



Flexible Working at LSE

1. Informal flexible working

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This section sets out the role of informal flexible working arrangements, as well as the value of informal discussion(s) between employee and manager as a precursor to the formal process.

Why informal?

There are two key advantages to having an informal stage in any flexible working process:

- Some types of arrangement (such as those that are very temporary) can be agreed between the employee and manager without the need for the formal process, *and*
- The informal discussion will be beneficial if the employee does subsequently decide to make a formal request because many of the considerations (and, where possible, potential solutions) will already have been discussed

First things first

Flexible working can seem like a daunting topic at first. The employee may find it difficult to see which option could work best for them, or whether they are looking for a temporary arrangement or something longer term.

The employee may find it helpful to take a moment to consider what their priorities are – both at work and in their personal life. Is there a reasonable way of better balancing the time dedicated to each of them? Of course, ‘reasonable’ may vary depending on the type of work – for example, not all jobs can be done effectively from home, such as ones that involve daily contact with students. Even at this early stage, it’s useful to start thinking about whether changing when or where work is undertaken will impact on both the individual and team, and how this could be handled.

Other things to consider

If the employee is thinking of requesting part-time hours, how would a reduced salary affect their income, holiday, pension and so on?*

If the employee would like to work from home for some of the week, how do they intend to stay motivated and organised to work on their own, and how will they keep up to date on any developments at work?

If the employee is currently working on a visa, it’s recommended that they first check that a flexible working arrangement wouldn’t impact on any visa restrictions – for example, if

they reduce their working hours and their salary decreases as a result. HR's Immigration & Compliance team can advise.

** The respective team (Payroll, Pensions etc.) can provide further details. If the employee is thinking of requesting a change of hours, the Holiday Calculator on the HR webpages can be used to calculate their new holiday entitlement.*

The informal discussion

It is up to you how you first approach the topic of flexible working with your manager – it could be in a casual conversation, in an email, or in a one-to-one meeting. Of course, it's also possible that your manager could be the first to mention flexible working if they've already been thinking about how it might work for either yourself in particular or the team in general.

However the topic of flexible working is first raised, it's best to have an informal discussion with your manager so that you can explore different options before anything is formalised. Remember that the full process can take up to three months, so this initial conversation should take place well in advance of when you would like any new arrangements to start. Your manager should also let you know if they have any particular concerns at this stage; you can then address these if you decide to make a formal application. You can usually make one formal flexible working request every twelve months, so it's a good idea to discuss things informally first so that your formal application is as strong as possible if you decide to make one. Following the informal discussion, you may decide to go ahead with a formal request; alternatively, you might decide to postpone this until a more suitable time.

Some informal working arrangements don't constitute a contractual change and so don't need to go through the formal process. These tend to be very temporary in nature (normally a few days or weeks at most), although they should still be confirmed in writing with your line manager so that both of you have a record of what was agreed. Examples would be asking to leave work an hour early to attend a personal appointment, or asking to work from home on a one-off occasion. Before making a formal request, it's worth thinking about whether something like this might suit your circumstances better.

If you are still interested in the formal process, the next section will take you through the first stage: **2. Making a formal request.**



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