MIT | Office of the Vice Chancellor

OVC FlexWork Guidelines

OVC aims to encourage a diverse, flexible and adaptive work culture. The use of flexible work arrangements (dubbed FlexWork in this document) that align with the organizational goals of OVC offices can be mutually beneficial for employees.

When used properly, FlexWork options can be a powerful tool to recruit and retain talent and provide current staff with a greater level of control over how, where, and when work is accomplished. Numerous studies have shown that such increased autonomy can contribute to higher levels of employee wellbeing and satisfaction. Finally, it is vital to note that not all jobs are compatible with all types of FlexWork and an equitable, transparent approach to its implementation is imperative for success. The guidelines provide OVC employees with a clear and consistent process for requesting FlexWork, and provides OVC leadership with direction by which they may fairly and adequately consider an employee's request for a FlexWork arrangement.

Honoring the Principles

OVC leadership and managers will support the creation and implementation of a consistent, transparent and open culture of FlexWork, through these guiding principles, aligned with performance expectations for the highest level of quality, responsiveness and customer service, and will hold themselves and all staff accountable for honoring and supporting the OVC FlexWork Guiding Principles.

If a situation arises where a colleague is not honoring a FlexWork Guiding Principle, managers and employees will engage in a timely and constructive conversation directly to resolve the issue.

Guiding Principles

FlexWork is valued and supported

- The business case for flexibility across OVC offices is understood and supported.
- Offices will take a strategic and proactive approach to flexible work and employee work-life integration.
- FlexWork should not be a barrier to career progression.
- FlexWork is enabled by organizational systems and processes.
- FlexWork is led and role modelled by senior leadership.

FlexWork success is a shared responsibility

- Flexibility requires organizational accountability and individual responsibility. This means…
  - Employees and their managers take responsibility for positive outcomes and collaborate to make implementation work.
  - Managers and employees set clear expectations and determine how work will be evaluated.
  - Managers and employees should strive to discuss unexpected challenges and be willing to adjust in real time.

The process for determining FlexWork will be fair and transparent

- Information on FlexWork options will be made widely available.
- Managers/office heads are responsible for evaluating their team's work and determining what must be completed and by whom. It is essential that managers work with their employees to objectively and fairly ensure an equitable process when considering flexible arrangements.
- Decisions should be made without bias or favoritism. It is critical to remove personal bias from discussions and decisions about FlexWork arrangements.

- Decisions are based on individual, organizational and team considerations.
- The types of FlexWork approved will differ from role to role.
- An equitable process does not mean that all requests for flexible work will result in the same outcome.

FlexWork arrangements must align with the office goals and OVC's mission & values

- The achievement of office mission and goals is paramount and must be addressed in FlexWork decision-making, work design and scheduling. Employees must be able to fulfil the responsibilities of their positions regardless of FlexWork arrangement.
- The impact on all stakeholders should be considered.
- All forms of flexibility may not be suitable for every job. Decisions should be job-specific and job-appropriate.
- FlexWork arrangements should be responsive to the changing needs of the workplace and reviewed and updated as needs change.

Proposal and approval process

1. All OVC employees may request a FlexWork arrangement by completing a FlexWork form.
2. Employees and managers are encouraged to discuss and jointly complete the FlexWork forms. Alternatively, employees can complete a FlexWork Form and submit to your manager for discussion and consideration. Decisions about FlexWork will be based on specific job responsibilities, per the existing MIT Job Flexibility Policy 3.1. An equitable process does not mean that all requests for flexible work will result in the same outcome. The types of FlexWork approved will differ from role to role.
3. Once the form has been completed and signed by the employee and the manager, it will go to the director of the office for final approval.
4. FlexWork forms that are not approved by the manager and/or director should be forwarded to OVC HR for review to ensure fair and consistent application of the OVC FlexWork Guiding Principles.
5. Manager(s) should work with employees to determine the optimal combination of remote work and onsite work that best fits the needs of the organization and the employee. A hybrid approach is encouraged if it meets the needs of the office/team and the employee.
6. Occasional flexibility will continue to be available _without_ requiring completion of an FlexWork Form.
7. New hires may also request FlexWork. Managers and directors will determine the timeline for consideration and approval depending on the individual and the job responsibilities. In some situations, a person may be hired with an approved FlexWork arrangement.
8. Each FlexWork arrangement will be evaluated on an ongoing basis, and can be altered, amended or withdrawn at the request of either party at any time when performance or other concerns arise or business needs change. For newly approved FlexWork arrangements, a trial period, will be established to assess the effectiveness of the arrangement.

