Flexible Working Policy

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the Flexible Working guidance.

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1. Introduction

Glasgow Caledonian University acknowledges the benefits of flexible working in enhancing employee wellbeing, engagement, and productivity. By promoting a healthy work-life balance, the University helps employees balance work with other priorities such as caregiving, learning, and leisure.

While face-to-face interaction remains central to the University's campus-based identity, flexible and hybrid working options are available when suitable. This approach reflects the University's strategy and values of inclusivity, wellbeing, and sustainability.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Glasgow Caledonian University employees, regardless of contract type, service length, or job role. It offers individuals the opportunity to make a formal request for flexible working on an open-ended basis. A trial period of up to maximum of 3 months can also be agreed (or extended beyond 3 months if mutually agreeable by both parties). Employees can make two requests in a 12-month period.

This policy does not cover agency staff, as their employment terms are governed by their agency.

3. Policy Statement

This policy outlines the steps employees and managers must follow when submitting and managing flexible working requests, based on the latest legislative changes and in line with the **ACAS Code of Practice** for Flexible Working requests (Acas Code of Practice on requests for flexible working | Acas).

The ACAS Code of Practice provides guidance to employers and employees on the statutory right to request flexible working as set out in the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended) and regulations made under it.

The University is committed to accommodating flexible working arrangements, providing they meet the needs and objectives of both the University and the employee.

This policy is not part of the employment contract and may be revised at any time.

4. Eligibility

Flexible Working is a way of working that helps meet an employee's needs by way of hours or location of work, for example having flexible start and finish times, compressed hours, changing to part-time or term-time only working or working from home on specific days.

All employees with an employment contract ('employees') have a statutory right to make a formal request for flexible working from their first day of employment, however, there is no guarantee that the request will be approved. Each request will be considered based on business needs and

feasibility. Staff may now make two requests within a 12-month period, and each application will be considered on its own merits. Only one request can be active at a time until a decision is made, the request is withdrawn, or an agreement is reached.

As employees can make two requests within a 12-month period, any agreed changes will be open-ended unless a trial basis of 3 months is agreed (or extended beyond 3 months if mutually agreeable by both parties). If a change to an employee's working arrangements is agreed, People Services will issue a contract variation to reflect the agreed change.

Flexible working arrangements may include annualised hours, compressed hours, flexi-time, hybrid working, job sharing, part-time work, remote work, staggered hours, trimester working, phased retirement, or career breaks.

Appendix 1 provides details of the types of requests and the impact these have on contractual arrangements.

Where flexible working is being implemented as a reasonable adjustment under disability legislation or to address a health issue it will be considered under the rules applying to GCU's duty under those laws. These requests will be handled through the Health & Wellbeing process, with guidance from Occupational Health and support from People Services.

5. Purpose

This policy is designed to explain the types of circumstances in which the University will consider requests for flexible working and outlines the management arrangements required to support these types of working arrangements.

The University operates different Hybrid Working arrangements at a local level within teams and departments in line with the published Hybrid Working Principles. This policy deals with individual requests to vary from the locally-agreed model.

6. Submitting a Flexible Working Request

Employees have the statutory right to submit **two flexible working requests** within a **12-month period**, effective from their first day of employment.

To submit a request, employees must:

- Submit the request by completing the form (**see Appendix 3**) and sending to their line manager.
- Include details of the requested changes (hours, times, or place of work).
- Specify the desired start date for the changes.
- Confirm if a previous request was made within the past 12 months.
- If a request is missing any required information, the employee will be notified and asked to resubmit the request with the necessary details within the required timescales
- For further details on the process, please refer to GCU's Flexible Working guidance.

7. Handling Requests for Flexible Working

The University is committed to providing a range of working patterns for its workforce, however it is recognised that not all types of flexible working arrangements will be suitable for all roles.

In line with the ACAS Code of Practice, management will consider a number of criteria including (but not limited to):

- The cost of the proposed arrangement.
- The effect of the proposed arrangement on students, clients, employees and key stakeholders.
- The level of supervision of the department and employee resources.
- Other organisational aspects specific to the individual's department.
- A review of the tasks specific to the role, including duration and frequency.
- A review of the workload of the role.
- Alternative options if the original request cannot be met.

