

Policy Title	Policy and Procedures for Flexible Working Arrangements
Previous title (if any)	UNFPA Work and Life Programme: Flexible Working Arrangements
Policy objective	The purpose of this policy is to foster a work environment that supports staff in managing the demands of their professional and personal life. The policy sets out the available flexible working arrangements that enable UNFPA staff to better deliver UNFPA's mandate.
Target audience	All staff members
Risk control matrix	Control activities that are part of the process are detailed in the Risk Control Matrix
Checklist	N/A
Effective date	1 September 2023
Revision History	Issued: November 2012 Revision 1: 1 February 2022 Revision 2: 1 September 2023
Mandatory revision date	1 September 2026
Policy owner unit	Division for Human Resources
Approval	

Flexible Working Arrangements

I. Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to foster a work environment that supports staff in managing the demands of their professional and personal life. The policy sets out the available flexible working arrangements that enable hybrid-work, reflect the expectations of United Nations Member States, and enable UNFPA staff to better deliver UNFPA's mandate.
2. Flexible working arrangements (FWAs) provide a foundation for work-life harmony and offer UNFPA staff members the flexibility to effectively manage both their professional and personal responsibilities. These arrangements support the recruitment and retention of staff, foster overall staff well-being, and enhance workplace motivation and productivity.

II. Policy

3. This policy outlines the different FWAs available and conditions and procedures to request and approve FWAs. It also identifies control actions to mitigate potential risks related to the process and establishes the following:
 - a. General Provisions applicable to all FWAs;
 - b. Different FWAs available;
 - c. Duration of FWAs;
 - d. Requests for Management Evaluation;
 - e. Description of Alternate Working Arrangements;
 - f. Approval Procedures;
 - g. Roles and Responsibilities; and
 - h. Adjustments of Benefits and Entitlements

A. General Provisions

4. This policy applies to all UNFPA staff members holding a temporary, fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointment.
5. A staff member's employment contract with the organization establishes their official UN duty station of assignment. FWAs must be compatible with duty-station specific and task-specific realities and needs.
6. FWAs are not an entitlement and not all staff members are guaranteed the opportunity to utilize FWAs. All FWAs must be approved by a staff member's manager.

7. Requests for FWAs may be denied for reasons including but not limited to incompatibility with a staff member's functions, the need for physical presence to serve beneficiaries and collaborate with implementing partners and host governments, and access to technology to deliver daily tasks.
8. Each duty station maintains core hours and a common work week during which all staff report to duty. The Executive Director determines the core hours for headquarters. For offices outside of headquarters the core hours and common work weeks are determined locally by the Regional Director, Country Representative or Head of Office, as applicable.
9. FWAs are voluntary adjustments to the regular working hours established at each duty station, and/or place of work, agreed between UNFPA staff members and their managers in accordance with the UN Staff Regulations and Rules and the present policy.
10. FWAs shall put well-being and health (both mental and physical), and safety and security of staff at the center. FWAs can help support physical and mental health of staff serving in challenging work environments and mitigate the risks of burnout and absences.
11. FWAs help UNFPA to attract, retain and motivate highly talented individuals that reflect the diversity of a global workforce. FWAs are part of institutional support for gender equality and help break down barriers for employment, including for persons with disabilities.
12. FWAs are voluntary, initiated by a UNFPA staff member and approved by a staff member's manager. FWAs must be distinguished from alternate working arrangements.
13. Alternate working arrangements (AWA) are mandatory and decided upon by the Organization. AWA may be adopted by UNFPA in the event of local, national, regional or global emergencies. AWA may be adapted to evolving circumstances and may limit staff member access to UNFPA premises to uphold safety and security norms.
14. FWAs are different from part-time work which refers to the overall number of hours worked, or the percentage of working hours on the basis of which the compensation, including salaries, benefits and allowances would be determined as opposed to full-time employment. An individual on part-time work may also avail of FWAs.
15. Managers should promote equal applicability across the workforce so that all staff have fair and equitable access to a range of FWAs.
16. Staff members should schedule meetings during core working hours to the extent possible, to allow for maximum participation of all meeting invitees.
17. FWAs should not result in additional costs for UNFPA.

