

UNFPA WORK and LIFE PROGRAMME
FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

PURPOSE

1. The policy on flexible working arrangements is part of a broader Work and Life Programme developed by UNFPA to support staff in managing the demands of working life. With the full support of senior management, the programme has been strengthened by an organizational culture that enables staff to create an optimal fit in their work and personal life, in line with UNFPA's Human Resources Framework.
2. Flexible working arrangements provide advantages for both staff and the organization which include the following:
 - a) Enhancing motivation by providing staff with greater responsibility for the performance of their work;
 - b) Encouraging sourcing and retention of diverse, talented and motivated staff by offering greater flexibility in how and where work is done ;
 - c) Enabling individuals to both serve the organization as well as address personal and family needs.

EFFECTIVE DATE

3. This policy supersedes all other versions of flexible working arrangements, and enters into effect the day of its publication.

GENERAL CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS**Eligibility**

4. The option of flexible working arrangements may be authorized for UNFPA staff (i.e. holders of UNFPA letters of appointment serving on permanent, continuing, fixed-term or temporary appointments) as well as Junior Professional Officers. These arrangements are not available to complementary personnel with non-staff status (including persons engaged as interns, United Nations volunteers, service contract holders, special service agreement holders, and procurement contract holders).
5. Approval of flexible working arrangements is contingent on satisfactory performance on the part of the requesting staff member. Accordingly, heads of office may wish to apply a minimum service period that must be completed prior to staff becoming eligible to apply for flexible arrangements. In cases in which a minimum service period is established, this must be notified, and applied equitably, to all staff in the relevant office.

6. This policy is intended to facilitate flexible working arrangements but does not create an entitlement to them. Utilizing such arrangements is a privilege that may be granted on a case-by-case basis subject to operational requirements. Supervisors are encouraged to agree to flexible arrangements whenever possible. However, this will not always be feasible as such arrangements are more suited to some jobs than others, and not all jobs and situations lend themselves to all forms of flexible arrangements. Productivity and quality of results must not be compromised. Just as no staff member is automatically entitled or guaranteed the opportunity to utilize flexible arrangements, nor will a staff member ever be obliged to utilize them.
7. The situation in every field office is unique. Accordingly, within the overall parameters established by this policy, each field office is encouraged to apply flexible working arrangements in a way which best takes account of the specific environmental context applicable in the relevant location.
8. No extra cost must be incurred by UNFPA as a result of any flexible work arrangement. No additional payments, benefits or entitlements can be claimed under this policy.

Application of flexible working arrangements

9. Supervisors should carefully manage the utilization of flexible working arrangements. Functional and operational coverage at all times is an essential part of smoothly integrating flexible work arrangements into an office's work. The impact on the colleagues of a staff member utilizing such arrangements must also be taken into account.
10. The effective management of flexible working arrangements requires trust and responsibility on the part of supervisors and staff. Supervisors need to use discretion in applying flexible arrangements with judgment and balance, optimizing the benefits to staff and the organization while minimizing potential problems, and ensuring implementation is equitable and consistent. Staff are responsible for prioritizing their work and structuring it in such a way that it is not disruptive to the organization, as well as ensuring that their level of productivity and quality of work is not impacted.
11. Staff may reduce, but are not permitted to totally substitute, their lunch break for additional work hours. According to the International Labour Organization, all staff, including those who opt to work under a flexible arrangement, must take at least a 30-minute lunch break.
12. Supervisors should exercise reasonable care not to schedule meetings requiring a staff member's attendance at a time when the staff member would normally be utilizing a flexible arrangement. However, there will be occasions in which exigencies of service such as meetings or other work demands will prevent a staff member from utilizing

his/her normal flexible arrangement, and mean that the staff member will instead be expected to forfeit the arrangement on that occasion and come to work.

13. Currently flexible working arrangements cannot be recorded or tracked through e-services in Atlas, and manual records must be maintained by leave monitors.

Time-limited nature of flexible working arrangements

14. All flexible working arrangements may be approved for a maximum period of up to one year at a time. Such arrangements may then be reviewed and further extended for time periods of up to one year at a time. Unless the arrangement is extended it will automatically cease on the agreed end date.