Upon receiving a request, line managers must:

- Handle the request in a **reasonable manner**, considering the potential impact on both the employee and the University. Please refer to the Flow Chart **(Appendix 2).**
- Seek advice from **Resourcing@gcu.ac.uk** before making a decision if agreeing to the request is not straightforward.
- Consult with their **Dean/Director**, as the final decision must be made by the line managers Dean or Director.
- Consult with the employee if the request cannot be approved as submitted. This discussion should explore potential modifications or alternative solutions.

Ensure the request is managed within the statutory **two-month timeframe**, including any appeals. Both parties can agree to extend this period.

8. Consultation Process

If the line manager cannot approve the request outright, a **consultation meeting** should be held:

- The meeting must be conducted **without delay**, allowing both the employee and their line manager time to prepare.
- The staff member may request support from a Trade Union colleague.
- Discussions should focus on how the request might benefit or impact the organisation and explore compromises or adjustments.
- Requests must not be rejected without exploring all possible alternatives.

9. Communicating a Decision

Once a decision is made, the line manager must:

- Confirm the decision **in writing** with final approval from their **Dean/Director.**
- If the request is approved, outline the agreed changes, review periods, advise that the

change/s are open-ended or on a trial basis of 3 months and advise People Services.
- If the request is approved, the employee's holiday entitlement and earnings should be adjusted accordingly, and confirmed in writing.
- If the request is rejected, clearly explain the **business reasons** (e.g., cost, impact on quality, or performance) and advise People Services.
- Offer the employee an opportunity to **appeal** the decision.
- Ensure the employee has a reasonable opportunity to attend any consultation meetings. However, if the employee fails to attend both the original and a rearranged meeting without a valid reason, the request may with withdrawn.
- Inform the employee in writing if the request is considered withdrawn.

10. Considerations for Rejection

Requests may be denied for business reasons, including:

- Increased costs.
- Detrimental effect on performance or service delivery.
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff.
- Insufficient work during the requested hours.
- Planned business changes.

11. Appeals Process

If the employee wishes to appeal, the following process will be undertaken in line with GCU's guidance:

- The appeal must be submitted within **7 working days** of the decision outcome being delivered.
- The appeal should present the grounds for the appeal, in line with GCU guidance.
- The appeal will be reviewed by an Executive Lead, out with the Area for impartial consideration.
- People Services will provide support and guidance to the Executive Lead to ensure they are equipped to hear the appeal in a fair and knowledgeable manner. The Executive Lead will carry out a paper-based review of the full details of the original flexible working application, copies of notes from all meetings, and full details of the appeal. A decision will then be confirmed in writing.
- All requests, including appeals, must be decided within **2 months'** of receiving the request. Any extensions must be mutually agreed and confirmed in writing.

12. Appeal Decision

- The employee will be notified of the outcome of their appeal within the **2 months'** time scale.
- This period may be extended by mutual agreement between the employee and People Services.
- The appeal decisions if final.

13. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

The University is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all, supported by an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) framework Promoting Equality and Diversity . This framework is reinforced by an EDI working group and a range of policies that apply to all employees, promoting and safeguarding equality of opportunity. All employees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this framework and its principles.

Aligned with The University's Values and Behaviours, the University is dedicated to preventing discrimination or unfair treatment based on protected characteristics and/or identity, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Additionally, all employees are responsible for treating others with fairness and respect, fostering an inclusive culture that values diversity and upholds dignity in the workplace. An Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted for this policy and is included in **Appendix 5.**

14. Monitoring and Review

This Policy will be continuously monitored, with feedback from all participants, focusing on its impact on employee wellbeing, engagement, new working methods, and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). This Policy and its effectiveness will be evaluated through the annual Staff Survey and other feedback channels, including the People Managers' Forum and specialised surveys.

Appendix 1: Types of Flexible Working:

- This option enables employees to reduce their working hours.
- Employees should gather information about the impact on salary, pension, and other benefits before requesting part-time work.
- Part-time employees are entitled to the same pay rates and holiday (pro rata) as full-time employees in similar positions, as well as equivalent (pro rata) entitlements for pension, maternity leave, sick pay, training, and promotion.
- Any reduction in hours will be open ended, and therefore it will not be possible to request to return to full-time work through this process.

Job-Share:

- Job sharing is a specific form of part-time work where two individuals share all responsibilities of a position. Alternatively, some roles may be better suited to two part-time positions rather than a job share;
- Job sharing is most effective when both workers have overlapping hours each week to facilitate information handovers and allow attendance at team meetings.

Compressed Hours:

- Compressed hours allow employees to fulfil their total contractual hours by working longer hours on certain days in exchange for shorter or no hours on other days.
- Annual leave will be prorated if an employee works less than 5 days per week.