18. Staff members who request remote working arrangements must have the necessary equipment and software required for the effective performance of their function.
19. The remote workplace must have a secure and proper work environment including appropriate workspace and any computer equipment and related telecommunication communications required. Staff who work remotely are responsible for all costs associated with their remote work location, including but not limited to electricity and internet connectivity, phone charges, and printing supplies. Under conditions established by the Executive Director¹, the organization may provide a one-time reimbursement of up to USD\$200 for the purchase of home office equipment. The organization will not reimburse staff members for recurring costs associated with their remote work environment.
20. Any exceptions to this policy may only be authorized by the Director for Human Resources Management.

B. Flexible Working Arrangements

21. UNFPA offers the following FWAs:
 - a. Flexi-time;
 - b. Compressed working schedule;
 - c. Remote work within the duty station (referred to as ‘teleworking’ in UNall service platform);
 - d. Remote work from outside the duty station (referred to as ‘telecommuting’ in UNall service platform).
22. UNFPA does not offer home-based or “elsewhere” contracts. Home-based or “elsewhere” contracts establish a staff member’s place of work at the onset of the contractual relationship with the organization.
23. Staff members are expected to be present in their official duty station of assignment. Staff members who work outside the duty station without prior approval in violation of this policy may be subject to an administrative or disciplinary measure in accordance with the applicable policies and procedures, including the [UNFPA Disciplinary Framework](#).

Flexi-time

24. Flexi-time allows staff to adjust the start and end times of their working day. Subject to exigencies of service, the full extent of flexibility should be given to allow a personalized schedule.

¹ Refer to [DHR Process Note “Reimbursement for purchase of Home Office Equipment”](#)

25. Staff members who are required to participate in meetings outside core working hours, may adjust the start and end times of their workday accordingly.
26. A staff member utilizing flexi-time for personal reasons or due to exigencies of service, must work the same overall number of hours as that of a normal working day at the relevant location.
27. Start times for a staff member may vary day to day, subject to agreement between the individual and their manager.

Compressed work schedule

28. A compressed work schedule allows staff to work the total hours of a common work week over fewer working days.
29. The total number of hours in a common work week may vary for each duty station and is reflected by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the United Nations Secretariat in local salary scales.
30. A staff member in the General Service category who is required to work in excess of the working week established for this purpose shall be given compensatory time off or may receive additional payment. A staff member in this category may compress their work week by extending their daily working hours for nine (9) working days and avail of time off on the tenth (10th) working day.
31. Staff in the National Professional and International Professional category may not avail of overtime or a compressed work week. However, National Professional and International Professional staff may avail of occasional compensatory time off.
32. Staff utilizing a compressed work schedule are required to reach a formal agreement on what their scheduling under this arrangement will be. Variations on the number of hours and days off may be applied, subject to agreement between the staff member and their manager to accommodate specific circumstances.
33. When the General Assembly is held, all New York headquarters staff are required to work an additional 30 minutes per day. This additional time does not count towards the extra working time required per day under a compressed working schedule.
34. The designated day off should be a Friday or a Monday. In countries that do not observe a Monday to Friday work week, an appropriate alternative day may be chosen as the designated day off. Days accrued as a result of a compressed work schedule may not be carried forward, accumulated, or credited to annual leave or compensatory time off.

