the spring of 2017, Harvard established University-wide flexwork guidelines, which provide a foundation for local policies and practices. Approval of FWAs at SEAS is at the discretion of the supervisor. To simplify the language in this policy, we will use the word telework to refer to work done in locations other than the Harvard worksite. The school's policy follows:

SEAS Flexible Work Arrangements Policy for Staff Employees

A proposal for an FWA can be approved by the immediate supervisor in consultation with any indirect supervisor(s). FWAs must be responsive to changing needs and will be reviewed at least annually to ensure the business needs are being met. FWAs may be terminated with reasonable notice at the discretion of the supervisor. FWAs should not be considered permanent.

All supervisors are expected to consider all formal proposals for flexible work arrangements objectively and fairly, but are not required to grant approval.

An objective consideration of FWA proposals is intended to ensure an equitable process, but does not guarantee similar outcomes among employees due to differences in job roles, job performance and departmental operations. Therefore, some SEAS employees will not be able to take advantage of every provision allowed by this policy.

Supervisors, in consultation with HR, may approve a short-term FWA to accommodate special proposals that fall outside these guidelines.

If there is a discrepancy between the SEAS policy and the HUCTW contract, the language in the HUCTW prevails.

Eligibility

- All staff employees are eligible to propose an FWA, but they may not be available to all staff during their first six months in a new position. FWAs also will likely not be available to employees working under a Performance Improvement Plan or to those who received a recent disciplinary action. In all cases, supervisors have the discretion to decide whether or not an FWA will be approved for their direct reports.

Flexible Hours, Days of Work and Core Days

- Employees may request to work between the hours of 7:00am and 6:00pm, Monday through Friday, with the Core Hours, when everyone should be available, between 10:00am and 3:00pm. This applies whether working onsite at Harvard or teleworking.
- A Core Day, where everyone must be present onsite at Harvard, can be established in each work unit at the discretion of the supervisor.

Telework and Paid Time Off

- Telework arrangements can be approved as long as business needs are met and there is appropriate work load planning to ensure that there is enough work that can be done outside the office.
- Telework will generally be approved for one business day out of the employee's weekly schedule.
- Employees may telework during the same week they are taking Paid Time Off, such as vacation, personal, sick time or holiday. To ensure consistency, though, if the Paid Time Off occurs on the regularly scheduled telework day, they may not ordinarily telework on another day that week. Supervisors, however, may approve such arrangements if business needs require it.
- Because Massachusetts and California are the only states where Harvard is registered to do business, teleworking outside of those states is generally permitted only for very short periods.

Computer Safety

- To ensure the safety of the University's data and confidential information, computer work done while teleworking must be done using a secure computer (either a Harvard-issued laptop or a personal computer with required protections) and a secure connection. VPN should be used when working in public spaces such as coffee shops, public libraries, airports, or hotels and when working with secured resources (e.g. departmental file shares, Harvard Library E-Resources, etc.). If a personal computer is used, see guidance for Securing Your Personal Device (link below). Any costs associated with internet and telephone service will be the responsibility of the employee.
- Employees teleworking should complete the web-based **Information Security Awareness Training (University-wide) (ID: EUR771)** accessible from the Harvard training portal accessible from <https://hr.harvard.edu/>. This course takes about 15 minutes.
- It is required that employees read and understand the information in the first two links below and implement the security measures on their personal device(s) as outlined in the third link –
Policy Statements - <https://policy.security.harvard.edu/policies>
Requirements for Working Remotely - <https://security.harvard.edu/requirements-working-remotely>
Securing Your Personal Device - <https://security.harvard.edu/personal-device-security-guides>

Workspace Safety and Privacy

- Employees who telework will be expected to maintain a safe workspace that is free from disruptions and distractions. Teleworking in public spaces, which limit privacy, should be avoided.

Conducting non-Harvard Activities While Teleworking

- Employees must engage only in Harvard work; no other substantive work – such as child care or personal projects — should be conducted during agreed-upon work times. Appropriate Paid Time Off can be approved for these situations.

Communication

- Staff should communicate their flex schedule by including it in their email signature and by posting it on their door or cubicle. Employees who work a compressed work week should also ensure they leave a message on their email and phones indicating the day they will be off.
- To communicate with staff working off-site, supervisors may use email, text, telephone and/or other collaboration/communication services that allow continuous contact throughout the workday. The communication service selected is at the discretion of the supervisor, and employees who telework must be willing to use these communication tools. Below are links that provide detailed information on a range of collaboration tools at Harvard.

Communication, Collaboration, and IT Security for Telework -

http://hr.harvard.edu/files/humanresources/files/flexwork_communication_collaboration_security.pdf

Chat, Video, & Collaboration - <https://huit.harvard.edu/services/chat-video-collaboration>

- Those teleworking must be accessible by phone/computer throughout the full work day in the same way they would be available if they were in the office.

Compressed Work Week or Telework

- The SEAS Summer Flextime program, (<https://www.seas.harvard.edu/human-resources/policies-and-procedures/summer-flextime>) where employees may work a compressed work week, may continue throughout the academic year. Employees can request to work either a compressed work schedule or a telework day, but not a mix of the two options.

Proposal Form

- Formal FWAs require a detailed proposal using the [proposal form](#), addressing how, when and where work will be performed. Employees are encouraged to speak with their supervisors prior to submitting a proposal. If employees or supervisors have questions, the HR office is available to address them.

- The personal circumstances of individuals, or their reasons for proposing an FWA, should not drive the decision to approve or deny the FWA.
- If issues of health, disability or family caregiving emerge during conversations about flexibility, managers must consult with SEAS Human Resources to determine if an employee's proposal for a flexible work arrangement is covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or should be explored as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- All FWAs should be initially reviewed after 30 days, and at least annually going forward.
- A copy of all signed FWA proposals, whether approved or denied, should be sent to SEAS Human Resources for the employee's personnel file.