Staggered Start and Finish Times:

- Staggered hours typically involve individuals or teams working set "core hours" during which they must be present, with flexibility on either side for choosing start and finish times, provided total contractual hours are met.

Term-time working:

- This flexible working option may be attractive to parents and caregivers of school-aged children who prefer to work only during term time.
- Salaries are spread over twelve months, with annual leave taken outside term time.

Annualised hours:

- Employees are required to work a certain number of hours annually but have flexibility regarding when those hours are completed.

Flexible retirement and Part-time working:

- Members of the USS, SPF and STSS Pension Schemes may apply for flexible retirement (subject to eligibility) and access part of their pension benefits if they reduce their working hours. Employees are encouraged to discuss the possibility of reducing hours with their line manager if considering flexible retirement.

- Once a Full Flexible Retirement Quotation is received, formal applications for part-time work and flexible retirement should be submitted. Managers will consider requests in line with this procedure. For more information about the USS Flexible Retirement scheme and application process, please visit the Pension Services website and Retirement guidance.

Remote and Hybrid Working:

- Employees may also request to work remotely on certain days on an open-ended basis by submitting a flexible working request.

The University has chosen to take a flexible, task-based approach to hybrid working. Hybrid Working describes a mode of working where colleagues spend some of their working hours or days at their normal, contractual place of work, and can arrange to spend some of their time working remotely.

The exact balance of on campus and remote working will vary depending on the activity you and your team are involved in, and your own specific role and responsibilities.

There are a number of practical considerations to be made in relation to home working:

- A clear understanding that the staff member can be contacted by GCU email and MS Teams throughout the day, unless agreed otherwise
- The staff member should still work within the core hours (i.e. times of day) relevant for their role, unless agreed otherwise
- Assurance that the staff member has a suitable work space with the equipment and resources required to do the work
- Assurance that the staff member is aware of work station health & safety requirements (e.g. by completing online training required for all staff using display screen equipment)
- Assurance that arrangements for working at home comply with information security requirements (e.g. through completion of required online training)

Receiving a Request

- When an employee requests a hybrid workplace arrangement, handle the request informally. Discuss the proposed arrangement and consider whether it can be accommodated based on business needs, team impact, and the employee's role. Hybrid work requests may be regular (e.g., set days each week) or ad-hoc, depending on work demands.
- If the employee needs a permanent change to their working hours or days, advise them to make a Flexible Working request.
- Hybrid arrangements are tied to the employee's current role and will not transfer automatically to future positions. If they apply for a new role, ensure they discuss the feasibility of retaining their hybrid arrangement with the hiring manager.

Employee Responsibilities

- Engage positively in flexible working discussions, considering alternative arrangements where

necessary.
- Follow the policy requirements, respond promptly, and attend scheduled meetings to facilitate decisions within the two-month period.
- For approved flexible or hybrid working arrangements, employees are expected to make reasonable efforts to attend critical meetings or training sessions that fall outside their usual working hours. Coordination with the line manager is required to arrange compensatory time off at a later date.
- Seek independent financial advice when reducing hours due to potential pension impacts.

Manager Responsibilities

- Approach flexible working requests openly and fully explore alternatives if the original request is not feasible.
- Seek final approval/provide reasons for rejection to Dean/Director before advising employee.
- Follow the policy guidelines, respond promptly, and attend meetings to ensure requests are processed within the two-month window. Follow the policy guidelines, respond promptly, and attend meetings to ensure requests are processed within the two-month window. This includes appeals, which should also be heard within the two-month period. Any extensions to this timeframe should be clarified and agreed upon by both the employee and the university.
- Consult with ER Managers in People Services when deciding on flexible working requests.
- Discuss alternative options with employees before rejecting their flexible working request.
- Refer to the Flexible Working - Guidance for People Managers for support as required

People Services Responsibilities

- Provide policy guidance to managers and employees.
- Assist managers in preparing outcome letters.
- Process and administer changes to working arrangements and terms for approved flexible working requests & monitor and review the overall process.
- Support appeals process.

Health and Safety

When an employee is working from their remote working location they continue to have the same health and safety duties as any other. For instance, they must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be reasonably be affected. All employees must continue to comply with the University's Safety, Health and Wellbeing Policy, complete work station/DSE online training and undertake to use equipment safely.