35. When a United Nations official holiday falls on the staff member's designated day off, an alternative day off may be granted on the working day immediately before or after depending on which option best serves the needs of the staff member and office.
36. If there is an official holiday or the staff member is on sick leave or annual leave for a maximum of one day during the relevant period, the staff member may still take the designated day off. This is, however, contingent upon the staff member having accumulated the required number of hours across the remaining working days (including the time that should have been accumulated on the one-day period of holiday or leave). If the holiday or leave is for more than one day, the compressed work schedule is suspended, however the accumulated hours are not forfeited. The compressed work schedule will resume the following week.
37. A designated day off accrued under the compressed work schedule cannot be taken while on official business (travel status). When a staff member is on official travel status, travel days are not counted towards the compressed work week. Staff members may be eligible for a rest stop over for journeys of long duration, or compensatory day off if required to travel on a non-working day to or from the duty station to a place of mission, as allowed in the applicable travel policy.

Remote Work from within the official duty station (Teleworking)

38. A staff member's employment contract with the organization establishes their official UN duty station of assignment. Remote work within the duty station allows staff to work at an alternative site within commuting distance² of the office in their official duty station. Remote work may be authorized on an ad-hoc or pre-scheduled basis.
39. Scheduled remote work facilitates team interaction. Managers are encouraged to identify and communicate work periods, if any, when all team members are required to work on premises.
40. UNFPA offers three options for remote work within the duty station, subject to manager approval:
 - a. Remote work up to three (3) days per calendar week. Under this arrangement, staff members report to premises two (2) full working days;
 - b. Remote work for a full calendar week on alternating weeks. Under this arrangement, staff members report to premises five (5) full, consecutive working days followed by five (5) full, consecutive working days at an alternative site within commuting distance;
 - c. Remote work for two full calendar weeks on alternating two-week periods. Under this arrangement staff members report to premises ten (10) full, consecutive

² Commuting distance is normally defined as 60 miles or 100 kilometers. For headquarters, commuting distance is considered the New York metropolitan area.

working days followed by ten (10) full, consecutive working days at an alternative site within commuting distance.

41. Absences from the office due to official holidays, official business or leave do not require modification or suspension of any pre-scheduled remote work arrangements.
42. Remote work arrangements may be fixed or vary week by week, subject to manager approval.

Remote Work from outside the duty station (Telecommuting)

43. Remote work from outside the official duty station allows staff to work from an alternative location outside of commuting distance of their official duty station, with manager approval.
44. The UN compensation packages for staff members are specific to a staff member's duty station.
 - a. For international professional staff, the post adjustment system is designed to ensure that remuneration levels have the same purchasing power at all duty stations. As the cost of living varies significantly across duty stations, net remuneration for staff in the professional and higher categories are set at different levels at each duty station so as to compensate for these differences in living costs.
 - b. General Service staff are recruited to serve at the same duty station and are not subject to geographic mobility. An underlying concept of the common system is that these staff should be compensated in accordance with the best prevailing conditions of service in the locality; consequently, they are paid not on the basis of a single global salary scale, but according to local salary scales established on the basis of salary surveys.
45. Staff members with fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointments may request to work a maximum of up to 60 working days per calendar year outside of their official duty station.
46. Staff members with temporary appointments may request to work outside their official duty station up to a maximum that is equivalent to five (5) working days per month of their employment period that calendar year.
 - a. When calculating the maximum allowed in a calendar year, staff members and managers must consider only full months of employment in the calendar year, e.g., a temporary appointment of five (5) months duration results in a maximum of 25 working days that a staff member may request to work outside the duty station.
 - b. The maximum applicable in a calendar year is established at the outset of the temporary appointment, and may be availed of at the outset of an appointment

with manager approval. This is not an accrued benefit. The maximum allowed is increased accordingly when an appointment duration is extended.

