

FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS POLICY 2024

The Vice-President (Operations) and Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor as delegates of the Senate of the University of Sydney, adopts the following policy.

Dated: 13 June 2024 (commencing 15 July 2024)

Last amended:

Position: Vice-President (Operations) and Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Name: Professor Stephen Garton and Professor Annamarie Jagose

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1 Name of policy

This is the Flexible Working Arrangements Policy 2024.

2 Commencement

This policy commences on 15 July 2024.

3 Policy is binding

Except where expressly stated, this policy binds the University and staff.

4 Statement of intent

- (1) The University:
 - (a) recognises the benefits that flexible working arrangements can offer to individuals, teams and the University, through:
 - (i) improved work-life balance and staff wellbeing;
 - (ii) increased job satisfaction;
 - (iii) enhanced staff engagement and sense of belonging;
 - (iv) improved staff productivity;
 - (v) greater workforce diversity;
 - (vi) enhanced ability to attract and retain talented people.
 - (b) is committed to supporting flexibility in work arrangements where reasonably possible and where operational requirements can be met;
 - (c) recognises the right of staff to disconnect from work outside scheduled work hours and during periods of approved leave.
- (2) This policy sets out:
 - (a) principles for flexible working arrangements for staff working within Australia;
 - (b) a framework for planning, managing, and supporting flexible working arrangements; and
 - (c) the responsibilities of:
 - (i) staff with flexible work arrangements; and
 - (ii) managers in implementing flexible working arrangements in their teams while ensuring operational needs are met.

5 Application

- (1) This policy applies to the following staff whose employment is based within Australia:
 - (a) all continuing and fixed term staff; and
 - (b) casual staff engaged on a regular and systematic basis.
- (2) This policy does not apply to any staff whose employment is based outside Australia.

Note: For further information about overseas work, contact the [Immigration and Global Mobility](#) team in Human Resources.

6 Definitions

carer	has the meaning given in the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 (NSW)
delegate	has the meaning given in the University of Sydney (Delegations of Authority) Rule , which at the date of this policy is: the position to which a delegation is given.
disability	has the meaning given in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 .
Enterprise Agreement	The current University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement .
flexible work arrangement	a change to standard hours, pattern or location of work which enables a staff member to better manage work and other life priorities.
flexitime	an arrangement over a 4-week period that provides flexibility to Professional staff to vary the times they work their ordinary hours within the Enterprise Agreement span of hours. Note: see flexitime arrangements for Professional staff in Schedule 4 of the Enterprise Agreement .
FTE	full time equivalent, which is the hours worked by an employee relative to full time hours. Also known as employment fraction. Note: For example, a staff member working full time has an FTE of 1.0. A staff member working 4 of the 5 standard work days in a working week has an FTE of 0.8.
HR Partner	a member of the Human Resources partnering team. Note: See the staff intranet for a contact details of the HR Partner team.
hybrid working	an agreed pattern of work where staff regularly work both remotely (i.e. not on University managed workplaces), and on campus or their usual place of work on University managed workplaces.

manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the person nominated by the University from time to time as the staff member's supervisor, or nominated to act as the staff member's manager for a particular matter. for the University of Sydney Business School, the Deputy Dean is the nominated manager for all academic staff. for all other faculties the relevant Head of School is the nominated manager for academic staff. for University schools, the Head of School and Dean is the nominated manager for academic staff. for clinical schools in the Faculty of Medicine and Health, the Head of School and Dean of Sydney Medical School is the nominated manager for academic staff. for research centres in the Faculty of Medicine and Health, the Centre Director is the nominated manager for academic staff.
remote working	<p>not on University-managed workplaces or University lands.</p> <p>Note: <u>refer to Clause 215 – 220 of the Enterprise Agreement.</u></p>
University lands	<p>has the meaning given in the Campus Access Policy which at the date of this policy is:</p> <p>includes any land or road occupied or used by, or in connection with, the University. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all or part of any building or structure; and any land used or occupied in connection with a building or structure.

7 Flexible working principles

- (1) Flexible working arrangements are available to all staff, however not all forms of flexibility may be suitable for all roles.
- (2) Proposals for flexible working arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with this policy and the [Enterprise Agreement](#).
- (3) Flexible working arrangements must balance:
 - (a) the particular circumstances and needs of individual staff members;
 - (b) the requirements of a staff member's role;
 - (c) the working patterns and needs of the relevant organisational unit and team;
 - (d) ways of meeting student, staff and other stakeholder needs; and
 - (e) the University's operational requirements, core activities and strategic priorities.
- (4) The University will support flexible working arrangements wherever reasonably possible and applications will not be unreasonably refused.

