Flexible Work Options (FWO) – Employee Tool Kit

Plymouth State University recognizes the importance of flexibility in the workplace for staff. Flexible work options (FWO) offer a way to provide excellent customer service while managing people, time, space, and workload in an effective and efficient manner.

Potential Benefits of Flexible Work
- Increased employee initiative
- Increased productivity
- Increased loyalty and morale
- Increased employee satisfaction
- Expand number of hours office is open for customers
- Uninterrupted time for getting work done
- Reduced absenteeism
- Reduced turnover
- Reduced overtime/comp time
- Decrease in workplace stress by being able to better balance work and personal responsibilities
- Continuous time for getting work done without impacting customer service
- Greater commitment to the organization

Eligibility
- Full-time, regular exempt and non-exempt staff who have successfully completed their probationary period
- Employees that meets or exceeds performance standards: most recent review must be Fully Satisfactory or above.
- Supervisor assesses job needs (both department and customer) and makes final decision regarding approval
- Flexible work is not appropriate/available for all positions or situations
- Employees are not required to participate unless part of the conditions of employment

The grievance procedure shall not be used to review the substantive merits of an administrative judgment, evaluation, or other discretionary act or decision, except as may be necessary when a violation of a nondiscrimination policy is alleged. (see the PSU Employee Relations – Complaint/Grievance policy at: http://www.usnh.edu/olpm/PSU/V.Pers/D.htm.)

Guidelines for Success
1. FWO should support the department/unit goals, as well as those of the University.
2. Understand that not every job is appropriate for a flexible work arrangement nor is every employee.
3. Talk with your supervisor about your potential request.

Your Flexible Work Proposal Should Address:
- How flexible work can contribute to the overall effectiveness of the department and/or the flow of work
- Why FWO make sense for your position
- A photo of your intended work space
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- Documentation of Internet Access, at (XXX) speed or higher.
- If using a non-PSU-provided computer, current virus protection and security must be documented.
- Challenges that you could foresee from a flexible work arrangement and suggestions you have to deal with those challenges
- Concerns your supervisor might have with your proposal and suggestions you have to deal with those concerns
- How your key responsibilities and tasks lend themselves to a flexible work arrangement: attach a copy of your current PDQ, highlighting the duties to be completed remotely: the percentages should align with the number of days intended for flexible work
- How your customers would be impacted by a change in your schedule and how you will make sure that customer service needs are met
- If you are a supervisor – describe how you will take care of those duties if you have a flexible work arrangement
- Could your work/life balance be improved through flexible work? How will a flexible work arrangement enhance your ability to get your work done?
- What type of flexible work arrangement would meet these needs? Why?

Additional Questions to Discuss with Your Supervisor
- How will a flexible work arrangement impact others in your area, including your supervisor?
- Are there busy times or projects in your area that may be impacted by your arrangement? What changes would you need to make during busy times to help with workflow?
- Do you understand that departmental needs may require you to be in the office when you are scheduled to work from home?
- Will there be an impact on coverage when others are out of the office for sickness, leaves or vacation? What will you need to do to help with coverage?
- How should others in your area be involved in determining out how the workflow might need to change?
- What arrangements need to be made if questions arise in your absence?
- Are there core hours where everyone needs to be in the office?
- Are you part of a team that would require matching schedules for all involved?
- How can you be sure that you are reachable when you are not scheduled to work or if you are working from home?
- Are you able to work without direct supervision as needed?
- Are you organized, self-motivated and flexible enough to work by yourself or non-traditional hours?
- How will you communicate with your supervisor?
- How will you talk with your supervisor about issues that arise about your work or the flexible work arrangement?
- Do you understand that dependent care responsibilities are not to interfere with regular work duties?
- If switching back to a traditional work schedule what is the time frame for transition? Employee has up to two weeks to transition from teleworking to on site work.
FLEXIBLE WORK OPTIONS

**Flextime**

*Start time and end time of an employee’s work day vary or the days of the week an employee works are varied*

- Employee works 7.5/8 hours per day.
- Need to make sure that FLSA implications (break times, lunch time and comp time) are addressed for non-exempt (hourly) employees.