47. Absence from a duty station may impact eligibility for the payment of some benefits and entitlements that require the physical presence of a staff member at the official duty station. These may be suspended in accordance with existing policies.³
48. Remote work from outside the duty station will be counted in full day increments. Remote work from outside the duty station will not be counted in half or partial day increments. Remote work from outside the duty station may be continuous or cumulative, subject to the maximum duration set out in paragraphs 45 and 46.
49. There are no extensions or exceptions to the allowed working day maximum. Staff members who require an additional period of time outside their official duty station beyond the maximum number of working days allowed in a calendar year may avail of other benefits and entitlements including annual leave or special leave without pay.
50. Staff members with visas provided by the host country at the official duty station must abide by host country requirements. Prolonged absence from the duty station may result in the host country rescinding a staff member's and eligible family member's entry/residence visa and/or work permits.
51. In cases where there are compelling personal circumstances, the Director of the Division for Human Resources may approve requests to work remotely from outside the official duty station for a duration exceeding 60 working days in a calendar year. When approved, this exceptional arrangement shall be for a minimum of six months and up to one year. In such cases, the compensation package will be adjusted retroactively as of the first day of the remote working arrangement as per Annex 1 of the present policy. The adjustment in compensation will not suspend the accrual of service time towards any maximum eligibility period. Staff should be advised that prolonged absence from the duty station will be reported to the host country and may result in the host country rescinding a staff member's and eligible family member's entry/residence visa and/or work permits. Staff members who fail to return to their parent duty station after the expiration of exceptional arrangements may be considered to have abandoned their post and may be separated from service as a result, pursuant to Staff Rule 9.3 and Staff Rule 9.6 (b) and the UNFPA policy and procedures applicable to separation from service.
52. When assessing the feasibility of remote work from outside of the duty station, staff members should consider host country regulations, where applicable.
53. Staff members choosing to work remotely from outside their duty station are responsible for:

³ See Annex I

- a. ensuring that they have appropriate health insurance for the period that they are working remotely outside of the duty station,
 - b. ensuring they have a suitable workspace that complies with UNFPA's safety and security standards,
 - c. informing the UNDSS and UNFPA offices in the country of remote work of presence in the country for purposes of being included in security arrangements,
 - d. recording their place of work in the UNFPA Global Directory.
 - e. meeting relevant visa and work permit requirements, and
 - f. meeting all other obligations including but not limited to tax obligations, where applicable.
54. Remote work outside of the duty station may impact a staff member's eligibility for medical evacuation, premiums for medical insurance coverage, and privileges and immunities.
55. Locations with active security management measures restricting the influx of personnel for security reasons and/or active relocation/evacuation measures applied (or imminent), cannot be approved as a location for remote work outside the duty station.
56. For headquarters, as per instructions by the United States State Department, all New York based United Nations staff members who hold a G-4 visa status need to maintain a residence in the New York metropolitan area.
57. Staff members are responsible for any travel-related cost between the official duty station and the alternative location of their choice. This includes traveling to the alternative location at the beginning of the remote working arrangement, to return to the official duty station at the end of the arrangement and to travel to the official duty station should exigencies of service require their physical presence as decided by the staff member's manager.
58. A staff member may be assigned to undertake duty travel when working remotely outside their official duty station. The organization's liability for duty travel remains "official duty station - place of official business travel - official duty station." The staff member may request a personal deviation to depart and return to the place of remote work location, however the staff member is responsible for any difference in fare.

C. Duration of FWAs

59. The use of a FWA is approved for a specific duration of up to a maximum of one year. They should be reviewed and discussed regularly, as part of ongoing feedback communications between managers and staff members. The arrangement will automatically cease on the agreed end date. Staff members may request modification of

an existing FWA. Staff members may request a new FWA upon the expiration or termination of an agreement.

60. There will be occasions in which exigencies of service such as meetings or other work demands will require staff members to temporarily suspend their normal FWA in the duty station. Managers must provide 24 hours' notice in writing when possible.
61. In the event of an emergency, managers may request a staff member to return to the duty station temporarily. A manager must provide at least ten (10) working days' notice in writing, to staff members who are working remotely outside the duty station. A staff member may resume remote working outside the duty station once their physical presence is no longer required at the duty station.
62. An arrangement may be terminated at any time by either the staff member or their manager in writing, should the needs of the organization, personal circumstances, or failure to adhere to the arrangement, such as underperformance, necessitate such suspension or discontinuation. A notice period of 30 calendar days should be given for all such terminations.
63. Staff members will be asked to self-certify their usage of FWAs after each calendar year. A staff member who misrepresents their presence in the office or presence in the duty station may be subject to an administrative or disciplinary measure in accordance with the applicable UNFPA policies and procedures, including the UNFPA Disciplinary Framework.