- (5) Priority will be given to requests made under the [National Employment Standards](#) of the [Fair Work Act 2009 \(Cth\)](#). These are, in no order of priority, staff members who:
- (a) are the parents, or have responsibility for the care of a child of school age or younger;
 - (b) are carers within the meaning of the [Carers \(Recognition\) Act 2010 \(NSW\)](#);
 - (c) have a disability and/or a chronic medical condition;
 - (d) are 55 years of age or older;
 - (e) are experiencing domestic or family violence;
 - (f) provide care or support to a member of their immediate family or household, which is required because of domestic or family violence; or
 - (g) are pregnant.
- Note:** See the [National Employment Standards](#); [clause 213](#) in the [Enterprise Agreement](#); and the [Family and Domestic Violence Support Procedures](#).
- (6) Flexible work arrangements must not compromise service outcomes to staff and students.
- (7) On campus teaching and related activities are a fundamental part of a University of Sydney education. While academic staff generally have some level of flexibility in determining working arrangements to support achievement of their academic endeavours, academics with teaching duties must give priority to allocated on-campus teaching and other academic responsibilities, unless approved under **subclause 9** of this policy.
- (8) Staff with disabilities will be provided with appropriate resources as determined reasonable by the University to facilitate their flexible work arrangements. The University will cover reasonable costs of these resources.
- Note:** See information on the [staff intranet](#) on Workplace Adjustments and reasonable accommodations. Contact [Staff Health Support](#) for further information.
- (9) Health, safety and wellbeing risks and responsibilities must be considered when assessing and approving flexible working arrangements.
- Note:** See the [individual responsibilities](#) on the safety health and wellbeing intranet.
- (10) Managers must only refuse requests for flexible working arrangements:
- (a) after considering alternative options;
 - (b) after obtaining advice from an HR Partner; and
 - (c) where there are reasonable and demonstrable business grounds to do so.
- Note:** See **clause 11** for more information on refusal of flexible working arrangements.
- (11) The relevant manager must consult [Staff Health Support](#) when assessing the suitability of a flexible working arrangement if:
- (a) advice is required to accommodate a workplace adjustment to support a disability;
- Note:** See the staff intranet information on [Workplace Adjustments](#)
- (b) it is to be implemented in response to an injury or illness; or

- (c) a staff member becomes ill or is injured with reduced capacity to perform the requirements of their role.

Note: See the [Injury and Illness Management Policy](#)

- (12) During periods of remote work, staff must be available and accessible during their scheduled work hours.
- (13) An approved flexible working arrangement does not automatically transfer when a staff member changes roles. The staff member must apply for a new flexible working arrangement with the relevant manager.
- (14) Information about the right to request a flexible working arrangement is available to all staff on the staff intranet and will be provided to new staff during onboarding.
- (15) A staff member will not be forced to enter into a flexible working arrangement.
- (16) In exceptional circumstances, the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Vice-President (Operations) may approve alternative flexible working arrangements in addition to those provided for under this policy.

Note: See [clauses 206-221](#) in the [Enterprise Agreement](#) and the [flexible working arrangements guide for managers](#) on the staff intranet.

8 Flexibility: Leave entitlements

- (1) Staff have access to a range of leave entitlements to support flexibility and balance work, personal, family, community or other responsibilities. These entitlements are set out in:
- (a) the [Leave Policy](#);
 - (b) the [Enterprise Agreement](#); and
 - (c) where applicable, the staff member's employment contract.

Note: For information about applying for and approving leave, see the [staff intranet](#)

9 Flexibility: Working arrangements

- (1) Flexible working arrangements may apply to working hours, patterns of attendance, and work locations.
- Note:** See the guidance for [staff](#) and [managers](#) on flexible working arrangements.
- (2) The following table summarises types of flexible working arrangements available under this policy.