Discontinuation of flexible working arrangements

15. Flexible arrangements may be discontinued at any time if the needs of the staff member or the organization require a return to a regular working arrangement. Flexible arrangements may also be discontinued if in practice a flexible arrangement ultimately impacts on operational effectiveness, causes undue inconvenience to other staff, or in the event of unsatisfactory performance on the part of the staff member. In such cases, a reasonable period of notice (up to one month as appropriate) will be given, if required, to allow time to make the necessary preparations.
16. Approval for flexible working arrangements is linked to a specific position, and agreed to by the relevant Supervisor and Head of Department. Therefore, when a staff member takes up a different position his/her flexible working arrangement will be discontinued, and he/she will be required to submit a new request to utilize flexible working arrangements. Any existing arrangement cannot automatically be carried over to the new post. Incoming supervisors also have the right to assess existing arrangements.

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS OFFERED BY UNFPA

17. UNFPA offers the following flexible working arrangements:
 - a) Flexi-time;
 - b) Compressed working schedule (10 in 9, and 19 in 20);
 - c) Telecommuting;
 - d) Part-time employment (50 percent).

Flexi-time

18. Flexi-time is an arrangement in which there is flexible working time at the beginning and end of the working day, with core hours during which all staff must be present at work.
19. Core hours at UNFPA offices are from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm at headquarters duty stations. Field offices might have different working hours / core hours, agreed upon by the Regional Director or Resident Coordinator's Office, as applicable.
20. Whenever feasible, activities such as meetings should be organized during core hours.
21. A staff member utilizing flexi-time will be required to reach a formal agreement (please refer to annexed flexible working arrangement agreement) on what the standard starting and finishing times will be under the flexi-time arrangement, and must work the same overall number of hours as that of a normal working day at the relevant location.

Compressed work schedule

22. A compressed work schedule allows a staff member to increase the amount of time worked per day in order to have one day off.
23. There are two different options available:
 - (a) *10 working days in 9* - Under this option, the working time normally spent during a period of 10 working days is compressed into 9 working days. Staff are allowed to take the tenth working day as a designated day off.
 - (b) *1 day off per month* – Under this option the working time spent during a normal working month is compressed allowing the staff member to take one day off each month as a designated day off.
24. A staff member utilizing a compressed work schedule will be required to reach a formal agreement (please refer to the annexed flexible working arrangement agreement) on what his/her scheduling under this arrangement will be. The designated day off will usually 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.
25. 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.
26. If a staff member is sick on the designated day off, that will be considered sick leave which should be applied for in the usual manner.

27. When a UN 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 office.
28. If there is a one-day official holiday or the staff member is on official travel, sick leave or annual leave for a maximum of one day during the relevant ten day 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 eight working days (including the extra 50 minutes that should have been accumulated on the one-day period of holiday, official travel, or leave). If the holiday, travel or leave is for more than one day, the compressed work schedule is cancelled, and is not applied during the relevant ten-day period.
29. Designated days off are earned on a "use it or lose it" basis. They cannot be carried forward, accumulated, or credited to annual leave or compensatory time off.
30. Designated days off will need to be manually recorded by leave monitors as 'Leave under Work/Life policy'.

Telecommuting

31. Telecommuting is an arrangement under which staff are authorized to work in an alternate location away from the office (the remote workplace). The three options available are:
 - a) Infrequent and short-term work away from the office;
 - b) Scheduled period of work away from the office;
 - c) Regular part-time telecommuting arrangement.

Infrequent, short-term work away from the office

32. The organization will use an informal approach to infrequent, short-term work away from the office under which, with prior approval from the supervisor, staff may occasionally be permitted to work from an alternate location. This may be applied when staff are prevented from reaching the office due to a force majeure event, or crisis / emergency situation following security recommendations, to facilitate a particular assignment, or to meet a short unforeseen personal need.
33. Under this arrangement a staff member may be permitted to work on one or more occasions from a remote work place for up to a combined total of ten working days per calendar year which must be utilized on a half day or full day basis only. While utilizing this arrangement staff members will be listed for attendance purposes as if present at work. This informal approach depends upon close communication between a staff

member and his/her supervisor to ensure that occasional work away from the office meets the staff member's commitments to the organization and does not negatively impact on team work.

Scheduled period of telecommuting

34. This is an arrangement under which a staff member may exceptionally be authorized to work from a remote workplace once per calendar year for between 11 to 20 consecutive working days to attend to a family emergency.
35. A staff member utilizing this arrangement will be required to reach a formal agreement regarding the period of work that will be performed away from the office (please refer to annexed flexible working arrangement agreement). The staff member and supervisor will need to agree on clear, measurable, and time-based outputs to be delivered during this period. In the event that the required deliverables are not met, it may be necessary to appropriately pro-rate the telecommuting period and instead charge an appropriate portion of this period against the staff member's annual leave balance.