To identify any potential health and safety hazards at a remote working location and take appropriate steps to minimise risk, the University retains the right to carry out a health and safety risk assessment (either remotely or by arranging a visit). The employee must ensure that their working patterns and levels of work when working from their remote working location are not detrimental to their health and wellbeing.

If an employee has concerns about their health or wellbeing arising as a result of their workload or working pattern, they should inform their line manager without delay so that measures to deal with this can be explored.

Employees must use their knowledge, experience and training to identify and report any health and safety concerns to their line manager without delay. For further information, please visit our Health and safety webpages.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessment

Employees who work remotely, even occasionally, must complete a Workstation Display Screen Equipment Assessment for their remote workstation. Line managers are responsible for ensuring this assessment is completed.

Reporting Accidents/Near Misses

Employees must follow University procedures to report any work-related accidents or incidents that occur while working remotely.

Personal Details and Safety

Employees should always use the following for work-related matters:

- The address of their GCU Department/School/Institute for receiving work-related mail, and are responsible for collecting it from campus.
- Microsoft Teams or a GCU mobile/landline phone number for communication.
- A meeting room on campus for meetings with students or other clients, avoiding home meetings.

Wellbeing

The University recognises that hybrid working can pose unique challenges for overall and digital wellbeing. To address potential issues, such as maintaining a healthy work-life balance, we are taking proactive measures. These include:

- Encouraging Line Managers to discuss wellbeing and mental health during regular PDAR meetings and fostering support networks within teams.
- Working strictly during office hours and incorporating short walks at the beginning and end of the day to create a mental boundary between work and personal life.
- Consistently working from the same space, ideally from a dedicated home office setup.

The University understands that hybrid working may not suit everyone, and employees who prefer not to participate in hybrid arrangements can continue with full campus-based work.

The University has a Strategic Framework for a University-wide approach to Health and Wellbeing and further information can be found on the People Services SharePoint pages.

Equipment and Suitable Workspace

The University will provide the necessary equipment for employees to work from the University Campus/ remote locations. Any equipment provided remains the property of the University, and employees must:

- Use it solely for its intended purpose and by authorised users.
- Take reasonable care of the equipment and follow our policies and procedures.
- Make it available for collection upon request.

The University is not responsible for providing, maintaining, or repairing personal equipment used by employees while working remotely. This includes the purchase of consumables for personal devices.

Employees must keep any University equipment secure when traveling between remote and work locations. Employees are responsible for ensuring they have a suitable workspace at their remote location, including adequate lighting. If this is not feasible, the employee must work from campus, where the University will provide a suitable setup.

For those regularly working remotely, the University will provide a laptop, monitors, office phone/headset, and wireless router in good working order. Requests for such equipment must be authorised by the Line Manager and approved by IT on a case-by-case basis.

Data Security and Confidentiality

Employees are responsible for safeguarding confidential information when working remotely or travelling. If these responsibilities cannot be met, employees will be required to work on campus, whereby the University will provide a secure setup.

When working remotely, employees must:

- Adhere to relevant University policies and guidelines for the use of IT equipment, Data Protection.
- Maintain privacy for confidential calls.
- Prevent others from accessing confidential information.
- Use a secure wireless network.
- Keep printed confidential documents secure and dispose of them by shredding when no longer needed.

All work for the University must adhere to security and confidentiality standards. Responsibilities include:

- Using strong, unique passwords for devices.
- Storing work only in GCU-approved platforms (e.g., OneDrive, Teams, SharePoint).
- Avoiding the use of personal devices or removable media for GCU information.
- Locking storage and avoiding public or unsecured Wi-Fi for sensitive data.
- Ensuring no unauthorised software is installed on GCU equipment.

University equipment must only be used by employees, not by family members or others. Remote printing and scanning costs are not covered by GCU.

Upon leaving employment, all equipment must be returned securely, and confidential waste must be disposed of properly, with minimal reliance on paper records.

Insurance Requirements

Employees are responsible for evaluating their own personal implications of remote working. This includes discussing potential impacts with their mortgage provider, landlord, or home insurer. Additionally, they are responsible for the care and security of any University property in your possession.

Visas and Immigration

Employees sponsored by the university under UKVI Tier, Skilled Worker, and Tier 5 Government Authorised Exchange must ensure that hybrid working complies with visa conditions and Home Office reporting requirements. Therefore, managers and sponsored employees must:

- Consult People Services before adopting flexible or hybrid working.
- Not begin any flexible or hybrid working arrangement without People Services approval.
- Any approved changes to working arrangements must be reported to the Home Office within **10 working days** of its commencement.

