



# Principles for Contractual Working Hours Arrangements

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## 1. Introduction


As part of our local pay negotiations, in February 2023, we agreed with our local trade union to reduce the full-time working week contractual hours for Professional Services colleagues from 36.25 hours per week to 35 hours per week, effective from 1 September 2023.

The normal contractual operating hours, based on a 36.25 week, are between 8.45am and 5pm. We have been engaging with Schools and Professional Service areas to explore the opportunity to adopt a different approach with the reduction in full-time contractual hours.

School Technical and Professional Service teams are encouraged to consider allowing greater flexibility around their operational working hours in alignment with the implementation of the 35-hour week. It is important however, to ensure operational needs continue to be met (recognising that there will be differences between teams and roles) in line with the principles below.

## 2. Contractual Working Hours Arrangements - Trial

The move to a 35-hour working week provides opportunity to provide increased flexibility around how contracted hours are worked, subject to operational requirements.



This change can lead to enhanced individual and team performance, as it allows for a better work-life balance – an increasingly important aspect for colleagues who have personal responsibilities and interests beyond work. Consequently, this approach supports our attraction and retention strategies.

To ensure operational and service requirements continue to be met, our intention is to trial a more flexible approach to working contractual hours for a six-month period. Once the trial has ended, we will gather feedback and consider the possibility of adopting this new approach in our future ways of working.

During the trial, teams are asked to regularly review any changes in the quality of the service provision as well as the application of the principles during the trial.

### 3. Eligibility

These principles apply to Professional Services Colleagues (including technicians).

It is however, recognised that flexibility around operational hours (start and finish times) may not be appropriate for all roles and teams, and this should be discussed and communicated locally within teams.

Please note, our academic colleagues continue to have flexibility in determining where and when they work, with notional working hours of 9am to 5pm.

### 4. Principles

These principles should be used to support discussions around the feasibility of implementing a more flexible approach to contractual working hours. It is, however, recognised that some teams are already working in this way and the principles will support these arrangements.

Whilst ensuring effective service delivery remains a priority for teams, eligible colleagues can have more choice, within certain parameters, on when they work their contracted hours.

- The success of adopting flexibility in start and finish times relies on trust. Individuals and teams have diverse needs and working styles, therefore the specific nature and possibilities of flexible arrangements may vary, both on an individual and team basis.
- To ensure a smooth implementation, it is important to establish clear goals and expectations, along with regular and well-structured discussions and ongoing communications.
- All colleagues should be honest and open about adopting this approach and share responsibility for making them work.
- Both colleagues and managers share responsibility for ensuring transparency and visibility of working hours and ensuring that contracted hours are fulfilled without negatively impacting the individual or team performance (this may include updating calendars and providing visibility and clarity to colleagues and managers for example).


- Colleagues adopting greater flexibility should accept that there is a responsibility to agree (and regularly review) expectations as well as offering a degree of flexibility in return.
- Greater flexibility should support and enhance service delivery. It is important to assess any impact that these arrangements have to ensure service delivery is not disrupted or negatively impacted.
- Additional flexibility should be based on roles and responsibilities, not grade.
- Introducing greater flexibility around working hours does not mean that colleagues are expected to regularly work beyond their contracted hours.
- The decision to introduce greater flexibility around working hours will be agreed locally and discussed with teams.
- Some front-facing teams may still be required to provide cover between the hours of 8.45am and 5pm due to operational needs. This will be discussed and agreed locally and may require flexibility from team members to ensure cover.
- It is recognised that certain teams and roles delivering front-line customer service or service delivery outside the University's regular opening hours, such as iPoint, cleaning, security, catering, portering and ENgage, will not be able to benefit from adopting this approach.
- If colleagues have a need for a fixed work pattern to support other commitments, it is advisable to complete a formal flexible working request.

## 5. Guidance for Adopting a Flexible Approach to Working Hours

Leadership teams are encouraged to discuss how the 35-hour week can be implemented for their teams, in line with their operational needs.

The following should be considered in an open-minded and creative way and parameters for application established locally:

- It is expected that there will be core hours for each area to ensure the successful delivery of the service provision and that teams are available during these times to meet operational requirements., e.g., between 10am and 4pm (unless there is an individual formalised agreed alternative pattern in place).
- Consider the 'bandwidth', i.e., the earliest and latest times between which contracted hours can be worked, e.g., between 8am and 6pm or 7.30am to 6.30pm or other suitable alternative.
- Is there still a need to continue provide operational activity from 8.45am to 5pm? If so, is there a requirement for a rota arrangement? Or can personal preferences cover this?
- Is there the possibility of flexibility on the day(s) that colleagues are working in a hybrid way, from home?
- How will you share what patterns colleagues are working, e.g., email signatures, calendars, shared rota?
- Are there any roles within the team, that are not eligible and is the rationale clearly outlined and understood?
- In some front-facing teams will there be a new agreed standard working day/service delivery times?

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- How will you communicate and share your parameters with colleagues and wider stakeholders?

## 6. Related Guidance

Hybrid Working Principles  
Workload Guidance for Managers  
Workload Guidance for Employees  
Flexible Working Policy