Table 1: Types of flexible working arrangements covered under this policy

Who	Flexible Working Arrangement
(1) All staff	(a) Changing employment fraction (FTE)
	(i) reduced or increased hours of work and employment fraction (FTE), for example working part time;
	Note: See clauses 200-202 of the Enterprise Agreement and the staff intranet

	<p>(ii) a Flexible Working Arrangements Application is required.</p> <hr/> <p>(b) Job sharing</p> <p>(i) where the work of a position is divided between more than one person;</p> <p>Note: See information on job share on the staff intranet.</p> <p>(ii) a Flexible Working Arrangements Application is required.</p> <hr/> <p>(c) Purchasing additional leave</p> <p>(i) purchasing additional weeks of leave during a 12-month period with a pro rata reduction in annual salary (including loadings);</p> <p>Note: See Individual Flexibility Arrangements in clauses 7-11 in the Enterprise Agreement and the staff intranet</p> <p>(ii) a Flexible Working Arrangements Application is required.</p> <hr/> <p>(d) Transition to retirement</p> <p>(i) transition to retirement under a pre-retirement contract for up to five years.</p> <p>Note: See clause 38(l) of the Enterprise Agreement.</p> <p>(ii) a Flexible Working Arrangements Application is required.</p> <hr/> <p>(e) Hybrid working with periods of remote working</p> <p>(i) an agreed pattern of attendance on campus (or the usual place of work on University managed workplaces); and working remotely, depending upon the type of work a team performs.</p> <p>(ii) Hybrid working arrangements and decisions will be guided by the Hybrid Working Principles in Schedule 1 of this Policy, and Clauses 215-220 of the Enterprise Agreement covering professional staff working remotely.</p> <p>(iii) a Flexible Working Arrangements Application is required if hybrid working includes working remotely regularly from interstate; or</p> <p>(iv) a Flexible Working Arrangements Application is required for a proposal to work remotely for an agreed period of time without a pattern of attendance on campus (or the usual place of work on University managed workplaces).</p> <hr/> <p>(f) Individual tailored arrangements not otherwise covered by this policy</p> <p>(i) to meet the specific needs of a staff member, for example a new parent, breastfeeding mother, carer, or to manage a disability.</p> <p>Note: See parental leave information on the staff intranet.</p> <p>(ii) a Flexible Working Arrangements Application is required.</p>
(2) Professional staff	<p>(a) Compressed work week</p> <p>(i) normal hours are worked over fewer days.</p>

	<p>Note: See further information on the staff intranet.</p> <p>(ii) a Flexible Working Arrangements Application is required.</p> <hr/> <p>(b) Part year (seasonal) or annualised employment over a 12-month period</p> <p>(i) may incorporate periods of full-time work, part-time work, and periods when no work is required.</p> <p>Note: See clauses 203-205 in the Enterprise Agreement and to the staff intranet.</p> <p>(ii) a Flexible Working Arrangements Application is required.</p> <hr/> <p>(c) Changing the pattern of working hours</p> <p>(i) to a different roster for working ordinary hours;</p> <p>(ii) through flexitime with variable starting and finishing times, and flexible time off; or</p> <p>(iii) by varying the span of ordinary weekly working hours;</p> <p>Note: See Schedule 4 of the Enterprise Agreement and to the staff intranet for information on hours of work and flexitime.</p> <p>(iv) a Flexible Working Arrangements Application is required for 9.(4)(c)(i) and 9.(4)(c)(iii).</p>
<p>(3) Academic staff with teaching duties</p>	<p>(a) Modified working times</p> <p>(i) modified working times during the University's normal daytime teaching hours may include agreed periods when the staff member is recorded as being unavailable for teaching.</p> <p>Note: Normal University daytime teaching hours are 8.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday. See support material on the staff intranet and the Curriculum Timetabling Policy for information about normal daytime teaching hours and unavailability of staff for teaching.</p> <p>(ii) Academic teachers who have been scheduled to teach must obtain approval for a modified teaching week through a Flexible Working Arrangements Application, explaining the reason they are unavailable.</p> <p>Note: See the curriculum timetabling information on the staff intranet and the flexible working arrangements guide for staff.</p>

10 Duration of flexible working arrangements

- (1) The manager and staff member should agree on the period that the flexible working arrangement will be in place in accordance with this Policy and [clauses 209-210](#) of the [Enterprise Agreement](#).
- (2) A manager may approve a flexible working arrangement:
 - (a) on a trial basis, or for a short term, for example up to six months;
 - (b) for a longer term, for example 12 months; or
 - (c) permanently, for example a change in employment fraction (FTE).

- (3) An agreed short or longer term flexible working arrangement may be renewed if it continues to meet the needs of the staff member and operational requirements.
- (4) A part-time arrangement for staff returning to work after parental leave is valid until the earlier of:
 - (i) six years from commencing part-time work; or
 - (ii) when the child starts school;

Note: See [clauses 319-320](#) in the [Enterprise Agreement](#).

