

Working Flexibly @ ACU



A GUIDE FOR STAFF

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Introduction

ACU is committed to providing a flexible, supportive and diverse working environment and encourages employees to live a balanced lifestyle, combining work, family and community responsibilities. The University's 'Statement on Work and Life Balance' recognises that although work is an important means by which a person contributes to society, people also need to share time with their family, attend to their personal spiritual development, rest and pursue broader cultural, educational and recreational interests.

The University also recognises that Work-Life Balance is a personal choice that will change over time as individuals move through transitions in their lives. A focus on achieving Work-Life Balance will support staff by providing a level of autonomy and flexibility within their work role to accommodate various priorities at work, home and in their community. Such changes may include:

- Family responsibilities, such as parenting and elder care;
- Vocational education for personal and professional development;
- Cultural responsibilities or commitments;
- Volunteering or community engagement activities outside work;
- Managing health/medical issues while in paid work for self or a partner; and
- Reduced working hours whilst transitioning to retirement.

Consistent with its Mission, the University has developed policies and practices, which encourage a working environment that promotes equity and fairness, and provides a range of options for staff. Where required, these policies also comply with State and Federal Anti-Discrimination legislation. The process for managing requests for flexible working arrangements is set out in these guidelines.

Benefits of Balancing Work, Life, Family and Community Commitments

Assisting staff to manage their work-life balance more effectively is beneficial to both ACU and its people through:

- Increased motivation, loyalty, commitment and productivity;
- Development of an organisational culture which is adaptable to change and enhancing organisational excellence;
- Enhanced health and well-being of staff members;
- Increased ability to attract and retain staff;
- Reduction in employment costs associated with recruitment and absenteeism; and
- Staff identifying ACU as an employer of choice.



What are Flexible Working Arrangements?

Flexible working arrangements assist staff members to balance their personal and professional responsibilities through the development of mutually beneficial working arrangements with their supervisor or manager. Flexibility can take a number of different forms and can be temporary or permanent, depending on the nature of the staff member's responsibilities, and what can be reasonably accommodated by the University. Changes may include:

- The hours worked;
- The number of days worked each week (job share or part-time);
- Using paid or unpaid leave entitlement for extended breaks from fulltime work or career break; and
- Work location or working from home on an ad-hoc or regular basis.

Who can apply for Flexible Working Arrangements?

The University will consider all requests for flexible working arrangements from continuing and fixed term staff members on a case by case basis.

Understanding your Responsibilities

When making a request for changed working arrangements, staff should:

- Consider and be clear about their needs;
- Familiarise themselves with the relevant policies and procedures;
- Discuss their request with their supervisor or manager with an open mind to consider flexible working options that meet their needs and those of the workplace. There may need to be some negotiation and compromise to make the arrangement work;
- Be aware that their request may be declined if there are reasonable business grounds for doing so.

Application Process

Step 1 – Identify your work-life balance issue(s) and/or need(s)

Flexible working arrangements can result in a “win-win” situation. The first step is to clarify the nature of and reason for your request, considering questions such as:

- Why do you need the flexible working arrangement?
- Do you need it on an ongoing or temporary basis?
- What work arrangements might assist in improving your work and life balance?

Step 2 – Explore your options and possible arrangements

Investigate the options available to see what may best suit you and your work area and discuss your proposed flexible working arrangements with your supervisor or manager. If you need clarification about this guide or the ['Flexible Working Arrangements Policy'](#), you can contact the HR Advisory Service on (02) 9701 4222 or by email HR@acu.edu.au.

Some options for flexible working arrangements may include:

Flexible Working Arrangement	Description
<i>Flexible working hours</i>	You can discuss start/finish times and take planned and unplanned days off without loss of salary through flexible working hours, subject to your supervisor or manager's approval. This is usually approved on the basis that work rescheduling is possible, and/or that lost time will be made up.
<i>Job-sharing</i>	Job-sharing involves a voluntary sharing of the duties and responsibilities on one position between two staff members.
<i>Part-time & fractional employment</i>	Fractional staff members are employed for a fixed number of weeks (less than 52 weeks) in the year. Part-time and fractional staff accrue normal benefits on a pro-rata basis, such as annual leave, personal leave, parental leave and long service leave.
<i>Averaging hours of work</i>	To accommodate peak workload demands at specified times of the year, a staff member may work more than the normal weekly hours allowed for by the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement, up to a maximum of 40 hours per week, and less at other times in the year so that across the year the average normal weekly hours are worked. These arrangements will be documented and agreed to at the beginning of every year.
<i>Purchase of additional leave</i>	Staff can apply to purchase an additional 4 weeks' annual leave by a commensurate reduction in salary. This option is available on an annual basis and the implications for superannuation must also be considered.
<i>Transition to retirement</i>	There are a range of options available to assist you in your journey that can be tailored to best meet your needs.