Regular part-time telecommuting arrangement

36. A regular part-time telecommuting arrangement allows staff to spend up to two days per week working from a remote work place.
37. A staff member utilizing regular part-time telecommuting is required to reach a formal agreement (please refer to the annexed flexible working arrangement agreement) on the working schedule that will be followed in the remote workplace. This schedule should provide for clearly established times when the staff member will be telecommuting. Telecommuting must be scheduled on a half day or full day basis.

Conditions applicable to telecommuting

38. The staff member must ensure that the remote workplace has a secure and proper work environment including appropriate workspace and any computer equipment and related telecommunication connections required. The flexible working agreement for this arrangement (for a scheduled period of telecommuting and regular part-time telecommuting) specifies that the staff member must take responsibility for meeting any costs incurred to set up and operate from the remote workplace. The agreement also includes a waiver releasing UNFPA of liability in the event of damage to the staff member's property while he/she is in telecommuting mode.
39. The nature of the staff member's work will be a key factor in deciding whether a telecommuting arrangement is feasible. Considerations include:
 - a) Nature of the work – can it be done remotely?
 - b) Individual work plan – are there measurable outputs within set timeframes?

- c) Integration within the team – how will it affect colleagues in the team?
 - d) The experience of the staff – are they able to work independently?
 - e) Security and sensitivity of the information dealt with – is the work to be completed too sensitive to be undertaken outside UNFPA premises and systems?
40. Due to the fact that teleworking involves the loss of direct supervision, it places greater responsibilities on both the supervisor and the staff member. It requires greater trust on the part of the supervisor, and enhanced self-discipline and ability to work independently on the part of the staff member.
41. The work the staff member performs while telecommuting should be measurable in terms of quality and quantity, and non-dependent for its satisfactory completion on direct personal contact at the office, or information, materials and facilities that are not available at the remote workplace.

Part-time employment (50 percent)

42. Part-time employment is an arrangement that allows staff to reduce their work schedule to 50 percent. Part-time employment may only be granted at 50 percent (part-time work at other proportions is not available).
43. Two options are available for scheduling part-time work which must be agreed to in advance. Staff members can either work for half a day for five days of the week, or they can work two-and-a-half days consecutively within the five day work week.
44. Supervisors may supplement part-time employment with temporary assistance but this must be covered within the overall cost of the full-time budget allocation for the concerned post.
45. The effect of part-time employment on staff entitlements is outlined below:
- (a) *Within-grade salary increments* - Increments accrue under the same conditions and qualifying periods as for full-time staff.
 - (b) *Salary and other benefits* - Salary and certain benefits (dependency allowances, education grant, rental subsidy, annual leave, and sick leave) will be pro-rated to 50 percent.
 - (c) *Mobility and hardship allowance* - The qualifying period of service will be prorated (for example, 12 months of service at 50 percent counts as 6 months).

- (d) *Official holidays* - Official holidays will only be granted when they fall on a working day during the regular part-time schedule. Staff may not change their regular part-time schedule to claim an official holiday.
- (e) *Overtime* - Staff eligible for overtime who are required to work in excess of their part-time schedule will receive compensation of 100 percent of the normal hourly rate, rather than the overtime rate of 150 percent, for additional hours worked up to the normal scheduled work day of full-time staff. Thereafter, and for work required on days outside the standard working week for the duty station or on an official holiday, they will be compensated according to the usual conditions governing overtime work.
- (f) *Maternity and paternity leave* - The same period of maternity and paternity leave applies as for full-time staff during which time part-time staff will receive pro-rated salary and allowances.
- (g) *Education grant travel* – Part-time staff will be granted education grant travel under the same terms and conditions and with the same qualifying periods as full-time staff, except that they will receive a lump sum pro-rated to 50 percent, or be requested to contribute the other half of the actual cost of the ticket. The reimbursement rate for the first education grant travel following conversion will be based on the longest period of time the staff member has been employed on a full-time or part-time basis during the relevant school year (e.g. if the school year is 10 months and during that period the staff member worked full-time for six months and part-time for four months, he/she will be entitled to 100 percent reimbursement).
- (h) *Home leave and family visit travel* - Part-time staff will be granted home leave and family visit travel and related entitlements under the same terms and conditions and with the same qualifying periods as full-time staff, except that they will receive a lump sum pro-rated to 50 percent, or be requested to contribute the other half of the actual cost of the ticket. The reimbursement rate for the first home leave/family visit travel following conversion will be based on the longest period of time the staff member has been employed on a full-time or part-time basis during the period between his/her return from the last home leave and the departure date of the next home leave).
- (i) *Medical insurance* - Part-time staff are eligible for full medical insurance coverage (including dental coverage and life insurance as applicable) under the same terms and conditions as full-time staff, except the amount subsidized by the Agency will be pro-rated to 50 percent and part-time staff will be required to meet the cost difference for full coverage themselves.
- (j) *Pension fund participation* - During the period of part-time employment staff are entitled to continue participation in the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund in

accordance with supplementary Article A of the Fund Regulations (for more information refer to the UNJSPF website at www.unjspf.org). The entitlement to, and the amount of benefits resulting from, part-time employment will be pro-rated by 50 percent (for example, one year at 50 percent part-time will count as 6 months of contributory service).

