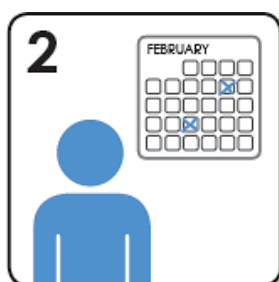


Flexible Working Arrangements



STAGGERED WORKING HOURS

- Flexibility within the core period of the working day



COMPRESSED WORK SCHEDULE

- The equivalent of ten working days in nine



SCHEDULED BREAK FOR EXTERNAL LEARNING

- Max. three hours per day, max. two days per week



WORK AWAY FROM THE OFFICE

- Telecommute up to a max. of two days per week

FWA IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR SUPERVISORS



United Nations – Office of Human Resources Management
Leadership, Development and Human Resources Services
Career Support and Performance Management Section

Preface

Research shows that the use of Flexible Working Arrangements (FWAs) leads to a more productive workforce, more efficient business processes, enhanced business continuity and helps attract a diverse pool of top talent. Furthermore, the use of FWAs significantly increases staff members' motivation and engagement with the Organization, reducing absenteeism and overhead costs and creating a "greener" and more sustainable environment.

The United Nations is committed to support the use of FWAs as a means to deliver high quality, timely results to clients, while also helping staff members achieve balance in their work and personal lives.

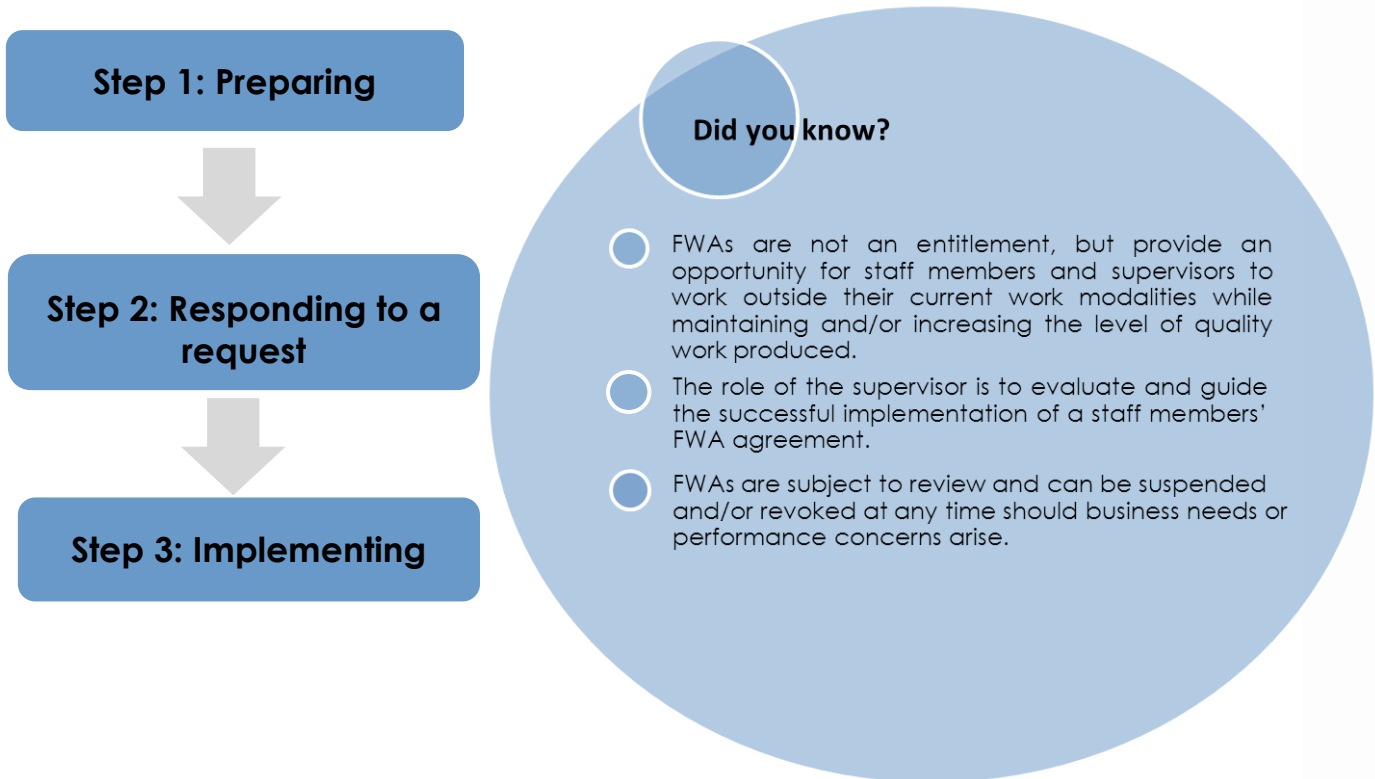
Support from senior management within the United Nations has been paramount to the success of FWAs. As former Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Mr. Kiyotaka Akasaka said, "Finding ways to enhance the productivity and work environment of our staff...is an investment in the way that we will work in the future."