Step 3 – Prepare and submit your flexible working arrangement proposal

Prior to meeting face to face with your supervisor or manager, it is a good idea to provide them with details of the proposed flexible working arrangement. You can use the 'Request for Flexible Work Arrangements' pro-forma on Pages 9 and 10 of this guide. The proposal should include:

- Current work arrangement;
- Proposed work arrangement;
- Reason for requesting a flexible working arrangement;
- Additional equipment required to implement the proposed arrangement;
- A completed 'Working From Home Agreement' (which includes a WHS Inspection Checklist for Home Workstations) if requesting a work from home arrangement;
- Proposed starting date and length of arrangement; and
- Any supplementary information and/or documentation to support the application.

Step 4 – Meeting with your supervisor or manager

Make an appointment for a meeting with your supervisor or manager to discuss what you're seeking and to ensure they have a clear understanding of the reason(s) for your request. During the meeting you need to:

- Be open to options;
- Be flexible – the outcome may not be exactly what you want but it is important that you remain flexible to get the best outcomes for both you and the organisation;
- Ask your supervisor or manager to give you a general timeframe for consideration of your request;
- Take time to think and get more advice if needed. Don't feel you have to agree to something straight away. It is fine to say 'I need to think about that. Can I get back to you about that this afternoon/tomorrow?';
- Thank your supervisor or manager for their time and consideration;
- Take some notes of what was said in the meeting.

Step 5 – Discussing your flexible working arrangement proposal

Flexible working arrangements need to be discussed between you and your supervisor or manager. It is important to make the discussion as detailed and transparent as possible, having regard to the following:

- The time period for the arrangement, including a review date;
- Whether the full tasks and responsibilities of your role can still be met under the new arrangement, or do parts of the role need to be re-assigned or delegated to other staff members;
- Arrangements for workplace communication, consultation, social activities and attendance at relevant training or staff meetings; and
- Any additional equipment that may be required.

What Happens after My Application is submitted?

Your supervisor or manager will consider your request and provide you with a written response within 21 days, stating whether your request has been granted or denied.

If your request is approved it is important to refer to 'Policies and Information Relevant to Work-Life Balance' of this guide (Pg. 7) for any relevant policies and/or documentation that apply to the new flexible work arrangement. For example, if a staff member is varying their fraction of work hours, they will need to fill out the 'Request to Vary' form that is then signed by their supervisor or manager and submitted to HR. However some flexible work arrangements need only be documented at a local level between the staff member and their supervisor or manager, for example varying start and finish times from '9am to 5pm' to '7am to 3pm'.

What can I do if my request is declined?