Appendix 2: Table Outlining Responsibilities for Employees, Managers and People Services for Handling Requests

Time Scale – Day	Process	Responsible Person	Action
Day 1	**Submitting the Form**	Employee	Completes and submits the flexible working application form to their Line Manager.
Day 1	**Receiving the Form**	Line Manager	Receives the full, completed application, this starts day 1 of the initial review process.
Days 3-10	**Initial Discussion and Review**	Line Manager	Holds a meeting with the employee to discuss options and clarify details. Decision timeframe starts, aiming to finalise within 14 days.
Days 3-10	**Initial Discussion and Review**	Line Manager	Considers the application and consults their Dean/Director.
Day 15	**Decision Point**	Line Manager/Dean/Director ***If Approved*** **-** Line Manager ***If Declined*** **-** Line Manager	Must approve or decline the request within 15 days. Notifies the employee and submits the approved form to People Services (Resourcing Team resourcing@gcu.ac.uk) by Day 15 and for this to be logged. Informs the employee of the outcome but discusses alterative options and the business reasons for denial. Notifies People Services (Resourcing Team **resourcing@gcu.ac.uk**) for documentation and for this to be logged.
Days 16-18	**People Services Documentation**	People Services (Resourcing Team)	Sends a formal confirmation letter to the employee, outlining either the new work arrangement (if approved) or reasons for denial (if declined). Workforce Planning Team to be informed.
Days 18-21	**Appeals Process**	Employee	Employee decides to appeal and submits the appeal form to their Line Manager and People Services (Resourcing Team **resourcing@gcu.ac.uk**) within 7 days of receiving the denial.
Days 22-25	**Appeals Process**	People Services (Resourcing Team)	An Executive Lead, out with the area will consider the grounds for appeal and carry out a paper-based exercise which will review all paperwork, meeting notes and letters issued as part of the original request.

Days 30-40	**Appeal Outcome**	Executive Lead	Appeal paperwork considered and reviewed.
Days 40-45	**Appeal Outcome**	Executive Lead	Executive lead will provide decision for the appeal in writing.
Days 46-59	**Appeal Outcome**	People Services (Resourcing Team)	Sends a final letter to the employee confirming the appeal decision.

Appendix 3: Flexible Working Application Form

Please refer to the University's Flexible Working Guidance before completing the application form to request formal flexible working arrangements.

The fully completed form should be submitted (emailed) to your line manager for consideration and cc resourcing@gcu.ac.uk.

Once this form has been submitted, this will start the day 1 process from the overall 2 months' time scale and be logged upon receipt. (Please see the Flow Chart below for further guidance on timelines. This form must then be approved by your Department's Dean/Director.

I would like to apply for a formal flexible working arrangement and outline my request below:

Personal Details

Name:	
Date:	
Role and School/Department:	
Pension Scheme:	

Eligibility to Make a Request

I confirm that I am eligible to make a flexible working request because: ☐ I am a current employee employed on a Glasgow Caledonian University employment contract. ☐ I have not made more than two flexible working requests during the past 12 months.
Please provide details of any formal live requests for flexible working (including changes in hours):

My Current Working Pattern

Hours per Week (e.g. 35):		Days Worked (e.g. Mon – Fri):	
Start & Finish Times (e.g. 9-5):		Place of Work:	

My Proposed Working Pattern

I need to work flexibly to… [provide reason/s for the request]:			
I propose the following changes [please complete as applicable to the request]:			
Type of Flexible Working (e.g. part-time, compressed hours, career break)		Open Ended or Fixed Term Basis (duration, if applicable):	
Proposed Effective Date:		Proposed Hours per Week (e.g. 28):	
Proposed Number of Days to be Worked (e.g. 2 days):		Proposed Days to be Worked (e.g. Mon – Wed):	
Proposed Start & Finish Times (e.g. 9-5):		Proposed Place of Work:	

Please sign and date this form in the space below and submit it to your manager for their consideration.

Signature:	Date of Request:

Your line manager will consider the request and discuss with the Dean/Director before any commitment is made, within a reasonable timeframe. A meeting may be arranged with you to discuss your application and consult with you before reaching a decision.

Timescale: A decision, including any appeal, will be communicated within two months of the date of your request.

