



# Flexible Working Policy

## Introduction

We acknowledge the mutual benefits of flexible working and are committed to developing an enabling culture where a healthy work-life balance is the norm and where colleagues are empowered to work in an agile manner to do their best work.

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## 1 Purpose

Many roles in the University are already flexible by their nature or contractual status. The extent of flexibility available will always be balanced with the impact on teams and the requirement to be present on our campuses. This means that for some colleagues, especially those who deliver a direct service, it may not be possible to take advantage of the full range of flexible working options.

This policy sets out the spirit in which flexible working arrangements should be considered and that managers and colleagues share responsibility for making flexibility work, which will mean that flexible working arrangement may sometimes need to change or that we need to think creatively about how to provide flexibility.

## 2 Scope

This policy applies to all university colleagues, from the first day of employment.



### 3 Types of Flexible Working

There are many ways of working flexibly and the most common requests include:

- A change of the hours of work (increase or decrease).
- A change to the times when you are required to work.
- Career Break – an extended period of unpaid time away from work.

Two requests to vary your working hours may usually be made in a rolling 12-month period to limit disruption to teams and services.

We allow flexibility on the number of requests that can be made to working patterns (where the hours stay the same) on the understanding that they can sometimes be difficult to get right.

### 4 Submitting a Request

You should discuss your initial thoughts with your manager as early as possible to explore how flexible working may work in practice. Discussions should be approached with an open mind to fully consider how the proposed working arrangement, or an alternative may be accommodated.


In advance of submitting a request, you are responsible for ensuring you are fully aware of any impacts this may have on your contractual terms and conditions (e.g. pay/annual leave/pension implications). Advice or support may be sought from either the People Team or Trade Union representatives, where required.

If you wish to make a formal request, please complete the Flexible Working Application Form, in good time ahead of any proposed start dates for a new arrangement.

To help your manager consider your request please provide as much information as possible about your desired working pattern. Your application, upon completion, must be submitted to your manager (please keep a copy for your own records).

### 5 Considering a Request

We have a duty to consider applications seriously but there is no *automatic* right to work flexibly. Your manager will require to consider the request in conjunction with your People Partner and Dean/Director, to ensure consistency and adequate staffing levels.



If approved, your manager will confirm by emailing the completed Flexible Working Application Form to the People Team [peopleteam@napier.ac.uk](mailto:peopleteam@napier.ac.uk) copying in your Dean/Director.

Their approval may be given with a trial period attached or with an adjustment to the original request (agreed in discussion with you).

The People Team will confirm the change of terms and conditions in writing to you and outline details of any agreed trial period for the changes.

If further information or consideration is required a meeting will be arranged as outlined below.

## 6 Formal Meeting to Discuss Request

If the request needs to be explored further, within 10 working days of the application, your manager will arrange to meet with you to explore the desired work pattern in depth, and to discuss any options or alternatives available where initial proposals cannot be supported.

You can bring a work colleague or trade union representative to the meeting.

Within 10 working days of the meeting, your manager will confirm the outcome in writing either:

- Their agreement to the new work pattern with confirmation of a start date, or;
- They will provide clear business ground(s) as to why the application cannot be accepted and the justifiable reasons for refusing the request.

The application process should take no more than two months from initial submission through to conclusion; however, most cases should be actioned promptly.

Where an application is approved, the People Team will confirm the change to terms in conditions in writing to you as above.

Managers retain the right to make the final decision on whether a flexible working request can be supported within their team/area. Applications can only be refused for valid and objective reasons where it is considered that a change to your work pattern would adversely impact the University on one or more of the following areas:

- The burden of additional costs.
- An inability to reorganise work amongst existing colleagues.
- An inability to recruit additional colleagues.

- A detrimental impact on quality.
- A detrimental impact on performance.
- A detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand.
- Insufficient work available for the periods the colleague proposes to work.
- Planned structural changes to the University's business.

Where a refusal is given, your manager must provide a justification (under one or more of the above reasons) of the specific reasons for the refusal.

## 7 Appeal Procedure

You have the right of appeal against the decision not to accept your request for flexible working, within 10 working days of the decision being notified to you.

The appeal will be heard by the Dean/Director or another senior manager within the department, if appropriate. They will carefully consider the grounds for the appeal, and you will be notified in writing of the decision within 10 working days.

The decision of the Appeal Manager is final and there is no further stage of appeal.

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