

# Flexible Working at LSE

## 3. Considering a formal request

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## Receiving the request

The manager should let the employee know that they have received the formal request and will consider it. It's in everyone's interests that the manager has all of the information they will need to make an informed decision, so they shouldn't hesitate to ask the employee if they need more details.

## What happens next

The manager now needs to properly consider the flexible working request. At times, for example if the request has already been discussed at length, the manager may be able to approve the request without much further discussion. Usually, though, the manager will arrange a formal meeting: this is a normal part of the process and is an opportunity to discuss the request and its practical implications in a little more detail. At the very least, this meeting should take place no later than 28 days after the request has been received – although it's usually preferable to meet much sooner. It's important to be mindful that the meeting may directly affect other considerations that the manager might not always be aware of – for example, if the employee has caring responsibilities that may require alternative arrangements depending on the outcome of the flexible working request.

### Receiving more than one request

At times, a manager may receive more than one request, close together, from different staff. If this happens, it's important to bear in mind that a decision about one request doesn't necessarily set a precedent for others. The manager may find it helpful to have a discussion with the staff involved, to explore if there is any room for compromise which could work for everyone.

## The formal meeting

There's an established format to the formal meeting, although some of the details will vary depending on the situation. The manager may find it helpful to read through this guidance note on **Preparing for the Formal Meeting**.

The meeting should be held in a private space (such as a meeting room) so that the request can be discussed openly, which may help all parties to reach a mutually agreeable solution.

The nature of the formal meeting will depend a little on the nature of the request. However, in general the meeting is an opportunity to:

- Talk constructively about the request and its practical implications
- Where appropriate, explore alternative arrangements that could suit the particular circumstances better
- Gather all relevant information so that the manager can make an informed decision which works for both the employee and the team

If the manager is already happy in principle with the employee's proposed work pattern (especially if they have already discussed the details informally), the formal meeting can be an opportunity to confirm how the arrangement will work in practice. For example, if the employee will be working from home, it's important to agree how they will stay in touch and how their workload will be managed.

If the manager has any reservations about the original request, there should be a discussion of potential compromises and alternative arrangements that could support the employee's work-life balance whilst also meeting the needs of the team.

### **When the meeting ends**

At the end of the meeting, the manager should let the employee know when they can expect to receive a decision. Sometimes, the manager may need to take some further advice or gather more information before reaching a final decision – if this happens, the manager should make sure that the employee is kept up to date with any developments.

**4. Making the decision** shows in more detail what goes into the outcome stage of the process.



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