For further information please refer to the Flexible Working Guidance

For Management use only - (please discuss with resourcing@gcu.ac.uk before communicating decision)

Date Application Received:		Date of Consultation Meeting (if applicable):	
Request Declined - Please Detail Reason/s for the Decision:			

Request Approved - Please Confirm Full Details of Flexible Working Arrangement Agreed with Staff Member:			
Dean/Director Name:		Dean/Director's Title:	
Signature:		Date Approved:	

Appendix 4: FAQ's for Employees and

Managers What is flexible working?

The term 'flexible working' means a working arrangement that meets the needs of both the employee and the employer where there is some flexibility on how long, where, when and at what times employees work.

What is the new Employment Legislation in regards to flexible working?

The Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023 have been updated so that making a flexible working request is now a day-one statutory right for all employees for requests made on or after 6 April 2024. Previously employees had to have 26 weeks continuous service.

The Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023, has also been amended. Employees do not have a right to flexible working but they do have a right to make a flexible working request.

What are the flexible working changes in 2024?

As well as having the right to request flexible working from day-one:

- Employees can now make 2 flexible working requests every 12 months, as opposed to the previous single request.
- The Act has reduced the time limit for employers to deal with flexible working requests from 3 to 2 months, although this can be extended if the employee agrees.
- Employers must consult with an employee before refusing a request.
- This new legislation removes the need for employees to explain or justify the impact of the proposed change to their working arrangements.

What is classed as Flexible working?

There are many different types of flexible working. For example:

- part-time hours
- staggered hours
- remote working
- working from home
- hybrid working
- flexitime
- job sharing
- compressed hours
- annualised hours
- term-time working
- team-based rostering
- other ways of working

Who is excluded?

Self-employed, agency workers, consultants, and directors without employment contracts are excluded.

What are the benefits of flexible working?

Flexible working can benefit both employees and managers.

For employees, it can help:

- balance work with their personal responsibilities, needs and preferences
- improve health and wellbeing
- open up more jobs to them

For managers, it can help:

- attract and keep staff
- their employees be more productive
- keep employees happy and motivated
- recruit for jobs that are hard to fill
- improve equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI).

As an employer, it's good practice to have a policy on flexible working. A policy can help managers and employees discuss and agree flexible working in a consistent way.

What details must an employee include when making a statutory request for flexible working?

They must complete the flexible working request form **(Appendix 3)** and include the following information:

- The date of the request
- The change they are requesting to the terms and conditions of their employment in relation to their hours, times, days or place of work
- The date they would like the change to take place from
- If and when they have made a previous request within the last 12 months (to the same employer)
- If they are requesting this due to disability or caring needs which are covered by the Equality Act (see more information below).

An employee is only allowed to have one live request for flexible working with their current employer at any one time. Once a request has been made it remains live until any of the following occur:

- You have decided if their application has been successful or unsuccessful.
- The employee withdraws their request.

- An outcome has been mutually agreed.
- The statutory 2-month period for deciding has ended.

Formal Request:

The employee must submit their request to you, copying in People Services (Resourcing Team **resourcing@gcu.ac.uk**) by completing GCU's Flexible Working form **(Appendix 3)** including:

- Date of the request and desired change.
- Confirmation they are making a statutory request.
- Any previous flexible working requests.

Discussion:

- Ensure the Flexible Working Request Application form has been fully completed before proceeding.
- Hold a formal meeting to discuss the request.
- Discuss with your Dean/Director as they will have to approve the change.
- Give written notice of the meeting, and let the employee bring a representative if they wish.
- Use the meeting to understand the employee's reasons and explore any compromises.
- Do not hesitate to ask necessary questions to fully understand the request.

Decision:

- Inform the employee of your decision in writing within two months.
- If rejecting the request, explain the business reason based on established justifications, however, you must meet with your team member and discuss alternative options.
- Update the People Services Resourcing Team **resourcing@gcu.ac.uk** to advise of the outcome and to have the request logged.

Trial Period:

- If unsure about a permanent change, agree to trial the arrangement for a 3-month trial period.
- Then review and decide whether to make it permanent or revert to the previous working pattern, with reasoning provided in writing.

What if my team member is on Maternity Leave and makes a Flexible Working Request?

If the employee returning from maternity leave makes a flexible working request, ensure the process is formal and documented. Even informal discussions must be clearly communicated in writing to avoid misunderstandings.