D. Requests for Management Evaluation

64. A staff member wishing to formally contest a decision may request a management evaluation. A request for management evaluation must be sent within sixty calendar days from the date on which the staff member received notification of the administrative decision to be contested, or else it is not receivable.

E. Alternate Working Arrangements

65. AWAs are adjustments to the regular working hours and/or locations, mandated by UNFPA and are therefore different from FWAs. The authority to implement AWAs rests with the Executive Director for staff in headquarters and representation offices, and with Regional Directors for regional and country offices. During long-term AWAs, staff members may submit requests to work remotely away from the duty station under the conditions established above.

III. Procedures

A. Approval process

66. All requests for FWA require managerial approval. Managers should consider FWA requests favorably. Not all requests for FWA may be approved. Requests for FWA may be denied for reasons including but not limited to incompatibility with some functions, the need for physical presence to serve beneficiaries and collaborate with implementing partners and host governments, and access to technology to deliver daily tasks.
67. A staff member may request more than one FWA. For example, a staff member may request flexi-time and remote work within the duty station concurrently.
68. The staff member and manager must agree on clear and measurable outputs to be delivered during this period, in line with individual performance objectives and the unit's yearly workplan. Staff members and managers should discuss aspects that may have an impact on their performance or ability to collaborate efficiently with other team members and counterparts.
69. When a manager is unable to approve a request as submitted, the manager may propose adjustments or an alternate FWA for discussion with the staff member.
70. Any decision (approval or denial) must be recorded in the UNFPA "[Flexible Working Arrangement Agreement](#)" form.

B. Roles and Responsibilities

71. Managers responsibilities include:
 - a. Managing the functional and operational coverage of their unit or office at all times;
 - b. Leading the co-creation of unit workplans and performance indicators with team members to assess suitability of requests for FWAs;
 - c. Monitoring approved FWAs;
 - d. Inviting staff members who work remotely to all team meetings and facilitating participation via virtual means;
 - e. Ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all staff members regardless of their remote work status;
 - f. Appropriately distributing workload to staff regardless of FWA and ensure that implementation of the policy within the team does not place an unfair work burden on other staff;
 - g. Ensuring that FWAs do not hinder or prevent the timely delivery of products and/or services;

- h. Reviewing each FWAs regularly to evaluate the impact on the fulfillment of performance objectives; and
- i. Revising FWAs in a timely manner in the event of a negative impact on delivery of products or services or fulfillment of performance objectives.

72. Staff member responsibilities include:

- a. Ensuring that their level of productivity and quality of work is not impacted by their FWA of choice;
- b. Completing hours of work established in their official duty station;
- c. Establishing a remote working site that complies with the UNFPA's safety and security standards, if applicable;
- d. Being familiar with collaboration tools used at UNFPA (e.g., Zoom, Google Suite);
- e. Participating in meetings and being accessible during the agreed-upon FWA hours;
- f. Returning to the office to attend staff meetings or for other duties when required by their manager; and
- g. Adjusting their place of work in their UNFPA Global Directory and UNDSS TRIP profiles and, when working remotely outside their duty station, inform the UNFPA office in the country to be included into the security arrangements at the duty station.