By using a collaborative approach and establishing clear lines of communication staff members and supervisors together can find more efficient ways to achieve results.

The key for a successful implementation of an FWA is trust between the staff member and supervisor. When well implemented these arrangements bring great benefits to all involved.

FWA Implementation Guide for Supervisors

The purpose of this guide is to facilitate the process supervisors go through when staff members under their supervision consider availing of FWAs. The guide is a simple roadmap consisting of the three steps outlined below and further discussed in the following pages:



Quick Tips

- The more time you invest in preparing for a successful FWA implementation, the better the long-term benefits will be for yourself and for the staff member.
- When evaluating a staff members' request, take into consideration your managerial style, the operational needs of the Department/Office and the possible impact it will have on your team.

Step 1: Preparing

This step will help build on your knowledge about FWAs and to better prepare you for managing staff members availing of FWAs.



Before discussing the FWA request with the staff member...

- ☐ Familiarize yourself with [ST/SGB/2003/4](#) policy on FWAs
- ☐ Review the contents of the iSeek [Flex Work](#) site which includes information on the [Policy Framework and Guidelines](#), an [e-Library](#) and a [FAQs](#) section
- ☐ Speak with your [FWA Focal Point](#) to help clarify any questions you may have

Characteristics of what good candidates for FWAs possess...

- ☐ Have good time-management skills
- ☐ Are results-oriented
- ☐ Are dependable and self-motivated
- ☐ Are not underperforming
- ☐ Are well organized
- ☐ Work well independently
- ☐ Hold themselves accountable for achieving results
- ☐ Are proactive in following-up and reporting on progress made

Want to further prepare?

Worksheet 1: [Assessing your skills & work habits](#)

Allows a supervisor to assess how well prepared they might be at supervising staff members availing of FWAs.

Worksheet 2: [Identifying the right FWA option](#)

Provides insight for supervisors on how staff members can determine which of the four FWA options best suits their needs.

Step 2: Responding to a request

This step of the process highlights the factors that you should consider when evaluating and approving a staff members' FWA request.



During the conversation with the staff member...

- ☐ Discuss the terms of the request including job responsibilities and expectations on the delivery of work
- ☐ Determine how work will be monitored and measured
- ☐ Define outputs within a given timeframe
- ☐ Focus on how the business needs must be met
- ☐ Stress the importance of two-way communication should any challenges arise

If the request is approved...

- ☐ Have the staff member and supervisor sign the FWA agreement form, found under the [Policy Framework & Guidelines](#) section on the [Flex Work](#) site and submit a copy to your Executive/Administrative Office



Quick Tips

- Remember that the goal of the conversation is to reach a balanced agreement that is mutually beneficial to the staff member and the operational needs of the Department/Office
- Keep in mind that the staff members' FWA request should be reason neutral
- Consider providing an explanation if the request is declined

Want to further prepare?

Worksheet 3: [Preparing for the initial meeting discussion](#)

Provides a list of questions for the supervisor to ask the staff member about the overall impact of the FWA request during their one-on-one meeting.

Worksheet 4: [Responding to an FWA request](#)

Helps identify the next steps when either approving, declining or dealing with an unclear FWA request.

Step 3: Implementing

This step of the process determines the success of the FWA agreement and assesses if any adjustments are required.

If you decided to approve the staff members' FWA request, consider the below to provide the appropriate level of support to ensure successful implementation.

What can you expect of the staff member?	What can the staff member expect of you?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> A well thought-out request for an FWA<input type="checkbox"/> A commitment to share the responsibility to make FWAs successful<input type="checkbox"/> Regular communication on the progress made towards your outputs/potential setbacks<input type="checkbox"/> A collaborative approach towards teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Careful consideration of and prompt response to your FWA request<input type="checkbox"/> Clear and consistent communication on expectations and agreed outputs<input type="checkbox"/> Feedback on the implementation of the arrangement<input type="checkbox"/> Regular feedback on performance



Quick Tips

- To explore if FWAs are a feasible option, consider suspending judgment and final decision of approving an FWA request after a trial period has been conducted. This can enable you and the staff member to work collaboratively together in implementing the agreement and to work out any challenges that may arise
- Be conscious that the successful implementation of FWAs is a two-way process shared by you and the staff member

Want to further prepare?

Worksheet 5: [Maintaining a successful implementation of FWAs](#)

Provides a list of tips for the successful implementation of FWAs.