**Considerations for Flextime**

- Working outside of normal business hours
- Communication between employee, supervisor, others in the office, customers
- Ability to supervise employee
- Supervisor’s ability to evaluate work of employee
- Application of University policies (holiday, vacation and sick leave; curtailed operations)
- Overtime obligations for non-exempt employees (working more than 40 hours in a work week)
- How often will there be a review of the flexplace arrangement?

**Compressed Workweek (for Non-Exempt Employees)**

*Work is completed in fewer than five full work days per week*

- Regular hours worked are extended to allow the employee to have a half-day or full day off
- 15-minute breaks are allowed every half-day of work, along with 30-60 minutes off for a lunch break
- Employees may work more than 8 hours per day as long as they do not work more than 40 hours a week.
- Payment for University holidays is 8 hours; some variations in compressed workweek schedules may occur due to holidays
- If an employee works 10-hour days and needs to take sick and/or vacation time, 10 hours of leave time must be used
- Examples include: four (4) 10-hour work days per week and four (4) 9-hour days with one 4-hour day per week

**Considerations for Compressed Workweek**

- Working outside of normal business hours
- Communication between employee, supervisor, others in the office, customers
- Supervision of employee
- Supervisor’s ability to evaluate work of employee
- Application of University policies (holiday, earned time and sick pool; curtailed operations)
- Overtime obligations for employees (working more than 40 hours in a work week)
- Coverage of office/customers when person is out of the office
- How often will there be a review of the telework arrangement?
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Telework
Work arrangement that allows an employee to work from home or another designated site for all or some portion of his or her scheduled work hours
NOTE: This does not apply to situations where an employee may work at home on an occasional basis. Those arrangements should be approved on a case-by-case basis and do not require formal authorization.

Questions/Considerations for Telework
- Are you able to work effectively without direct supervision?
- How will communication with co-workers and supervisors be handled? Phone/email/chat etc.?
- Is the proposed telecommuting agreement in the best interests of the University/department or is it only being proposed for your convenience?
- Where will you be working? Be prepared to provide a photo of your work space.
- Does the setting encourage a safe and effective situation?
- What is the anticipated duration of the arrangement?
- What is the proposed work schedule at the telework site?
- How often will you be expected to return to the regular work location?
- What agreement needs to be made between you and your supervisor regarding work to be done, assessment and monitoring of work results and employee performance?
- What equipment is required for you to effectively perform your job?
- What equipment will you supply? What are you expecting the University to supply?
- What office supplies will you need?
- What additional services will be required – internet, phone, fax, copier? You will be responsible for paying for additional services.
- What arrangements need to be made for maintenance and service of any university-owned equipment used at the site?
- Do you have remote access to your workplace computer?
- If you work with sensitive or confidential information, how will you ensure the security of the data?
- What provisions need to be in place to prevent unauthorized access to confidential or sensitive information or data?
- Do you understand that care-giving responsibilities are not to be part of the telework agreement?
- Are you non-exempt or exempt? If non-exempt, are there issues that need to be considered about overtime.
- Are you familiar with use of vacation, earned time, sick pool, sick leave and holiday policies and how they will be applied to the agreement?
- How often will there be a review of the telework arrangement?
- What cost savings might there be for you or Plymouth State as a result of your flexible work arrangement?
Sample Flexible Work Options Proposal
A well-composed proposal should include a plan that will be acceptable to all in the department and customers.

TO: Supervisor
FROM: Your Name
SUBJECT: Flexible Work Arrangements Proposal
DATE:

I am proposing adjusting my work schedule using the following flexible work option (please circle) FLEXTIME COMPRESSED WORKWEEK TELEWORK.

Below are the potential benefits I have identified for all involved. (You may choose to include opportunities for improved cost effectiveness, process improvement, customer service, etc.)

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List reasons why you believe the arrangement will be successful.

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Challenges you think may arise and how you propose dealing with them.

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List reasons why a flexible work arrangement is important for your work/life balance.

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I would like to discuss this proposal with you and address any concerns you have. I understand that the success of the department/area/office needs to come first and that you will determine whether or not this fits into the attainment of our goals. I also understand that the arrangement will likely undergo a trial period and adjustments may need to be made. There may also be times when the arrangement may need to be suspended due to needs of others in the office or our customers. If this arrangement is accepted, a FWO form needs to be completed and returned to the Human Resources office.