



Flexible Working Policy and Procedure

March 2017

Version 2: Revised February 2017 – all staff now eligible to request flexible working (Agreed at March 2017 Joint JNCC)

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1 Introduction

West Lothian College recognises the increasing demands placed on staff to combine full time work with undertaking domestic or other caring responsibilities. A range of provision has been developed over time to help staff balance their work and home life commitments. This includes the Family Leave Policy and the Maternity Policy.

This policy applies to all staff. There is no automatic right to work flexibly as there will always be circumstances when it will not be possible to accommodate the desired work pattern. However, West Lothian College has a statutory duty to consider such applications seriously and wherever possible it will endeavour to find satisfactory solutions which suit both the member of staff and the College.

Advice on this policy or related topics is available from HRM.

2 Why do people work part-time or flexible working patterns?

2.1 There are many reasons why some people might want to consider the option of working part-time or flexible patterns.

These include:

- childcare responsibilities or caring for dependant relatives
- healthcare problems or disabilities
- easing down to retirement
- further education or training
- pursuing other interests or activities.

3 What benefits are there for the College?

3.1 The benefits to the College can include:

- the retention of skilled and experienced members of staff and a more efficient and flexible use of staff resources
- better cover for sickness, annual and special leave
- access to a wider pool of potential employees and therefore a wider pool of experience and skill.

4 What types of part-time or flexible working arrangements are available?

4.1 **Permanent Part-time Working** is an arrangement where staff work less than the usual FTE hours

- it can be any number and arrangement of hours
- it can be worked in any grade of post.

4.2 **Job sharing** is a form of part-time working in which the responsibilities of one job are split between two (or more) people. The specific duties covered by the post can be shared between the job sharers or split so that each has slightly different responsibilities

- converting full-time posts into part-time job shared posts can help to provide opportunities for part-time work all grades and groups
- job share partners would be employed on the same grade but could be appointed and paid on different salary points within the grade depending on experience.

4.3 **Part year/Sessional Working** is an arrangement whereby staff are appointed to work less than a full year. The decision as to which weeks will be worked would be the subject of agreement between the Manager and the member of staff concerned

- This arrangement could suit those members of staff with school age children. Staff would work full-time or part-time during the 40 weeks of College term and not at all during the College holidays.

4.4 **Temporary Part-time Working** could assist staff returning to work after a period of ill health by allowing them to ease back to full-time duties gradually, probably increasing their hours over an agreed period until they are back working full-time. It could also suit a member of staff who needed to reduce their hours for a short period to care for a sick relative.

4.5 **Voluntary Reduced Time** would allow a member of staff to work less than the standard week, e.g. four days rather than five. This may suit a member of staff nearing retirement age or someone who wishes to pursue outside interests.

4.6 **Annualised Hours** is where a member of staff works an agreed number of hours during the course of a year, but those hours can be spread unevenly throughout the year

- This could be a mixture of part-time and full-time working (e.g. full-time during a department's busiest period and part-time for the remainder of the year).

4.7 **Flexi Time** allows staff more flexibility on a day to day basis. It also allows staff to accrue hours that can be taken off at an agreed time.

4.8 **Home working** this allows staff to work from home on a regular basis. Home working will only be considered and approved where it is considered appropriate to do so e.g. to work on a specific project or work activity can be carried out off site. Staff should only undertake home working when their application for Flexible working has been approved.

If there is a requirement to work from home on an ad-hoc basis this should only be carried out with the express approval and agreement of your Line Manager.

Employees undertaking homeworking should also refer to the 'Lone Working Policy' and complete the necessary 'risk assessment' forms.

5 Applications to Work Flexibly

5.1 Eligibility

All staff have the right to request to work flexibly in order to help them balance work and family life.

The College is only required to consider one application to work flexibly from each member of staff in any 12 month period. Additional requests within a twelve month period may be considered at the discretion of the Manager in conjunction with HRM.

