

University of London - Flexible Working Policy

1. Introduction

The Central Academic Bodies and central activities of the University of London (“the central University”) is committed to preserving and promoting employment opportunities to individuals whose lives are incompatible with the normal established patterns of work. This could be due to personal or domestic circumstances, physical or mental disabilities, or interests and aspirations.

Flexible working requests could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Compressed hours
- Part-time working or job shares
- A later or earlier start or finish time
- Working from home on set days every week or fortnight
- Term time working

As of June 2014, every employee has the statutory right to ask to work flexibly after 26 weeks employment service. You can find out more here: <https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working/overview>

The central University will give sympathetic consideration to all employees’ requests for flexible working and whether the request is for a permanent, short-term or trial adaptation in the hours, times or place of work.

The central University will give equal consideration, and will not unreasonably refuse, any request made under the Flexible Working request procedure made by an eligible employee.

2. Activity Based Working (ABW)

At the beginning of 2016, the University introduced a style of work known as Activity Based Working (ABW). ABW is about achieving better outcomes through offering people flexibility and autonomy, often in terms of location, and judging performance on achievement and output.

By its nature, ABW is intended to be a flexible style of working, however, any arrangements that are agreed are not contractual changes. They can be amended or brought to an end at short notice. This policy concerns the statutory right of employees to apply for flexible working, which is a formal contractual change.

For more information about ABW, please contact a member of [OSD](#).

3. Flexible Working Request procedure: Informal process

You may make your initial approach informally (verbally or in writing) to your direct line manager, who will consider your case within a reasonable timeframe. If in agreement, your line manager will inform HR who will write to you to confirm the variation in your contract.

Should your line manager refuse your informal request, you still have the option to make a request under the University Flexible Working Request procedure, as described below.

4. Flexible Working Request Procedure: University policy under Statutory Provisions

You may choose to make a request formally under the statutory provisions. You may do this regardless of whether you have already made an informal request. In order to be eligible to make a formal request, you must:

- have been continuously employed for 26 weeks.
- have not made a formal Flexible Working Request under statutory provisions in the previous 12 months

Requests must be made in writing addressed to your line manager and contain the following information in order to be valid:

- The date of the application, the type of flexible working you are requesting, and when you would like the change to come into effect
- The effect, if any, the requested change would have on the central University as an employer and how, in your opinion, this effect could be dealt with
- Confirmation that you are making a statutory request and, whether you have made a previous request to work flexibly in the last 12 months.

If your request does not contain this information you may be asked to resubmit the request.

Your line manager may be able to agree to the request on the basis of the application itself, or may request to meet with you to discuss further. This meeting will be held within 28 calendar days of receiving the request. You are able to be accompanied to the meeting by a fellow worker or trade union representative. Should you fail to attend this meeting, HR will rearrange the meeting as soon as reasonably practicable. Should you fail to attend the rearranged meeting your request will be treated as withdrawn.

Within 14 calendar days of this meeting, HR or your line manager will either:

- write to you agreeing to the application, specifying the contract variation agreed and the start date on which it is to take effect, or

- write to you agreeing to the application with modifications, specifying the contract variations agreed and the reason for the difference with your initial request, or
- write to you refusing the application, stating which of the specified grounds for refusal it considers to be applicable and explaining why those grounds apply in relation to the application.

There are eight business reasons on which an application may be refused:

- the burden of additional costs;
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental impact on quality;
- a detrimental impact on performance;
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work; and
- a planned structural change to the business.

Applications will be decided on business reasons and judged on the circumstances of the team and department at the time of the request. Managers will not make a judgement based on the perceived merit of the reason for the request. An exception to this is in the case of Reasonable Adjustments (see section 7 below).

5. Appeals

You have the right to appeal the outcome of a Flexible Working Request.

Appeals should be made in writing to the HR Director, Kim Frost within 14 calendar days of being notified of the refusal. In your appeal you should clearly indicate your reasons for appeal in relation to the eight business reasons referred to above. Reasons for appeal could include, but are not limited to:

- A change in circumstances means the business reason no longer applies
- Evidence given for the refusal is not robust
- The adverse business impact on which the refusal was based was overestimated

HR will appoint a suitable reviewer to hear your appeal, and will hold a meeting with you within 14 calendar days of the appeal being received. The reviewer will not have been involved in the case previously and will, where reasonably practicable, be from the next level of management to your line manager. Should you fail to attend this meeting, HR will rearrange the meeting as soon as reasonably practicable. Should you fail to attend the rearranged meeting your appeal will be treated as withdrawn.

If the appeal is upheld, HR will write to you to specify the agreed contract variation and the date from which it is to take effect. If the appeal is dismissed, HR will write to you set out the grounds for the decision and contain sufficient explanation as to why those grounds apply.

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which your request has been handled, you may raise a grievance under the [University's grievance procedure](#).

6. Time limits

All requests will be dealt with within a period of three months from first receipt to notification of the decision on appeal.

The time limits referred to above may be extended where both you and your line manager are in agreement. For example, the time limit may be extended to allow for a trial period of the flexible working arrangements.

7. Reasonable Adjustments

If you have a disability, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, the University is required by law to make "reasonable adjustments", to ensure you are not seriously disadvantaged when doing your job. This may include making flexible working arrangements.

The University may require you to attend an appointment with an Occupational Health professional to request their recommendation as to the necessity and type of flexible working arrangements that would benefit you.