



## Guidelines for Flexible Working Request

The University of Bolton believes that flexible working can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity.

From 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 all employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service have the right to request flexible working and to have their request considered seriously by their employer.

To be eligible to make a request for flexible working, you must have 26 weeks' continuous service with the University. Before making an application, you should first read the following notes. **You can only make one request in every 12-month period.**

You should note that any request submitted will normally be considered within 28 days from first receipt. The whole process (including any appeal) will normally be dealt with within three months. You should therefore ensure that you submit your application well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect.

It will help your line manager to consider your request if you provide as much information as you can about your desired working pattern. It is important that you complete all the questions contained in the flexible working application form, as otherwise your application may not be valid. When completing sections 3 & 4, think about what effect your change in working pattern will have both on the work that you do and on your colleagues. Once you have completed the form, you should immediately forward it to your line manager, with a copy to Human Resources (please keep a copy for your own records).

Your line manager has 28 days after the day your application is received in which to arrange a meeting with you to discuss your request. Please note if the request is granted the new legislation means that the changes made can now be **'subject to review'** or **'a right to end the arrangement.'**

Should your application not be approved, you cannot submit another application until a period of 12 months has elapsed.

### Requests for Flexible Working

A request for flexible working could include a request for a change to the number of hours that the employee works, a request for a change to the pattern of hours worked, a request to job share or a request to perform some or all of the work from the employee's home. This is not an exhaustive list.

All requests must be made in writing by email or letter through completing the Flexible Working Application Form, which is available from the HR section of the University of Bolton Website. Once completed please send to your Line manager/AGL/Head of Department and a copy (for information) to Human Resources.

### **Meeting to Discuss a Flexible Working Request**

Once the line manager receives the completed request form, he / she will arrange a meeting to consider the request, unless a request can be considered and approved without the need for a meeting.

An employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a union representative at any meeting to consider the request for the flexible working. The meeting should take place in a private meeting room so that the discussion is kept away from other employees. The aim of the meeting is to find out more about the proposed working arrangements and how they could be of benefit to both the employee and organisation.

### **Outcome of a Flexible Working Request**

After the meeting, the line manager will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to the employee and to the organisation against any adverse impact of implementing the changes. 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 his/her working pattern.

The employee will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as is reasonably practicable after the meeting, but no later than 14 days after the meeting. The request may be granted in full or in part: for example, the line manager considering the request 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.

### **Reasons for Turning Down a Flexible Working Request**

The line manager will give reasons for the rejection of any request. Those reasons can be one or more of the following business reasons, which are:

- the burden of additional costs;
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental impact on quality;
- a detrimental impact on performance;
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;

- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work; and
- a planned structural change to the business.

A request may only be rejected for one of the above business reasons. If the Line Manager is unsure then advice can be sought from Human Resources.

### **Flexible working requests that are granted**

If the request is granted, the employee and the line manager will discuss how and when the changes will take effect. Any changes to terms and conditions will be put in writing and sent to the employee as an amendment to his/her contract of employment/written statement of terms and conditions of employment as soon as is reasonably practicable. Although successful requests may result in a permanent change to the employees terms and conditions, it is also possible to make any changes 'subject to review' or a 'right to end the arrangement', therefore on a temporary basis.

### **Right of Appeal**

Employees who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their flexible working request are entitled to lodge an appeal. They must do so in writing to HR within 14 days of being notified of the outcome. The appeal will normally be heard within 14 days following submission and the employee will be informed of the outcome of the appeal within 14 days of the appeal meeting.

These time limits may be extended where both the employee and employer are in agreement. For example, the relevant manager and the employee may agree to extend the time limit to give the employee a trial period on the flexible working arrangements.

### **Further Information**

For further information go to: [The right to request flexible working | Advice and guidance | Acas](#) or contact a member of the HR Team.

**These guidelines will be revised annually and may be amended as appropriate. These guidelines do not form any part of any contract of employment.**

**October 2014**