Key Points to Remember:

- Explore alternatives with the employee if the initial request presents challenges and advise them to update their Flexible Working request **(Appendix 3).**
- Ensure any request works for the University and provide clear justifications if not.
- Approve requests based on their individual merits without setting a precedent for others, however, every request must be handled in a reasonable manner.
- Flexible working requests can be sensitive, so handle them with care.
- If an employee makes a request due to their disability, you must consider the request in line with its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and speak to People Services **casework@gcu.ac.uk** for further advice.
- If the request has been accepted and involves a change in salary and/or annual leave and is either a temporary trial or permanent change to their contract of employment, send the form and details to the resourcing team at People Services **resourcing@gcu.ac.uk**.

What are acceptable reasons for rejecting or refusing a request?

A decision to reject a request must be for one or more of the following reasons which are set out in the Employment Rights Act 1996:

- The burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to recognise work amongst existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- Planned structural changes

Do I have to consult with my team member before deciding if their application is successful or not?

Yes, you must not reject a request without consulting your employee. If you decide to agree to their request in full, you must consult with them before deciding to discuss their request.

What should I do if I cannot accept the request and have to reject it?

You should meet with the employee to see if there are any alternatives first of all, if not, you should provide them with a written decision which clearly explains the reasons as to why their request has been rejected. Your written decision should make it clear that the employee can appeal the decision.

My team member has changed their mind and wants to withdraw their Flexible Working request application, what happens now?

You should treat the application as withdrawn under the statutory provisions whereby:

- The employee notifies you in writing, that they wish to withdraw their request.
- Without reasonable cause, they fail to attend a meeting to discuss their application or an appeal more than once.
- You should confirm the withdrawal of their application in writing.

How do flexible working arrangements fit in with absence or leave? Sickness Absence:

Employees on flexible working arrangements must follow the same sickness absence reporting procedures as other staff.
If an employee is unwell on a scheduled workday (whether remote or on campus), the absence should be recorded as per the university absence policy.
If the employee works flexible hours and falls ill outside of their scheduled work period, it should not count as an absence.

Annual Leave:

Leave entitlement should be recalculated when a flexible working arrangement is in place, people services will offer further guidance on case by case as entitlement may change and is usually pro-rated.

Employees should book leave based on their agreed working pattern, ensuring it aligns with their contracted hours.

What if I find that the Flexible Working model is causing operational issues during a trial period?

Any operational issues should be addressed through regular reviews. Performance-related issues should be managed normally. For further guidance, contact People Services (Casework Team **casework@gcu.ac.uk**).

How can I manage my team when they are working from home?

If you have employees working flexibly/hybrid, this means clarity around performance expectations and effective communication is critical. It is also important to ensure that any performance issues are promptly addressed and you meet with them regularly.

You should also plan on-site days strategically and ensure employees have the equipment needed to work remotely. Regular reviews should be conducted to ensure all arrangements meet business needs.

If an employee on a skilled worker visa requests to work from home (partly or fully) is this permissible in terms of their visa requirements which normally state their contractual place of work as campus/office?

A major issue GCU should consider is that if a worker works entirely remotely this could give rise to enquiry why the worker needs to be sponsored to work in the UK. If the employee works under the hybrid model, there is no need to report this, however, if they work fully remote, this must be reported.

If an employee on a skilled worker visa requests to reduce to part-time hours (thereby reducing their salary) is this permissible given the minimum salary thresholds?

Any reduction of salary to what was specified in the Certificate of Sponsorship (COS) for the worker must be reported via the SMS (licence portal) within 10 days of the reduction occurring. A sponsor however must stop sponsoring the worker if their revised salary no longer meets any salary, hourly or going rate requirement for the job they are being sponsored to do.

If salaries are above the minimum salary requirement for a Skilled Worker role then you could reduce to part-time hours and still meet or exceed the minimum salary requirement.

I am happy to accept one of my teams request for Flexible Working, who should I contact at People Services?

You should contact the Resourcing Team at People Services **resourcing@gcu.ac.uk**.

How will the university track and monitor flexible working requests and decisions?

The university will use the HR Oracle system to record and monitor flexible working requests, enabling us to track trends, measure approval and decline rates, and monitor appeals effectively.

Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment

1. DESCRIBE
1.1. Name of policy/strategy/decision
Flexible Working Policy
1.2. Owner
Kathleen Cleary, Director of People
1.3. Date
5 November 2024
1.4. Aims of policy/strategy/decision
This policy aims to promote and support flexible working arrangements ensuring a fair, consistent, and inclusive approach for all employees. It seeks to provide equitable access to GCU's flexible working options, helping staff balance work and personal commitments. The policy aligns with legislative changes effective from April 2024, which grant employees the right to request flexible working from day one of employment, reduce the employer's response time, and remove the need for employees to justify how their request impacts the business.
1.5. Who does the policy/strategy/decision affect?
All GCU staff employed on GCU contracts of employment (including full-time, part-time, open-ended and fixed term contracts).
1.6. Could there be any potential implications for equality, or people with protected characteristics?
This policy is aligned with the University's commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. As it applies to all staff, it is expected to impact all equality groups, including those with protected characteristics. Support for staff, such as reasonable adjustments for disabilities, will be provided in line with GCU's existing health and wellbeing processes through People Services. Positive impacts may include improved work-life balance and greater access to flexible working options for caregivers, individuals with disabilities, and others with specific needs, reinforcing GCU's commitment to equality and inclusion. The policy may also enhance diversity in recruitment by attracting a broader range of applicants. Potential negative impacts could include feelings of isolation or diminished support networks, particularly for employees with disabilities or health conditions. Additionally, staff in roles unsuitable for flexible working might feel excluded. While the policy is designed to support equality, diversity, and inclusion, its real impact will become clearer as it is implemented. Ongoing monitoring will be essential to assess its effects, and this equality impact assessment will be updated as evidence is gathered.

2. ASSESS
What are the implications, positive or negative (and evidence for this) of the policy/strategy/decision in relation to GCU's duty to have due regard to the need to?

2.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?
The policy removes any arbitrary barriers to requesting flexible or hybrid working based on protected characteristics. Managers will be trained to apply the policy consistently to prevent discrimination. Monitoring uptake and gathering feedback will help identify if any groups are being unintentionally excluded. Ongoing monitoring is essential to ensure fairness as the university is aware that some groups could be negatively affected depending on the nature of their roles and the areas in which they work such as security and domestic staff. The actual impact will only become clear as the policy is implemented, therefore, this equality impact assessment will be updated based on evidence from the monitoring process. Potential sources of evidence include feedback from staff groups and networks (e.g., Staff Carers Network, Menopause Café, and Disabled Staff Network) and insights from the annual Staff Engagement Survey, with responses analysed by equality group regarding the 'New Ways of Working' statements and Critical Success Factors.
2.2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it?
The principles of this policy align with the duty to promote equality. By facilitating flexible and hybrid working, it allows all employees, including those with disabilities, caregivers, or health conditions, to request adjustments tailored to their needs. The policy also advances GCU's inclusivity objectives by encouraging a more diverse pool of applicants and fostering more equitable working conditions for all staff.
2.3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it?
The policy fosters positive relationships by promoting inclusivity and flexibility, while acknowledging potential challenges such as isolation, particularly for individuals with mental health conditions. Key to maintaining good relations are support mechanisms, including regular check-ins. The application of the policy's Principles and Guidelines does not hinder good relations between people with protected characteristics and those without. However, the real impact will only become clear as the policy is implemented, so this equality impact assessment will be updated based on evidence gathered through monitoring and feedback.

3. ACTION
3.1. If a negative impact has been identified, how will this be addressed?
No negative impact has been identified so far. However, ongoing monitoring will inform this equality impact assessment and help identify any potential negative effects, guiding future improvements to the policy.
Our Flexible and Hybrid Working resources, available to all staff, include guidance for managers to support them in developing appropriate working models. These resources are continuously reviewed and updated based on feedback from policy implementation. We also offer Mental Health Awareness training for staff, support through our Employee Assistance Programme (PAM Assist), and our People Manager Pathway development programme includes guidance on leading in flexible and hybrid environments, ensuring managers can apply the policy fairly and consistently.
3.2. If changes have been made to the policy/strategy/decision as a result of this assessment, outline the changes
N/A.

4. MONITOR AND REVIEW
4.1. How will the implementation of the policy/strategy/decision and its impact on equality be monitored and reviewed?
The implementation of the policy will be monitored through the regular policy review process. Feedback on equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) issues related to people with protected characteristics will be gathered through the annual Staff Engagement Survey, the EDI survey, and by directly engaging with relevant groups and networks, such as the Staff Carers Network, Menopause Café, and Disabled Staff Network.

5. PUBLISH
Please email this completed form, along with the policy/strategy and any other relevant information[1] to equality@gcu.ac.uk for publishing on the Equality and Diversity website and annual reporting in line with Equality Act 2010 requirements.

6. SIGN OFF	
6.1. EIA Owner	Date
Director of People	
6.2. Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Date
Adrian Lui	

[1] Information or evidence may be removed if it is commercially sensitive or personal information