- (5) **Transition to retirement** under a pre-retirement contract may be approved for up to five years.

Note: See [clause 38\(l\)](#) in the [Enterprise Agreement](#).

- (6) A staff member will revert to the usual working arrangements of their substantive position at the end of the agreed period of a temporary flexible working arrangement, unless this has been renewed in accordance with **subclause 10(3)**.
- (7) A staff member must submit a new [Flexible Working Arrangements Application](#) to amend or extend a previously approved application.
- (8) A staff member who wishes to return to their substantive working arrangements before the end of the approved period must submit a new [Flexible Working Arrangements Application](#) to the relevant manager with at least four weeks' notice. A manager may agree to a shorter notice period if this can be accommodated.

11 Implementing a flexible working arrangement

- (1) Staff must discuss proposals for flexible working arrangements with the relevant manager, and obtain their approval, before the arrangements are implemented.
- (2) When applying for a flexible working arrangement, staff must provide:
 - (a) details of the flexibility being requested;
 - (b) the duration of the arrangement;
 - (c) reasons; and
 - (d) any relevant supporting information.
- (3) Where a [Flexible Working Arrangements Application](#) is not required, the arrangement may be confirmed via email.
- (4) Where a [Flexible Working Arrangements Application](#) is required, it must be submitted to the relevant manager or delegate for approval with a minimum of 4 weeks' notice.

Note: See Part 6 of the [University of Sydney \(Delegations of Authority\) Rule](#) for delegations.

- (5) The relevant manager or delegate must provide the staff member with a written response within 21 days of receiving it, or as soon as possible if the request is urgent.
- (6) An application for a flexible working arrangement will be assessed against the flexible working arrangement provisions of the Enterprise Agreement and the Principles in this policy, and will be supported where reasonably possible.

See Enterprise Agreement, [Flexible Working Arrangements clauses 206-221](#)

- (7) An application for flexible working arrangements may only be refused on reasonable business grounds. For example, if the requested arrangement:
 - (a) is too costly to implement;
 - (b) requires a rearrangement of work which could not be accommodated as proposed;
 - (c) results in a significant loss of operational efficiency;
 - (d) conflicts with allocated on-campus teaching or other academic responsibilities; or
 - (e) has a significant impact on student, staff or other stakeholder service.
- (8) A manager or delegate must seek advice from an HR Partner before refusing a request for a flexible working arrangement.
- (9) If the request is refused:
 - (a) the response must be in writing and include detailed reasons;
 - (b) the manager must discuss and consider other options which may be available; and
 - (c) the staff member may make a further application:
 - (i) if the circumstances change; or
 - (ii) after six months from the date of the initial application.

12 Right to disconnect from work

- (1) Staff are not expected to work outside their normal working hours unless:
 - (a) urgent or exceptional circumstances arise; or
 - (b) provided for in the Enterprise Agreement, for example, if staff are receiving a payment under the [Enterprise Agreement](#) to be on call or work overtime.
- (2) Staff are not required to respond to work-related emails, calls, or other forms of communication outside their agreed working hours or whilst on leave.

Note: see clause 225 of the [Enterprise Agreement](#) and *Leading Wellbeing* on the [staff intranet](#)

13 Responsibilities

- (1) **Managers are responsible for:**
 - (a) modelling a positive approach to flexible work;
 - (b) considering a flexible working arrangement request in the context of the particular circumstances of individual staff;
 - (c) assessing the impact of the proposed flexible working arrangement on the staff member's role, team workloads and operation, as well as student and other stakeholder expectations;

Note: For example, an adverse impact on timetabling. See the [Curriculum Timetabling Policy](#) for information on core teaching hours.

- (d) enabling fair and equitable flexible work arrangements as appropriate for all staff, while also considering the individual needs of, and benefits to the staff member making the request;
- (e) prioritising proposals for flexibility from staff members in accordance with the principles in subclause 7(5);
- (f) considering how the University's [digital resources](#) can be used to support a proposed flexible working arrangement. This includes digital ways of working, communicating, and collaborating;
- (g) considering and discussing alternative flexible work options, where a staff member's request does not meet operational requirements;
- (h) establishing clear performance expectations with agreed outcomes and effective communication strategies, including team communication;
- (i) monitoring and periodically evaluating the effectiveness of a flexible working arrangement and discussing changes to the arrangement with the staff member if required;
- (j) considering safety, health and wellbeing risks and benefits when approving a flexible work request; and consulting with [staff health support](#) where required;

Note: See the [safety and wellbeing responsibilities for managers](#).