Work Location

- Regardless of work location, employees must maintain the highest level of quality, customer service, responsiveness, operational effectiveness and performance standards.
- Employees working remotely must be as responsive as they would be if they were physically in the office.

- Regardless of the employee's formal FlexWork arrangement, employees must come into the office if physical presence is required. Managers and directors will provide as much notice as possible when situations arise that require physical presence.

Communication and responsiveness are critical when working flexibly

- Employees who work remotely must have the technology required to meet their individual job responsibilities and ensure adherence to OVC PII Policy.
- This may include the ability to log into the VPN, and secure access to shared files to ensure important information is accessible to those who need it.
- OVC Offices will equip employees approved to work remotely with laptops to meet job responsibilities. Employees are responsible for having the necessary peripheral equipment to work remotely, including but not limited to, reliable internet access and home or cell phone, etc.
- Employees are expected to be responsive to all work-related communications, regardless of their work location per their established team communication norms and practices. This may include:
  - A group/shared calendar function (e.g., Outlook, white board, Excel) to record hours of availability.
  - A way for employees to be contacted (e.g., email, slack, cell #, preferred chat feature, instant messaging, etc.).
  - Forwarding their work number to either their off-site phone or cell phone for seamless accessibility.
- Meetings should be set up so both in-person and virtual participation is possible. Please refer to Work Succeeding Toolkit for Managers sections 4 and 5 for additional tips on creating inclusive meetings, communication and collaboration.

Accountability and trust are a shared responsibility between the OVC employees, teams, and managers

- Everyone (leadership, managers, and employees) will start with the assumption of positive intent when working on a FlexWork arrangement.
  - This means that all employees will assume remote staff _are_ working and should be included in daily work as if they were physically present.
  - Leadership/managers will measure productivity and accountability, regardless of whether a person is working in the office or remotely, by their job performance against established goals and the level of support and customer service they provide against operational effectiveness and performance standards.
  - Employees are expected to be responsive and accessible to colleagues regardless of where they are physically working. Although, it is understood that people may be on a call or doing focused work away from their computer.
  - The key to successful implementation of flexibility is to provide the highest level of quality and customer service regardless of when, where or how employees are working.
  - FlexWork arrangements require trust, collaboration, and reciprocal, mutual flexibility.
  - Employees, teams, and managers will work together to monitor FlexWork arrangements regularly and assure that they are still meeting operational effectiveness and performance standards.
  - Remote work cannot be used while caring for a dependent, or while performing other significant responsibilies.

- Non-exempt employees utilizing FlexWork arrangements are expected to adhere to lunch and attendance schedules agreed upon with their manager.
- FlexWork arrangements should not:
  - o Create undue burdens on other individuals
  - o Create overtime costs
  - o Create problems of safety, security, or supervision
- Employees who are approved to work remotely are expected to maintain performance, attendance, reliability and responsiveness as they would when they are physically working in the office.

Please familiarize yourself with MIT Policies and Guidelines

Policies

3.1 Flexible Work Arrangements

Employment Policy Manual (EPM) 3.1.1. Alternative Schedules

Employment Policy Manual (EPM) 3.1.2. Off-site Work

3.2 Performance Feedback. Performance Reviews and Corrective Action

7.10 MIT Employee Working Outside Massachusetts

Guidelines

Guidance on Providing Equipment for Working Remotely

Resources for Working Remotely

Obtaining Disability Services

Guidance on Purchasing and Tracking Items Shipped to Employees Homes for Remote Work