IV. Risk Control Matrix

Risk Description	First Line of Defense Controls			Second Line of Defense Controls		
	Control Activity Description	Reference (paragraph #)	Who performs	Control Activity Description	Reference (paragraph #)	Who performs
Managers exhibit bias when considering FWA requests	Managers should consider FWA requests favorably but may deny requests that are incompatible with exigencies of service or the nature of the functions, e.g., due to the need for physical presence.	66	Managers	A staff member wishing to formally contest a decision may request a management evaluation.	64	Staff members, Legal Unit
Staff availing of FWAs are less productive, less collaborative or not available during agreed working hours.	Managers must revise FWAs in a timely manner in the event of a negative impact on delivery of products or services or fulfillment of performance objectives.	71	All staff members and managers	An arrangement may be terminated at any time by either the staff member or their manager, should failure to adhere to the arrangement, such as underperformance,	62	Managers

				necessitate such suspension or discontinuation.		
Staff members are not treated equitably	Managers are encouraged to promote equal applicability across the workforce so that all staff have fair and equitable access to a range of FWAs.	15	Managers	A staff member wishing to formally contest a decision may request a management evaluation.	64	Staff members, Legal Unit
Managers have difficulty guiding staff using FWAs	The staff member and manager must agree on clear and measurable outputs to be delivered in line with individual performance objectives.	68	All staff members	Defined roles and responsibilities for managers and staff members	71, 72	
Remote work from outside the duty station negatively impacts UNFPA's collaboration with stakeholders,	FWAs should be adapted to respond to duty station-specific realities and needs.	5	All staff members	Requests for FWAs may be denied for reasons including but not limited to incompatibility with a staff member's functions, the	7	Managers

or reputation based on actual or perceived reduced presence in the duty station.				need for physical presence to serve beneficiaries and collaborate with implementing partners and host governments, and access to technology to deliver daily tasks.		
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Annex I

Adjustment of benefits for remote work away from the duty station

Benefit	Remote work up to 60 days	Remote work for periods beyond 60 working days*
General Service and National Professional Officer Staff		
Net Base Salary¹	No Adjustment	Adjustment
International Professional Staff		
Post Adjustment²	No Adjustment	Adjustment
Danger Pay³	Adjustment	Adjustment
Rest & Recuperation⁴	Adjustment	Adjustment
Non-family Service Allowance⁵	No Adjustment	Adjustment
Hardship Allowance⁵	No Adjustment	Adjustment
Mobility Incentive⁵	No Adjustment	Adjustment
Education Grant⁶	No Adjustment	Adjustment
Special Education Grant	No Adjustment	No Adjustment
Rental Subsidy⁷	No Adjustment	Adjustment

Home Leave and Family Visit⁸	No Adjustment	Adjustment
Repatriation Grant⁸	No Adjustment	Adjustment

*This may include retroactive adjustment to a staff member's compensation.

1/ **Net Base Salary:** The salary of staff members in the General Service and National Officer categories will be the lower of the official duty station and the remote working location. If the remote working location is not an established UN system duty station, the lowest salary scale in the country of the remote working location will be referenced. The staff member's salary will not be adjusted when the remote working location is in a country without a United Nations salary scale for locally recruited staff.

2/ **Post Adjustment:** The lower post adjustment between the official duty station and the remote working location. If the remote working location is not an established UN system duty station, the lowest post adjustment of the country of the remote working location will be referenced. A change in post adjustment implies an adjustment to dependent spouse and single parent allowance that is equivalent to six (6) percent of net remuneration (base salary plus post adjustment).

3/ **Danger Pay:** This is not payable for any days of remote work outside of the duty station.

4/ **Rest and Recuperation:** Qualifying service is considered interrupted by periods of remote work from outside the duty station for more than three consecutive days.

5/ **Non-family Service Allowance, Hardship Allowance and Mobility Incentive:** "Adjustment" implies the suspension of this benefit for the duration of remote work from outside the duty station.

6/ **Education Grant:** When a staff member works remotely from outside the duty station for more than two thirds of the academic year, the education grant will be prorated on the basis of the period of service in the duty station compared to the full academic year.

7/ **Rental subsidy:** This is linked to the post adjustment of the official duty station. Upon change of post adjustment, a new subsidy will be calculated should a residence be maintained at the official duty station. A rental subsidy will not be paid for a residence at the remote working location.

8/ **Home Leave, Family Visit and Repatriation Grant:** Accrual of qualifying service credit is suspended while working remotely from outside the duty station.