

Best Practices for Implementing Flexwork: Guidance for Supervisors

Supervisors play a critical role in developing, supporting, communicating and evaluating flexwork. Supervisors should consider the guidance below when working with employees to implement flexwork successfully.

Considering and Implementing Flexwork Arrangements

- Implement an equitable process for arranging flexwork, seeking assistance from Human Resources if needed. Please note that “equitable” does not mean that individuals’ arrangements will be identical or even similar.
- Use the [Flexible Work Proposal Documentation Form](#) to frame discussions with employees and to document the arrangement. Using this form will help you create an equitable process.
- Focus on the employee’s work and whether the needs of the college’s business can be met if the employee proposes flexwork. Do not focus on the employee’s reason for the request. Doing so can lead to bias or favoritism.
- Use your meeting with the employee as an opportunity to discuss the proposal. Through discussion, you and the employee may wish to modify the arrangement to better suit the needs of either the college, the employee, or both.
- All flexwork arrangements must be documented in writing, agreed upon by the employee and approved by the supervisor. Decisions not to approve a flexwork arrangement must also be documented in writing.
- Seek approval from the Vice President or leader of your division if an employee seeks:
 - To implement a schedule other than 3/2 or 4/1 with the majority of those days being on campus
 - To work remotely full time
- Confirm that the employee, and not the college, is responsible for securing, maintaining and paying for a reliable Internet connection.
- Confirm that the employee has reviewed St. Olaf’s IT security policy, which can be found [here](#).
- Confirm that the employee has reviewed the college’s information on ergonomics (which can be found [here](#)), has assessed the employee’s remote workspace, and understands that implementing any changes will be at the employee’s own cost.
- Set goals and determine timetables and dates for deliverables clearly in order to assess whether any flexwork arrangements have not achieved a net-positive or net-neutral impact on the business.

Communicating Flexwork Arrangements

- Develop a strong communication plan to manage and set expectations for employees who are engaging in flexwork.
- Underscore the importance of mutual accountability: determine the values, beliefs and core principles that govern the team’s interactions with each other and with students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni and other stakeholders.

- Ask the team to collaborate on and agree to basic and inclusive workplace practices and modes of communication with others.
- Establish the expectation that remaining in communication with team members, faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni and other stakeholders is essential to achieving the strategic plans of the college, the division and the department.
- Require team members to post their schedules, share their contact information, and keep their calendars up to date, indicating clearly when they may be working remotely.
- Determine expectations for responsiveness. Ask the team to collaborate and agree upon windows for responsiveness and attendance at meetings.
- Determine when and how team members will handle online meetings, calendars, and availability. Include options for remote attendance at meetings.
- Identify the communication tools to be used by employees.
- Determine formal and informal methods of communication: define how team meetings, 1:1 meetings, and other kinds of communication will take place.
- Evaluate the communication plan and assess both how well the plan is working and how well team members are following the plan.
- State clearly when team members are required to be available, whether in person or remotely, for “peak seasons,” when departments need all hands on deck to achieve their goals.

Reviewing Flexwork Arrangements

- Establish a trial period of 30 days for any new arrangement.
- Review flexwork arrangements at least annually and, if needed, more frequently to determine the success of the arrangement or the need for adjustments.

Declining Proposals for Flexwork Arrangements

- Give concrete reasons, documented in writing, about why the proposal does not achieve a net-positive or net-neutral result for the business. Explain in detail why the proposal is not adequate: is the role itself not suitable for the particular arrangement? does the proposal lack sufficient detail? Is there a history of underperformance in the role, including but not limited to written warnings? does the employee not have a reliable Internet connection?
- Meet with the employee and engage in a candid conversation about the proposal and the reasons for declining it.
- Document the contents of the conversation.
- If the situation or conversation is a challenging one, ask for support from Human Resources.

Useful Resources

- [Guide to Managing Teams When Working Remotely](#)
- [Guide to Managing Remote and Hybrid Individual Team Members](#)
- [Remote Work Resources](#)