



CONSIDERING INDIVIDUAL FLEXIBILITY AGREEMENT REQUESTS

Individual Flexibility Agreements allow staff members and the University to vary employment conditions including hours, patterns and locations of work to meet the teaching, research and administrative priorities of the University and staff members' personal commitments, taking into account the operational requirements of the team and work area.

This guidance document should be read in conjunction with the [Fact Sheet - Returning to Work and Flexible Working](#)

When considering proposals for flexible working arrangements, it's important to be consistent and follow a set process. This will help you achieve the best outcome for your team and individual staff members.

The steps below can help you streamline and formalise this process. Ideally, you may have already raised the topic of flexibility options in a team meeting or planning day so that everyone in the team understands the University's approach to flexibility and how we can embrace new ways of working to ensure we have an engaged workforce and excellent outcomes both at work and in our personal lives.

Step 1 – A staff member has requested flexibility in their working conditions

Work through with the staff member what outcomes they are seeking and how an Individual Flexibility Agreement will help them achieve this. You might like to ask them to send you a brief email including details of the request, what changes they want to make to their current work arrangements and what support they think they might need. It is also important to understand the reason for the request so you can consider whether the proposed Individual Flexibility Agreement will work.

Step 2 - Consider the proposal: does it suit their role and your team?

When considering the proposal, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the role suited to this kind of arrangement on a longer-term? If not, why not?
- Does the staff member need to be in the workplace at all times? If not, when are they expected to be on campus?
- How will this arrangement affect the rest of the team and our ability to deliver our shared objectives?

In cases where you have one or several Individual Flexibility Agreements in place in the team, you might like to consider job sharing arrangements

Considering a job share proposal

Job sharing arrangements involve extra thought and planning. When considering a proposal for job sharing, consider the following questions:

- How can the work be divided? e.g. shared or split responsibilities
- Are job sharers able to increase hours when each one is on leave?
- Will service quality be affected by a job share arrangement?
- Will the arrangement take advantage of staff members' individual strengths?
- How will I determine outcomes and objectives for each staff member?

Step 3 - Meet with the staff member to discuss their request

Have an individual discussion with the staff member about their request. This will give you a chance to understand their request fully and raise any potential issues with them. It will also give your staff member the chance to add any details they left out of their proposal (e.g. personal reasons they didn't want to put in writing). An individual discussion also makes it easier to discuss and negotiate the staff member's request, especially if not all requests can be accommodated.

Negotiate the Individual Flexibility Agreement

When negotiating an Individual Flexibility Agreement with a staff member, make sure the decision-making process is transparent. Consider how to accommodate the request, rather than why it can't be done. Ensure the staff member is aware of all the factors that will influence your decision, including:

- their reasons for requesting the arrangement (e.g. personal circumstances)
- any operational requirements related to their role
- how the proposed arrangement would affect the rest of the team and service delivery

Step 4 - Communicate your decision

If you are happy to endorse the request, you can do so in your discussion meeting. However, if you need more time to gather information and consider the request, give the employee a time frame for when you will get back to them. This might be necessary if you have to consider multiple requests from the team and put in place a roster to ensure business continuity.

Once you've made a decision to endorse or deny the request, it's important to clearly communicate this with the staff member and explain why you have reached the decision. You should also clarify, if you have approved the request, how long the agreement will be in place for as Individual Flexibility Agreements are intended to be temporary and reviewed periodically.

Once the request is approved, please work with your staff member to complete the **Home-Based Work form** for professional staff or **Home-Based Work form** for academic staff, as applicable. This form is used to approve a staff member to work from a location other than an ANU campus. If your staff member is requesting to vary their work pattern or hours, please complete the **Application to change hours pattern** form as this will be needed to ensure the staff member is paid appropriately.

Share your decision with the team

When an Individual Flexibility Agreement is approved, you should communicate with the rest of your team so that everyone is aware of arrangements and impacts on the team. You do not need to share individual details, including the reason for the agreement, particularly if the individual concerned has asked for flexibility for personal reasons. For the agreement to be successful, clear communication and shared expectations across the team is important. This will help team members support each other to be successful.

For enquiries about this document, please contact:

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Related resources:

[Individual Flexibility Agreement](#)

[Fact Sheet – Returning to Work and Flexible Working Arrangements](#)