Worksheet 6: [Reviewing the FWA agreement](#)

Provides the supervisor a list of questions to ask the staff member when the FWA agreement is up for renewal.

WORKSHEETS

These worksheets are optional and are intended to raise your self-awareness in areas like work habits, skills, personal expectations and business needs.

While completing these worksheets does not necessarily translate to a successful implementation of FWAs, it can help you prepare to better respond to an FWA request and to successfully supervise a staff member availing of FWAs.

Worksheet 1

Assessing your skills & work habits

How well prepared would you say you are to supervise a staff member availing of FWAs? Take this self-assessment to improve your self-awareness on skills and work habits that are crucial for the responsible and successful implementation of FWAs.

Please select only one answer for each statement- **Always**, **Sometimes** and **Rarely**.

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely
I am comfortable focusing on results and outcomes, rather than the staff members "face time"			
I serve as an advocate for my staff members and generally facilitate the implementation of FWAs			
I am a resource and provide insight into creative ways that can enhance a staff members' work-life balance			
I understand the benefits of FWAs for staff members and for the Organization			
Staff members who report to me would say that I am approachable, flexible and supportive			
I set and articulate clear expectations and goals with each of my staff members			
One of my strong points is planning and organizing			
I am willing and able to delegate			
I don't feel the need to supervise closely in order to monitor work performance			
I trust my staff members			
I am confident I will actively adapt to changes of working style within my team			
I am good at estimating time accurately and able to structure the timeline of deliverables			

If you answered either "**Sometimes** or "**Rarely**" then the subsequent worksheets in this guide will answer some of the questions that you may have about FWAs.

You can also build on your managerial and leadership competencies by taking the [Skillport](#) courses identified below and by reading the articles found in the iSeek [Flex Work](#) site [e-Library](#) section:

Skillport

☐ [Effective Team-building Strategies](#)

You will learn tools, techniques, and tips to help you and your team to develop a "one for all, all for one" mentality and be able to promote and maintain a creative and productive work atmosphere.

☐ [The Voice of Leadership: Effective Leadership Communication Strategies](#)

This course covers the role of communication in leadership and how leaders can effectively communicate their objectives to their teams.

Flex Work

☐ [A Supervisor's Guide to Flexibility](#)

☐ [Business impacts of Flexibility: An Imperative for Expansion](#)

Worksheet 2

Identifying the right FWA option

This worksheet provides insight for supervisors into the decision-making criteria involved when staff members evaluate which of the four FWA option(s) best suits their needs.

1. Staggered Working Hours

Staff members are expected to be present during a core period of the working day. The core period will be set at each duty station. Staff must complete the balance of working hours for each day before, after, or partly after, the core period.

Questions	Yes	Maybe	No
Will scheduled meetings, coordination of projects, etc. be affected?			
Can your job duties be performed equally well under the proposed FWA?			
Would the proposed work schedule negatively affect your job commitments?			
Are there any safety concerns or building access issues?			

2. Compressed Work Schedule

Allows the staff member to work longer hours over the course of a two-week period by distributing among the nine days the hours that would have otherwise been worked on the tenth day.

Questions	Yes	Maybe	No
Do you have the energy to concentrate and stay highly focused for long periods of time without burning out?			
Is working the longer hours advantageous, in terms of productivity?			
Will scheduled meetings, coordination of projects, etc. be affected?			
Can your job duties be performed equally well under the proposed FWA?			
Would the proposed work schedule negatively affect communications with your supervisor and/or colleagues?			
Can you identify potential work problems or obstacles related to your request and think of ways to overcome them?			

3. Scheduled Break for External Learning Activities

Staff members who wish to attend courses relevant to their professional development may request breaks of up to three hours per day for a maximum of two days per week.

Questions	Yes	Maybe	No
Will scheduled meetings, coordination of projects, etc. be affected?			
Can your job duties be performed equally well under the proposed FWA?			
Can you develop a reasonable work schedule for completing your work?			
Can you identify potential work problems or obstacles related to your request and think of ways to overcome them?			

4. Work Away from the Office: Telecommuting

Allows a staff member to work up to two days per week working from an alternate work site provided that they have access to the necessary equipment to be reached by telephone and/or e-mail.

Questions	Yes	Maybe	No
Will the working environment be adequate to perform your work responsibilities?			
Does your job require daily face-to-face time with other staff members?			
Will scheduled meetings, coordination of projects, etc. be affected?			
Are you self-directed and comfortable working without close supervision?			
Can your job duties be performed equally well away from the office?			
Can you develop a reasonable work schedule for completing your work?			
Do you have access to technology/equipment at the alternative job site to perform the essential functions of your job?			
Would the proposed work schedule negatively affect communications with your supervisor and/or colleagues?			
Can you identify potential work problems or obstacles related to your request and think of ways to overcome them?			
Can you exhibit as much flexibility as you are asking of your supervisor and fellow colleagues? (i.e. coming to the office on a short notice to attend to a work related emergency)			
Do you accept that business needs may necessitate you coming to work on your telecommuting day?			
If you take care of dependents, do you have adequate support/care while you telecommute?			