5.2 Scope of Flexibility

An eligible member of staff may request:

- a change to the hours he/she works
- a change to the times when he/she is required to work
- to work from home

Applications for a change in working pattern will not always require a significant alteration. For example, a parent may simply wish to start work half an hour later to take his/her child to school and make up the time later in the day.

5.3 The Procedure

An eligible member of staff who wishes to apply for flexible working should submit a completed application for Flexible Working Form (Appendix 1) to the HRM Manager outlining the reason for the request; the proposed start date; changes requested; effect these changes may have on the College and how these effects could be dealt with. A standard form should be completed and is available on the HRM section (Policies and Procedures) of Serengeti.

Within 14 days of receiving the written application the HRM Manager will arrange to meet with the member of staff and their Manager with the intention of discussing the desired work pattern and how best it might be accommodated. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to consider other alternative working patterns should there be problems in accommodating the desired work pattern outlined in the member of staff's application.

The member of staff has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague employed by the college.

The HRM Manager will write to the employee within 14 days following the date of the meeting either to agree to a new work pattern, the date from which the variation will take effect and, where the change is time limited, the end date of the variation; or to provide a clear business ground(s) as to why the application cannot be accepted and the reasons why the ground(s) applies in the circumstances along with details of how an appeal can be made. Where a new work pattern is agreed HRM will issue a notice of a variation of contract.

A variation to a work pattern may be made on a permanent or time limited basis. A trial period in the new work pattern may be helpful. The intended duration of the change will be made clear and recorded at the time and may involve a change in the conditions of service of the member of staff.

An application may only be refused on one or more of the following grounds which are set out in the Employment Act 2002. Further advice on the application of these grounds within the College should be sought from HRM:

- The burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to re-organise work amongst existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality or performance
- Insufficient work during the hours the employee wants to work
- Planned structural changes

A member of staff who is dissatisfied with the outcome of his/her application has the right to appeal to the Principal who may delegate authority within 14 days of the outcome being notified to him/her.

If an appeal is made the Senior Nominated Officer will arrange to meet with the member of staff within 14 days of receipt of the written notification of appeal and will notify the member of staff of the outcome within 14 days of the meeting.

The response times described in this policy are those required by statute. The member of staff and the HRM Manager may jointly choose to vary from these.

6 What should I do if I am interested in changing my hours for other reasons?

- 6.1 If you are interested in changing your hours, either permanently or on a temporary basis, you should first talk to your Manager about the possibilities within your present post or work area. You will not be able to change your hours of work in your present post unless there is agreement by your Manager. Requests to reduce or change your hours of work can only be met if they suit the operational needs of your group. If it is not possible to accommodate your request within the group you may if you wish write to the Human Resource Manager specifying the change you are seeking. The Human Resource Manager will seek to match your request with suitable notified vacancies as they arise.
- 6.2 Before finalising any arrangement to reduce your hours you should make sure you are fully aware of the implications of part-time working on your salary and conditions of service. You can check this out with the HRM or your Trade Union.

Flexible Working Application Form

Employee Details (to be completed by employee)

Name	
Job Title	Grade

Details of Application (to be completed by employee)

Please give the reason(s) for your Flexible Working application

Please give details of the working arrangements you would prefer:
How many hours would you like to work each week?
_____hours
How would you like these hours to be split e.g. mornings, afternoons, 2.5 days per week?

- *Depending on operational requirements of the service your line manager may not be able to agree to your preferred working arrangements, however, any problems with your preferences will be discussed with you.*

Signed _____ Date _____ <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Employee</i></p>
<i>When you have completed this form please then pass to HRM. You will normally be told if the application has been approved and given a copy of the completed form within 4 weeks of the form being received by the manager.</i>

Approval (to be completed by HRM Manager and signed by Line Manager:

Signed:	HRM Manager
Decision	<i>Application approved/not approved</i>
Reason(s) for decision if not approved or if approved but working arrangements are different from those requested (in this case please detail the arrangements you would prefer as well as why this is the case)	
Signed _____ Date _____ <i>Manager</i>	
<i>This form should be completed and copied to the employee within 4 weeks of receiving it.</i>	