

Team Checklist:

How can we make flexible working successful for our team?



Things to consider

Flexible working has generally been managed on an individual basis however an alternative approach is for the whole team to consider how flexible working can be managed whilst still delivering the team's required outcomes or services.

Achieving a shared understanding is a way to make flexible working more accessible for all team members, even if not everyone decides to work flexibly. Adopting a set of principles in collaboration with your People and Culture Business Partner to work in conjunction with ECU's enterprise agreement, policies and guidelines is a way to achieve this.

This checklist aims to guide team discussions so that everyone better understands flexible working arrangements and a set of agreed principles for the team is reached. Additional support is available through your [People and Culture Business Partner](#).

Not every team member needs to be interested in flexible working to have this discussion – the point is for the team to have the same shared understanding about flexible working and how it operates within that specific team.

Team Discussion

1. What do we know as a team about flexible working at ECU? What options are available? Who is interested?
2. What questions or possible concerns do we have about flexible working? *List and discuss each separately to better understand.*
3. What makes us function as a team? What key outcomes or responsibilities do we need to maintain or enhance (regardless of flexible working)?
4. What flexible working arrangements already exist within our team - formal, informal, ad hoc?
5. What flexible arrangements might we be able to consider - formal, informal, ad hoc?
6. What does productivity look like for us as a team? What could enhance student experience, teaching, research, and/or operational and service delivery?
7. What can each of us gain if we had greater flexibility? At work? Outside of work? *Discuss in general terms*
8. What other issues do we need to think about? Whose views do we need to consider? *Things to discuss include nature and location of work, inherent requirements of roles, job performance, fairness in both work and flexibility, individual capabilities, organisation of work.*
9. What might be the positive outcomes from the opportunities identified?
10. Are the options workable? What might be the implementation challenges? Are there any concerns?

Note: When considering points 4 and 5 remember flexible working covers when, where, and how work is done. It can also be who does the work (e.g. job sharing, tasks) depending on the type of work undertaken by the team

Team Principles

Next, take the time to consider and agree on a set of principles to support the team delivering required outcomes, maintain service standards and ensure appropriate coverage. These need to identify how the team will work together and communicate to make the arrangements work as well as work in conjunction with ECU's enterprise agreement, policies and guidelines.

These team principles may need to outline:

- Performance expectations with a focus on key objectives, output and outcomes and not on presenteeism.
- Aspects of work that are non-negotiable (*e.g. service coverage, teaching, industry engagement, operational priorities, meeting attendance*).
- The what and how of staying in touch with your Line Manager and each other to maintain quality connections. Identify the tools for keeping informed about each other's whereabouts, whether in the office or working elsewhere.
- Being flexible about flexible arrangements and being prepared to be available outside of the agreed arrangements.
- Whether there is a need to consider the systems and tools required to ensure seamless service delivery for specific activities (*e.g. shared mailboxes, one phone contact, roster arrangements, any need to notify key stakeholders*).
- How peaks and troughs in work will be managed appropriately across the team (if relevant).
- If there is a need for an agreed day, on a regular basis, for all team members to be available and the activities that need to be scheduled (*e.g. meetings, training, business planning etc*). For ad hoc activities, consider the amount of notice team members may need to make themselves available.
- Safety and wellbeing are important – consider the health and safety requirements in any flexible work option and the relevant health and safety policy and/or guidelines (*e.g. fatigue from working compressed hours, having adequate breaks, working in isolation from others, ergonomic set ups*).
- What needs to occur when deciding to work elsewhere (*e.g. minimum notice period with agreed exceptions, who needs to be informed, updating status in Teams, check-in meetings with others, sharing Outlook diaries, maintaining confidentiality of documents and communications*).
- What needs to be considered when working elsewhere (*e.g. work priorities and deadlines, contingency plans if IT is not working, tools for collaborating with others, alternative contacts, any shared activities*).
- **Most importantly** – how the principles and arrangements will be evaluated, monitored and reviewed (incl. frequency) – perhaps consider a trial period to better assess and adjust as required.

Next Steps

Developing a shared understanding about flexible working arrangements within a team is likely to take a couple of meetings. Remember to ensure all team members have enough time to review any principles developed and the opportunity to ask questions. Keeping a positive and questioning mindset is key to achieving a workable outcome, maintaining team productivity and effectiveness, and meeting the University's business needs.

Requests for flexible working arrangements are still made individually to the team manager and best discussed first before completing a ['Flexible Work Request'](#) form.

Note: The [Fair Work Act 2009](#) provides a legal right for employees with particular circumstances to request flexible working arrangements and for their request to be responded to within 21 days.

If at any stage there are concerns about the principles being developed by the team, discuss the proposal with your [People and Culture Business Partner](#). They can provide strategic insights and experience on how flexible working is best structured.

Remember

Successful flexible working arrangements require both managers and team members to be satisfied the arrangements can be accommodated without adversely impacting the business needs and effectiveness of the team and of the University.

Be prepared to be open to alternative options – it may take time to work out what best supports the whole team to be productive and effective.