



Flex Work Program
FAQs

What is a “FlexWork” schedule?

- A schedule that provides employees some balance and flexibility, more time for life outside of work, an effectively higher rate of pay per hour worked.
- Also allows employees a chance to innovate and think of better ways to be more efficient (for example, make better use of meeting time or even reduce meetings).
- Helps improve cross-training.
- For those who have to work 5 days in a row during certain periods, it allows for a 5.5 hour reprieve from weekly work.

What is FlexWork?

FlexWork is a program designed to effectively reduce the work obligations for employees by, in essence, 5.5 hours per week (understanding that not every week will be perfect). For most areas this could mean one less day of work, or it could mean 5 days of work but for less hours per day. The goal is for the work week to still total 37.5 hours for payment purposes - inclusive of flex time.

The “bank” only refers to the internal method HR will be using to ensure that everyone has the time available to populate their time sheet or compensated absence report.

What FlexWork is Not

FlexWork is meant to provide a weekly “reprieve” from work for 5.5 hours. FlexWork is *not* an additional bank of Paid Time Off. It is not the same as vacation or sick time. It does not roll over or get paid out. Unless in an area where weekly reduction of time is not possible (e.g. Athletics, when sports are in season), employees should not be banking time for use all at once, otherwise the program is not working as intended.

We have asked supervisors to only allow banking for rare circumstances where an employee was simply unable to flex for that week. Again, if this cannot happen, then we have asked supervisors to discuss the situation with the Office of Human Resources.

Who is Eligible to Participate?

All full time non-instructional exempt (salaried) and non-exempt (hourly) employees are eligible to participate in the FlexWork program. This includes remote employees who are full-time.

This will not apply to part-time, seasonal, or temporary employees.

This does apply to 10 and 11-month full time employees (the bank HR will use to draw flex time will be prorated).

An Overview of the Flex Work Program

- Full time employees will work 32 hours per week, but the workweek is recorded as 37.5 hours. 5.5 of the hours will be considered “flex time”. One question asked was how we can still be considered full time when the federal government recognizes 35 hours as full time. The answer is that we are supplementing the work week, in essence, with 5.5 hours which will be paid.
- The work day is defined as 8am – 5pm (vs. 8:30am – 5pm). As an example, an employee who works a 4-day work week will work four 8-hour days (assumes a one-hour lunch).

An Overview of the FlexWork Program

- Employees are expected to meet requirements and expectations for performance and productivity laid out by their supervisor.
- An employee who is not meeting requirements and expectations will no longer be eligible to work the alternative schedule and will be placed on a different schedule, which will be communicated by their supervisor.
- The program is to be managed by each department, requiring plans and expected outcomes (which are shared with the Office of Human Resources). Flexibility within the departments is allowable as long as employees meet the status of “full time” under the program, and as long as all expectations are met.
- Employees may direct any questions to their supervisor or to the Office of Human Resources (315-792-3276 or hr@Utica.edu)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does FlexWork impact vacation and sick time?

A: No, FlexWork is completely separate from vacation, sick, or any other form of time off. Remember, since the work week is to be reduced and productivity expectations are still in place, we need employees here for 32 hours each week as often as possible. This also means there should be less “come in late/leave early” instances for routine appointments and obligations since there is an additional day off to do these things. Vacation and sick time will be recorded in 8 hour increments.

Q: Will employees be expected to use their flex time as sick time?

A: No. Sick time is a bank of time to be used specifically for sickness for yourself or your family.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How does FlexWork work if there is a University holiday or the campus is closed for a day during the week already?

A: Again, the expectation is that employees are at work for 32 hours, as often as possible. If a week has a Monday holiday, the overall expectation is that employees will be at work Tuesday – Friday with no additional pay above their normal weekly pay. The same holds true for closures due to inclement weather. Weeks that contain holidays will be considered “block out” weeks for flex time since most people will already be off. Those weeks will be excluded from flex time.

Note: Some have asked – for example - what happens if it is a holiday week, the holiday is on a Monday and therefore Monday is everyone’s flex day, but the employee’s normal flex day is Friday? The answer is that the employee will have already received their flex day but if they still need that Friday off for another reason, they may use their vacation time. Since we know holidays well in advance, we hope this helps employees to plan.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Must employees keep the same day off every week?

A: The method of staffing is up to the department supervisor who works with team members to devise a schedule that is fair, equitable, and meets the needs of the University. This could mean creating a fixed schedule where employees have the same day off each week, or it could mean the day varies from week to week based on staffing and other needs. Whenever possible, set schedules are encouraged but we realize it may not work everywhere. If an employee wishes to change their flex schedule either temporarily or indefinitely, the change must be approved by their supervisor. Supervisors may ask for advance notice of those changes.

