Flexible Work Schedule

The University of North Texas supports the use of flexible work schedules that are designed to increase productivity and enhance work/life balance, while meeting the operating and customer service needs of each department. The availability of flexible work schedules is not intended to change a department’s regular hours of operation, nor does it alter the responsibility or diminish the authority of supervisors to establish and adjust work schedules.

Official work hours for UNT (and the State of Texas) are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

A flexible work policy was effective Jan. 1, 2009 for use at UNT in Denton.

Guiding Principles

Flexible work arrangements can be a useful method to support the university’s work while supporting employees' personal needs. Flexible work arrangements do not work for all employees or all types of jobs, but when used appropriately, they can enhance the employer/employee relationship. Studies show that work schedule flexibility can yield many benefits, including increased productivity, improved morale, decreased absenteeism and turnover and improved quality of work.

Flexible Work Arrangements are:

- Flexible. They provide variations in when and/or how work is done.
- Focused on overall business goals, rather than case-by-case accommodations to individuals.
- Planned and predictable.
- Structured to emphasize the long-term rather than the short-term.

Flexible Work Arrangements are not:

- An entitlement or reward.
- A secret arrangement or special deal.
- Suitable for every employee or every job.

Flexible work arrangements do not reduce the actual number of hours worked. Examples include:

- Non-traditional start and end times, i.e., 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., or 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Extended meal times offset by additional hours worked at the beginning or end of the shift, i.e., 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Start and end times individualized by day, i.e., 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday and Friday
- Compressed Workweek
- Longer work days with shorter work weeks
- Four 10-hour days and three days off
• Four 9-hour days with a half day off

Potential Benefits of Flexible Scheduling

• Decreased absenteeism due to health issues
• Decreased absences due to routine appointments
• Decreased turnover
• Decreased overtime/comp time worked
• Increased productivity
• Increased loyalty
• Increased health and well being
• Increased employee job satisfaction
• Increased employee initiative

Manager’s Responsibilities

• Consider the potential improvement of business/department needs when assessing flexible schedule proposals from employees.
• Seek input from other employees since a flexible schedule for one employee can impact all team members.
• Consider each proposal on its own merits.
• Seek feedback from colleagues experienced with supporting flexible work options.
• Ask for assistance or guidance from Human Resources.
• Clarify all expectations with the employee before implementing a flexible work schedule and discuss any questions or concerns.
• Consider adopting the new schedule as a pilot arrangement with a timeline.
• Communicate the new arrangement to other staff in the department and appropriate administrators and timekeepers.
• Monitor the successes and challenges.
• Evaluate the arrangement periodically, and have regular discussions with the employee.

Flexible work arrangements may require some adjustment in management style on the part of supervisors and may also require adjustments in communication to maintain accountability. The following steps can be helpful:

• Develop systems and structures that allow employees to respond to ever-changing work demands, such as having a back-up plan for coverage and communication when unexpected situations arise.
• Communicate explicitly and consistently about standards for accountability, quality and timeliness.
• Create a comfortable environment where employees can share concerns and creative ideas.
• Be open to experimenting and considering new ways of doing business.
• Read and understand the Flexible Work Schedule Policy.
• Consider setting time frames for requests (2 times per year or each fiscal year or ongoing.)
• Evaluate requests based on feasibility.
• Conference with department head.
• Complete form and communicate decision with employee.

Employee's Responsibilities

• Read and understand the Flexible Work Policy and its contents.
• Think through which flexible schedule options will meet both your needs and that of your unit.
• Discuss your interest in a flexible work arrangement with your supervisor/manager.
• Seek advice or counsel from others who are working a flexible schedule.
• Remember that not all positions and situations are appropriate for a flexible schedule.
• Consider how the arrangement you are considering would impact your work and the work of your colleagues.
• Include their feedback and need in your considerations.
• Complete the Flexible Work Schedule Form and provide to your supervisor to request a flexible schedule.
• Discuss your proposal with your supervisor.
• Make sure you and your supervisor have clarified all the details or concerns and understand expectations.
• Possibly try out the new schedule with a pilot arrangement.
• Monitor the successes and challenges and evaluate the arrangement periodically with your supervisor.