Worksheet 3

Preparing for the initial meeting discussion

To help facilitate the conversation during your one-on-one meeting with the staff member, you can use the questions below as a guide when addressing the staff members' FWA request.

The outcome of the discussion should allow you to make an informed decision and determine if the FWA agreement will be a successful experience for all parties involved.

To help prepare you for the conversation with the staff member, please look at the questions below.

Pre-Implementation

1. What FWA option are you requesting?
2. What are your current work responsibilities?
3. What is the proposed duration of the FWA?
4. Does your past performance history suggest that an FWA will be successful for all involved?

Nature of Work

1. How will your job responsibilities and work output be maintained?
2. Does the nature of your work require you to collaborate with other staff members?
3. If yes, can the team provide coverage for functions handled during your absence?
4. Can you perform your job duties/responsibilities without frequent supervision?

Communication

1. How will you ensure business continuity in communicating with your colleagues and clients while on your FWA schedule?
2. What is the best way to maintain frequent communication about the status of your work?

Review

1. What is the best way to properly monitor your work output?
2. How much notice is required by either party if the FWA agreement needs to be modified or ended?

Responding to an FWA request

After you have had the discussion with the staff member about their FWA request and you are ready to make an informed decision you can follow the options below to determine the next steps.

Option 1: Approving a request

If you have decided to approve the FWA request, have both parties sign the [FWA agreement form](#), file it with your Executive/Administrative Office and begin implementation of the agreement. Be mindful that the staff members' FWA request should be reason neutral and that your decision to approve the staff members' FWA request doesn't adversely affect other staff on your team and satisfies the operational needs of the Department/Office.

Option 2: Declining a request

If you have enough information to decline a FWA request, it is recommended that you provide the staff member with a clear explanation of your reasons. The staff member has the option to make revisions to the original request if more clarification is needed. Additionally, the staff member can revisit making a request if the current timing is not appropriate for availing of FWAs.

Option 3: Incomplete or unclear request

If you have assessed a FWA request and you are uncertain to whether approve or decline the request at this stage, consider having a meeting with the staff member to discuss the specific areas of concerns that you may have:

- What evidence would you need to measure the success of a proposed arrangement?
- What are your expectations of the arrangement?
- What performance objectives must be met (e.g. qualitative, quantitative outputs)?
- What will be your timeline for review of the FWA agreement?

After considering the previous questions, an incomplete or unclear proposal can be either declined or approved after some modifications. Remember you may consider approving the request on a trial period.

Worksheet 5

Maintaining a successful implementation of FWAs

Once you have approved the staff members' FWA request, the list below can provide you with guidance to maintain a successful implementation of FWAs.

☐ Model work-life balance. Team members will notice if you "walk the talk". Your comments to team members should be consistent with the expectations communicated during discussions.

☐ Given you have set clear performance objectives for your staff members, trust and empower them to organize their work to meet business needs.

☐ Discuss expectations for hours of work, communications (both ways) and notification of absences.

☐ Ensure staff members' work plans are updated to reflect changes to work arrangements. Ensure workloads and targets are appropriate to changed hours or contact times.

Check in periodically with individual staff members to ensure arrangements are going to plan:

- ☐ Their hours of work allow for interaction with supervisor, peers and clients
- ☐ Their hours of work allow for learning and development in addition to job tasks
- ☐ The range and nature of their duties are appropriate to their level
- ☐ Their workload is manageable

☐ Use the opportunity at team meetings to recognize the success of arrangements, particularly the impact on team effectiveness and productivity.

☐ Set a meeting with the staff member if there are warning signs that an FWA is not working as intended (e.g. staff member is habitually working outside agreed work hours or breakdowns in trust and/or communications).

☐ Are business requirements being met? Collect evidence of success. You will use this when formally reviewing the arrangements or conducting performance evaluations with staff members.



Worksheet 6

Reviewing the FWA agreement

When the FWA agreement is up for renewal, this worksheet will help you to discuss the terms and overall benefits/challenges of the FWA agreement with the staff member.

1. How well has the FWA agreement been meeting the work commitments of the Department/Office identified in the agreement?

2. What was the impact of the FWA agreement? Consider the quality of work produced.

3. Did the quality of communications with the supervisor, peers and clients meet the stated expectations?

4. Has the FWA agreement affected colleagues? Consider productivity and the overall effect on the team members' and supervisor workload.

5. What needs to be improved or changed?

6. What should be recognized and celebrated?