ALL EMPLOYEES SHOULD RECORD THEIR FLEX SCHEDULE ON THEIR GOOGLE CALENDARS. EMPLOYEES SHOULD ALSO ADD THEIR FLEX SCHEDULE TO THEIR EMAIL SIGNATURE.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: If our office/staff situations allow for it, could we opt for a 30-minute lunch instead of an hour?

A: Yes. New York State Law requires employers to provide a 30-minute meal period for every 6 hours worked. The University has always provided an hour, but the requirement is for 30 minutes. Supervisors have the approval to offer 30-minute lunches as an option to make a schedule work as long as it meets all of the requirements for coverage and is equitable.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does FlexWork impact health benefits? Does it impact FMLA, Paid Family Leave, short or long term disability, or TIAA? Does it impact bereavement time?

A: No, the FlexWork is not connected to any of the above items. TIAA is not impacted.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I work in an area where it is nearly impossible to work only 4 days during certain times of the year and still get work done (e.g. Athletics, when sports are in season). What does that mean for me?

A: Supervisors in those areas work with employees to identify blocks of time where FlexWork is not possible, up front. Of course, this has to take into account the needs of our students first, as with any department. Supervisors are allowed to be as flexible as they need to be as long as it results in a full-time schedule, expectations are met, and the plans are fair and equitable.

Employees have a pre-populated bank of time based on 5.5 hours multiplied by the number of weeks that should have a flex day included. Weeks that have holidays in them will NOT be included in this calculation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will there be any block out weeks, or weeks when no one at the University may work a reduced number of hours/days?

A: Yes. The President reserves the right to identify block out weeks for the benefit of our students, and will communicate those accordingly. In addition, supervisors may also identify block-out weeks. For now, however, the official block out weeks are weeks that contain a holiday (see the Human Resources web page for holiday information).

Q: The earlier start impacts my life (daycare, dropoff, etc.). Will there be a way to help with that?

A: Again, supervisors are charged with devising schedules that are fair and equitable and take into account the University's needs, but also needs like this. We need offices covered from 8am – 5pm and rely on supervisors and their teams to make it work so that people are not negatively impacted. If an employee needs to work shorter days for 5 days instead of working a 4-day week, that is allowable with supervisory approval.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the expectation of availability on my day off?

A: Department supervisors should consider an employee unavailable on their day off. That being said, if there is a University emergency, it is our hope that employees would help as needed. This should be a rarity.

Q: What happens if I cannot keep up with our workload due to FlexWork? Is there compensation if we come in “extra?”

A: Exempt employees are required to work the number of hours needed to complete all assigned tasks and meeting all operational requirements. Non-exempt employees who work more than 32 hours but less than 37.5 will not receive additional pay because they are already being compensated for 37.5 hours. If they work more than 37.5 hours they will be compensated for the extra, and if they work over 40 (actual hours worked) they will be eligible for overtime in accordance with applicable law.

Remember – the goal is for departments to work on efficiency so that the final result is that everyone can take advantage of reduced hours.

If employees are absolutely unable to avail themselves of flex time (must be confirmed by supervisor) for a particular week, the supervisor may “bank” that flex time to use at another time, preferably within the same pay period or month. But this should be a rarity. If it is not, the supervisor should speak with the employee about alternatives and talk to the Office of Human Resources.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: If I am in a one-person or two-person office and there is little opportunity for alternating, how can we make it work?

A: It is incumbent on your supervisor to help you explore ways to cross train, even if it means collaborating with other areas. If that is still not possible, you may explore other options. For example, you may decide that you will work 5 days per week but get a large block of time off during a less busy season.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: For those of us who are hourly and will be doing a 4-day week, for example, how do we fill out our time sheets?

A: The work day will be worth 8 hours now. Your “day off” will be coded as “Flex Time” for 5.5 hours, to total 37.5 hours. This will ensure that you are paid for the full 37.5 hours.

Q: For salaried employees, does this impact our Compensated Absence reports?

A: Exempt employees need to record vacation and sick days as 8-hour days and flex day as 5.5 hours on the Compensated Absence report. We need to think of paid time off (vacation, sick, flex, etc.) as a bank of HOURS and not a bank of DAYS in order for this to work. Ultimately, people will have enough hours to fill a time sheet. Exempt employees must, at a minimum, record any Flex Time they used on their monthly compensated absence report. This can be done on a daily or weekly basis, as long as it is captured.

ON TIME LEAVE REPORT AND TIME SHEET COMPLETION ARE CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS PROGRAM

Other Questions?

Please contact us at hr@utica.edu or call (315) 792-3276