- (k) contacting their HR Partner for advice where they:
 - (i) consider there are reasonable grounds to refuse a request for a flexible working arrangement; or
 - (ii) may need support in resolving any issues identified in an existing flexible working arrangement.

Note: See the [flexible working arrangements guide for managers](#) on the staff intranet.

(2) Staff members are responsible for:

- (a) discussing a proposal for a flexible working arrangement with their manager, as well as alternative options if the initial proposal is not feasible, before the arrangement is implemented;
- (b) considering, and including in their application, details of:
 - (i) the benefits for themselves; and
 - (ii) how the proposed flexible working arrangement can be reasonably accommodated;
- (c) having a clear understanding of performance expectations and agreed outcomes;
- (d) being available and accessible during scheduled work hours when working remotely;

Note: A staff member with caregiving responsibilities should explore appropriate leave and flexible work options with their supervisor to manage their carer and worker responsibilities. This could include flexible work options under clause 9 and leave arrangements under the [Leave Policy](#).

- (e) maintaining effective communication with their manager and team members, including establishing clear boundaries for communication during non-working hours;

- (f) understanding their safety and wellbeing responsibilities associated with their working arrangements;
Note: See the [safety and wellbeing responsibilities for staff members](#) and the [working remotely – work area setup guide](#) where applicable.
- (g) understanding their responsibilities for the security of the University's information and systems when working remotely;
Note: See the [Cyber Security Policy](#) and the [Cyber security: working from home reference guide](#).
- (h) being aware of the guidelines relating to privacy when working remotely; and
Note: See the [Privacy Policy](#) and the [staff intranet](#).
- (i) for professional staff, where flexitime has been approved, recording all hours worked, including start and finish times, hours accrued, and absences.
Note: See [Schedule 4, clause 11](#) of the [Enterprise Agreement](#)

14 Rescissions and replacements

This document replaces the following, which are rescinded as from the date of commencement of this document:

- (a) Flexible Working Arrangements Policy 2020, which commenced on 26 August 2020.

NOTES

Flexible Working Arrangements Policy 2024

Date adopted: 13 June 2024

Date commenced: 15 July 2024

Date amended:

Original administrator: Chief Human Resources Officer

Review date: 15 July 2029

Rescinded documents: Flexible Working Arrangements Policy 2020

Related documents: [Fair Work Act 2009 \(Cth\)](#)
[National Employment Standards](#)
[Carers \(Recognition\) Act 2010 \(NSW\)](#)
[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
[Enterprise Agreement](#)

[University of Sydney \(Delegations of Authority\) Rule](#)

[Curriculum Timetabling Policy](#)

[Cyber Security Policy](#)

[Family and Domestic Violence Support Procedures](#)

[Injury and Illness Management Policy](#)

[Injury and Illness Management Procedures](#)

[Leave Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Work Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Work Health and Safety Procedures](#)

[The University of Sydney Disability Inclusion Plan 2019-2024](#)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
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SCHEDULE 1 – HYBRID WORKING PRINCIPLES

The University is committed to maintaining flexibility while maximising our capacity to realise our fundamental purpose of delivering outstanding teaching and learning, and conducting excellent research.

The following principles should be used to guide local decision-making:

- (1) hybrid working must balance personal, role and team outcomes. Service outcomes to staff and students cannot be compromised;
- (2) staff and supervisors recognise and value the importance of in-person connection, and acknowledge that attendance at campus is a requirement for reasons including, but not limited to:
 - a) team culture, connection and relationship building
 - b) collaboration
 - c) face-to-face student, colleague, and internal client interactions
 - d) learning and development
 - e) onboarding, training, and welcoming new team members
 - f) maintaining a vibrant campus
- (3) performance is defined by productivity and outcomes, where performance expectations are clear and attention is paid to the quality and quantity of work that is delivered rather than on when, where, or how work is completed.
- (4) staff are transparent about when, where, and how they work, and hybrid work arrangements are reviewed regularly.
- (5) the best hybrid solutions are developed together in teams.

Note: See the staff [intranet](#) and comprehensive flexible working arrangements toolkits which promote teams to discuss and facilitate hybrid working arrangements. This suite of resources supports leaders and staff in crafting flexible solutions that balance University, team, and individual needs.