

The ultimate guide to negotiating flexible working conditions





Companies with the most engaged workforces offer flexibility and are focused on creating an inclusive culture where the reason for needing flexibility does not matter. Offering flexible work opportunities makes sense for everyone.

So whether you are a parent returning to work, or someone looking for flexibility because of other caring commitments, health reasons, sporting interests, looking for an alternative to retirement, or pursuing side projects, this guide to negotiating flexible working conditions is for you.

We have broken the guide down into three key steps:



1. Do your research



2. Create a plan



3. Have the conversation

The different types of flexible working

Before we discuss how you can approach working flexibly with your employer, it's important to understand the different types of flexible working. Flexibility means something different to everyone.

1

Part-time:

Employees are hired to work less than standard full-time hours

2

Shift swapping:

Employees arrange shifts amongst themselves provided all requirements are covered

3

Compressed hours:

Employees cover their standard working hours in fewer days

4

Staggered hours:

Employees have different start, break and finish times than standard hours

5

Job sharing:

One full-time job is split between two employees who agree the hours between them

6

Flexi-time:

Employees have the freedom to work in any way they choose outside a set core of hours determined by the employer

7

Term-time working:

An employee remains on a permanent contract but can take paid/unpaid leave during school holidays

8

Working from home/ Remote working:

Employees spend some or all of their week working from home or another premises other than the employers'

Did you know that WORK180 Endorsed Employers offer a variety of flexible working options?

Visit [our job board](#) and filter your job search to find a role that suits you!

1. Do your research



Anyone can request flexibility – but certain employees have a legal entitlement to request flexible working arrangements under the Fair Work Act. Employees who have this legal entitlement include employees (other than casual employees) who have worked with the employer for at least 12 months and long-term casuals who have a reasonable expectation of continuing employment with the employer on a regular and systemic basis. Also, the request must be because they are:

- a parent of, or have responsibility for the care of, a child who is school age or younger
- a carer (within the meaning of the Carer Recognition Act 2010)
- a person with disability
- aged 55 or older
- experiencing family violence, or
- providing care or support to a family member, or someone they live with, who is experiencing family violence.

Before you make your request for flexible working arrangements:

- See whether your employer has a formal HR Policy regarding flexible working – these can usually be found on the company intranet.
- Find out if there are any other employees working flexibly, whether that be under formal or informal arrangements.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has a range of great resources available, specifically around flexible working. If at any time you need more information or assistance, call the Fair Work Ombudsman Infoline on 13 13 94 or visit the [Fair Work Ombudsman website](#).

2. Create a plan



Before you approach your employer, it's important to create a plan around how the flexible arrangement will work. Think of this as your business case for working flexibly, considering the following questions on behalf of your employer:

- How is it going to work for the organisation?
- How is it going to work for your team?
- How is it going to work for your clients?
- How is it going to work for you?

Some questions to keep in mind when putting together your plan:

1

Does your employer have the technology and infrastructure to support a flexible arrangement?

2

How will your employer be able to measure work and productivity effectively?

3

How can you ensure expectations are set with clients and team members around hours of work?

4

What metrics can be put in place to measure the effectiveness of the flexible arrangement?

3. Have the conversation



Now the preparation work has been done – it's time to have the conversation with your employer. Of course, we will all have different relationships with our managers, so each approach will need to be carefully thought through depending on that relationship. Below are some general tips on how you can have the discussion:

1

Send your request with your business case to your employer. On the following page, you will find a letter template that you can use to submit your request.

2

Ask to meet with your manager to discuss the proposal. This might sound obvious, but it's important the discussion isn't had in an ad-hoc setting.

3

Have your business case ready and be able to clearly articulate how it's going to work.

4

Be prepared to negotiate a staggered approach such as working from home 1 day a fortnight initially to demonstrate its effectiveness.

5

Be confident! Research has shown countless times how employees with flexible work arrangements are some of the most productive in the workforce.

Tip! Make sure you put everything in writing and keep checking in with your manager to make sure the arrangement is working for both you and your employer.

Below is a letter that you can use as a template when submitting your request for flexible working arrangements with your employer.

<Date>

Private and confidential

Employee details:

<Your name>

<Contact details>

<Job title>

Subject: Request for flexible working arrangements

Dear <insert manager's name>,

I would like to request to work a flexible work arrangement that is different from my current working arrangement.

I am making this request

<to help me care for my child>

<because I am a carer>

<because I am 55 or older>

<because I have a disability>

<because I am experiencing violence from a member of my family>

<to help me to provide care or support to a member of my immediate family or a member of my household who is experiencing violence from their family>.

I can confirm that I have worked continuously as an employee of this business for the last 12 months and am employed on a <full-time basis/part-time basis/casual basis>.

I would like to start working <include a paragraph to describe the flexible working arrangements you require including the days/hours/times you would like to work>.

These changes will assist me because <insert reasons>.

I believe that the effects on the business and my colleagues such as; <include here any impact that may be occurred by your change in working arrangements>, can be accommodated by <identify ways the work can be performed and how impact to the business and your colleagues can be minimised>.

I would like this working arrangement to start from <insert date>.

I would appreciate your response to this request and am happy to discuss this matter at a time that is convenient. I am willing to discuss possible alternatives to the arrangements I have outlined and I am also willing to work with you to make sure that this arrangement works effectively for both the business and me.

Yours sincerely,

<Insert name>

Note: Don't forget to keep a copy for your own records.

Your original flex arrangements may need to be tweaked over time to suit your needs and the needs of the business. Being open and transparent about what is working and what isn't will help keep the conversation open and keep you and your manager on the same page.



We hope you have found this guide useful! Please keep an eye out for more guides and events WORK180 are offering to support you in your career. You can do this by following us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram and keeping an eye on the WORK180 website.

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