- (k) *Appendix D entitlements* – The compensation benefits payable under Appendix D of the UN Staff Rules in the event of death, injury, or illness determined in accordance with Articles 10.2 and 11.1(c) shall be pro-rated based on the agreed proportion of work, except in the event of death in which case such benefits will take account, on a pro-rated basis, of previous full-time service. The additional lump-sum payments made in the case of injury or illness resulting in permanent disfigurement or permanent loss of a member of function shall be the full amounts indicated in Article 11.3(c) and Article 11.3(d).
 - (l) *End of service travel and removal benefits* - Part-time staff will be granted the related travel, unaccompanied shipment, and removal entitlements under the same terms and conditions as full-time staff, except that the periods of part-time service will be pro-rated to 50 percent for the purposes of accumulating the necessary service requirements.
 - (m) *Termination indemnity, repatriation grant, death benefit* - Periods of service in part-time employment will be pro-rated when calculating termination indemnity, repatriation grant, and death benefit. For example, for staff at 50 percent part-time, 12 months of service shall be counted as 6 months of service.
46. The impact of part-time work will vary from staff member to staff member depending on their particular circumstances. A staff members should therefore ensure that he/she fully understands, and seeks advice on, the implications of part-time work on the level of entitlements and benefits that will be receivable in his/her specific case, prior to requesting part-time work.

PROCEDURES

Standard request procedure

47. Infrequent, short-term work away from the office used occasionally for specific assignments, or due to “force majeure” or crisis situations, shall be managed using an informal approach that only requires the agreement of a staff member’s supervisor, and notification to the leave monitor of the staff member’s absence. Use of the flexible working arrangement agreement form is not necessary. Approval for all other flexible working arrangements shall be obtained using the process outlined below.

48. Before submitting a formal application for a flexible working arrangement, a staff member should first have a discussion with his/her Supervisor to reach an informal agreement regarding the type and associated conditions of the desired flexible working arrangement. The Supervisor should then discuss the proposal with other staff under their supervision, colleagues in the same department, and the head of office as appropriate. This is to ensure that the terms of the arrangement are considered feasible and the impact on the staff member's co-workers and operational effectiveness of the office are fully taken into account.
49. If, after these discussions, it is foreseen that the flexible arrangement would be feasible and under what conditions, the staff member should obtain formal authorisation for the flexible working arrangement by completing the "[Flexible Working Arrangement Agreement](#)" form.
50. By endorsing the staff member's request in the form the supervisor is certifying that he/she has done the necessary consultation regarding the feasibility of the flexible arrangement and believes that the requested arrangement can be put in place without creating a detrimental impact on the operational and functional coverage of the work area under his/her supervision.
51. The head of office should then review this request in the context of all other requests for flexible arrangements that have been made by staff members in the same office. By approving a request for a flexible arrangement the head of office is certifying that this flexible arrangement will not have a negative impact on the operational and functional coverage of the overall office. He/she should also ensure that the arrangement is consistent with the relevant conditions, and complies with any other general parameters for usage of such arrangements established locally.
52. Approved requests for flexi-time, compressed work schedules, and telecommuting are to be maintained by the relevant leave monitor.
53. The original version of the approved request for part-time work should be submitted by the relevant leave monitor to the applicable UNDP benefits and entitlements service focal point and will be maintained in the staff member's personnel file. The benefits and entitlements service focal point will ensure that the necessary adjustments are made to the staff member's salary and benefits.
54. An extension of a flexible arrangement should be obtained utilising the same procedure as that used to make the initial request.
55. Leave monitors should provide a copy of all approved flexible arrangement requests to the staff member, the supervisor, and the relevant head of office.

56. Leave monitors should maintain a comprehensive record outlining all flexible arrangements in place within their area of responsibility for monitoring purposes, as well as to meet safety and security requirements.