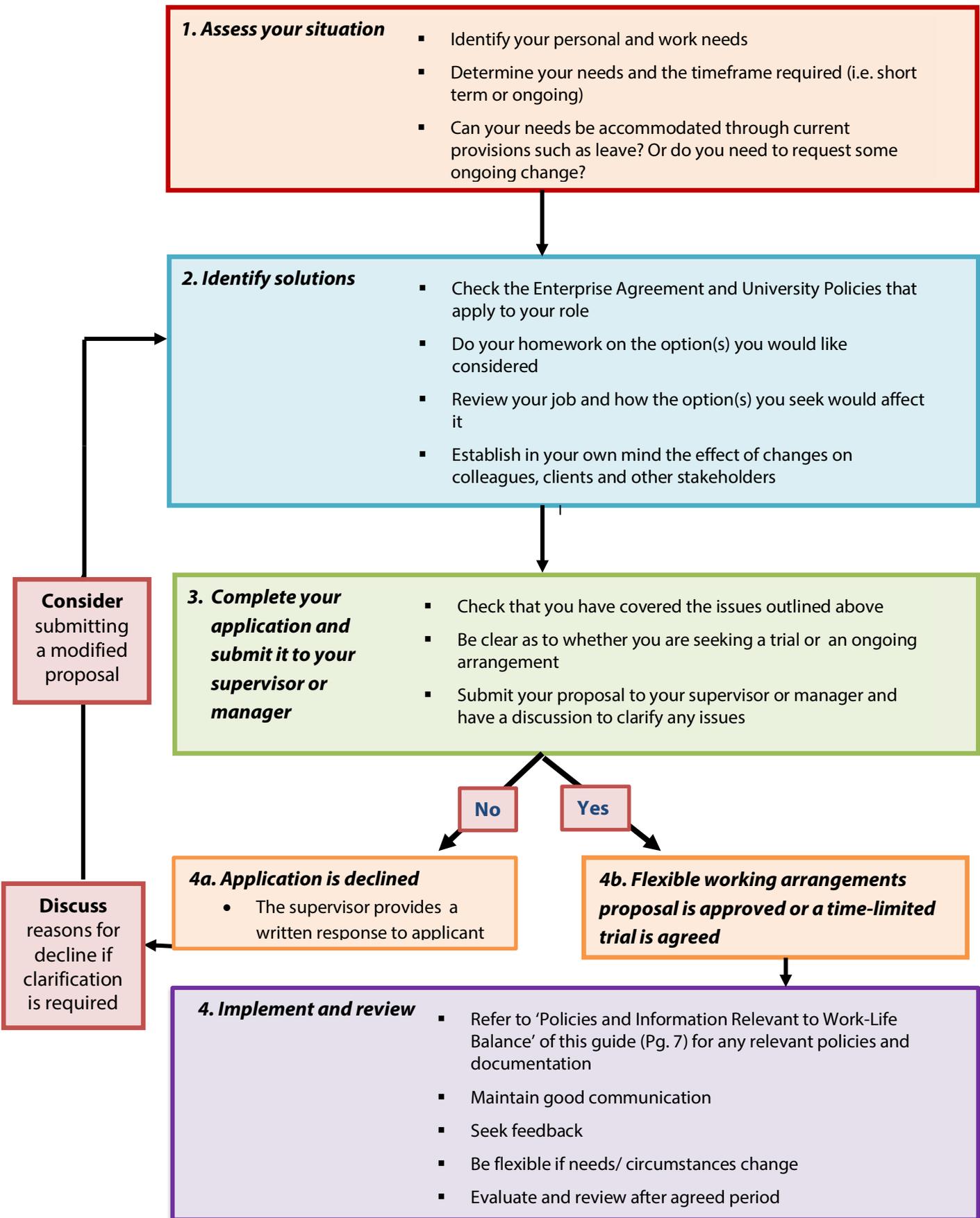
Your supervisor or manager may decline your request if they consider that there are reasonable business grounds to do so. These grounds could include, but are not limited to, cost, lack of adequate replacement staff, loss of efficiency and negative impact on customer service.

If your application is declined, you can request a review of your application from your supervisor or manager which could include consideration of alternatives that may be viable for you, the work unit and the University.

Policies and Information Relevant to Work-Life Balance

<p>Work Arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part-time work• Job Sharing• Flexitime• Flexible working hours• Work from Home• Change of work location <p>Family/Carer Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breastfeeding• Childcare support for women academic staff• Parental Leave• Personal Leave – carer’s leave• Compassionate Leave• Supporting Parents at ACU Information Kit <p>Phased Retirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Retirement Contract Agreement• Transition to Retirement <p>Community Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paid outside work and community service voluntary outside work policy• Civic/Community Service Leave	<p>Study and Personal/Professional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study Support for General Staff• Academic Staff Study Support• Professional Learning for Academic Staff• Professional Development for Professional Staff• Research Awards for Female Academic Staff• Job Rotation for general staff• External Secondment• Internal Secondment <p>Other Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Realtime Health• ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement• You can contact the EAP directly on 1800 81 87 28 (24 hour service) or go to their website AccessEAP
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Flowchart for Requesting a Flexible Working Arrangement



Request for a Flexible Working Arrangement Pro-forma

Steps for making an application

1. Please read the University's [Working Flexibly@ACU Guide](#) and the [Flexible Working Arrangements Policy](#) prior to completing this form.
2. Have an initial discussion with your supervisor or manager regarding your request.
3. Complete and submit this form and include any supplementary information and/or documentation to support the application.
4. Include a completed 'Working from Home Agreement' (which includes a WHS Inspection Checklist for Home Workstations) if requesting a work from home arrangement.
5. Discuss your application with your supervisor or manager.

Personal Details

Name:

Staff number:

Job Title:

Nominated Supervisor or Manager:

I would like to apply to access a work and life balance arrangement that is different to my current working arrangements.

I request the following changes to my working arrangements:

(Include your current work arrangements, your proposed work arrangements and any additional equipment required to implement the proposed arrangement)

I provide the following reasons for the changes which I seek:

Date arrangement is proposed to commence, if approved:

Is the request for a permanent or temporary arrangement?

Date arrangement will conclude, if temporary:

In signing this request I declare that the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and I acknowledge that my request may be refused on reasonable business grounds.

Name:

Date:

Signature: _____

Submit this request to your supervisor or manager