Process for resolution of disagreements

57. While supervisors are encouraged to accommodate flexible arrangements where appropriate, flexible working arrangements are a privilege and not an entitlement, and will not always be feasible. In cases in which a supervisor does not agree to endorse a staff member's proposal for flexible working arrangements or wishes to discontinue an existing arrangement, the staff member has the right to request that the matter be submitted to the head of office to make a decision.
58. Any such requests should be forwarded to the relevant head of office by the staff member together with a detailed rationale outlining how in his/her view the necessary arrangements could be put in place to ensure that the arrangement does not impact operational effectiveness, or cause inconvenience to other colleagues in the same working area. The requesting staff member may also seek to demonstrate that the lack of endorsement for the flexible arrangement or action to discontinue an existing arrangement was motivated by prejudice, or would result in inequality of treatment compared to other staff, or severe hardship.
59. Prior to making a decision, the head of office should consult with the staff member and the supervisor, as well as any other staff that he/she feels would be impacted.
60. In cases in which the head of office supports the supervisor's view, or in cases in which despite the endorsement of the supervisor for the arrangement the head of office decides not to approve a flexible arrangement or to discontinue an existing arrangement, the staff member may submit a request to the Director of Human Resources asking for assistance in finding a resolution.
61. Any such requests should be forwarded to the Director of the Division of Human Resources (DHR) by the staff member together with a detailed rationale containing the information outlined in paragraph 58 above. The Director of DHR, or his/her designee, should consult with the staff member, the supervisor, and the head of office, as well as any other staff that he/she considers to be able to provide information relevant to the case. The Director of DHR, or his/her designee, should endeavour to find a compromise that satisfies all parties. If this is not possible, the Director of DHR will make a decision on whether the request will be approved, and if so what modifications or conditions will apply.

Requests for variations

62. Any variation to the usual terms and conditions of the flexible arrangements offered under this policy may only be made on an exceptional and strictly temporary basis not exceeding one year, and is subject to review and approval by the Director of the Division of Human Resources. Any such requests should be forwarded by the relevant head of office to the Director of DHR by the relevant head of office together with a detailed rationale outlining the reasons that necessitate the deviation, the proposed duration, and the action that will be taken to prevent any loss of operational effectiveness during the duration of the exception.

SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Requesting staff members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the impact of their requests on their duties and responsibilities, as well as those of their team and the organization; Submit request using “Flexible Working Arrangement” form to immediate supervisor; Meet the obligations outlined in the selected flexible working arrangement.
Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review each case in a fair and objective manner; Initiate discussion within unit/team on meeting set goals, work objectives and distribution of work, to guarantee that the needs of the organization are protected; Provide endorsements of flexible work arrangement requests;
Heads of Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review each case in a fair and objective manner; Decide on requests for flexible working arrangements, weighing the desires of the staff member, advice from the supervisor and objectives of the office.
DHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocates for usage/implementation of the policy and provides guidance and clarifications; Ensures the policy remains relevant and makes adjustments based on best practices.
Director of DHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists in finding a resolution in the cases of a disagreement between a staff member, supervisor, and head of office about approval of new flexible arrangements or the discontinuation of existing arrangements.
Leave monitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a comprehensive record of flexible working arrangements

	<p>for all staff for which they are responsible;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and record any absence as a result of a compressed working schedule; • Ensure the original version of a request for part-time work is provided to the relevant UNDP Entitlements and Benefits Service focal point. • Provide a copy of approved requests for flexible work arrangements to the requesting staff member, supervisor and head of office.
UNDP entitlements and benefits service focal points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the necessary adjustments are made to the staff member's salary and benefits for approved part-time work arrangements.

OTHER RELATED POLICIES

63. Staff should also familiarize themselves with other related policies which include:

- (a) Annual leave, Home leave and Special leave – UN Staff Rules, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3
 Certified and Uncertified Sick leave – UN Staff Rules, 6.2
 Maternity and Paternity leave - UN Staff Rules, 6.3
https://docs.myunfpa.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/UNFPA_Publication-22257
 UNFPA follows UNDP policies for leave, i.e. annual, maternity, paternity, adoption, family leave and special leave
<http://content.undp.org/go/userguide/HR/hour-hday-leave/typesofleave/?lang=en#top>
- (b) Leave for External Training/Learning, Sabbatical leave and Special Leave without Pay (SLWOP) for developmental purposes – UNFPA Staff Learning and Career Development Policy
<https://docs.myunfpa.org/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-205>
- (c) Compensatory time off for travel – UNFPA Duty Travel Policy
<https://docs.myunfpa.org/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-210> and
 UNDP Duty Travel Policy – Travel Time and Rest stopovers
<http://content.undp.org/go/userguide/HR/travel/duty/route-transport-accommodation/?lang=en#top>

ANNEX

[Flexible working arrangement agreement form](#)