Flexible Working Arrangements

1. Staggered Working Hours
   - Flexibility within the core period of the working day

2. Compressed Work Schedule
   - The equivalent of ten working days in nine

3. Scheduled Break for External Learning
   - Max. three hours per day, max. two days per week

4. Work Away from the Office
   - Telecommute up to a max. of two days per week

FWA Implementation Guide for Staff Members

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 Staff Members

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

Step 1: Preparing

Step 2: Requesting

Step 3: Implementing

Did you know?

- FWAs are not an entitlement, but provide an opportunity for staff members and supervisors to work outside their current work modalities while maintaining and/or increasing the level of quality work produced.
- The role of the staff member is to make an informed decision on what FWA option works best for them while satisfying the operational needs of their Departments and Offices.
- FWAs are subject to be suspended and/or revoked at any time, given cause, should business needs or performance concerns arise.

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 supervisor.
- Take into consideration the overall impact the FWA agreement will have on your colleagues, clients and the business needs of the Department/Office.
## Step 1: Preparing

This step will help build on your knowledge about FWAs and to better prepare you for the successful implementation of the new working arrangement.

### Before approaching your supervisor with your request...

- Familiarize yourself with [ST/SGB/2003/4 policy on FWAs](#).
- Consider the reasons why you are requesting an FWA.
- 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 staff member to assess how well prepared they might be for availing of FWAs.

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

Helps determine which of the four FWA options best suits the needs of the staff member.
Step 2: Requesting

This step of the process highlights the elements involved when requesting to avail of FWAs.

Once you have decided which FWA option best suits your needs, you can set up a meeting with your supervisor to discuss your FWA request.

During the conversation with your supervisor...

- Discuss the terms of the request including job responsibilities and expectations on the delivery of work
- Suggest how work will be monitored and measured
- Stress the importance of two-way communication should any challenges arise

If your request is approved...

- Fill out the FWA agreement form found under the Policy Framework & Guidelines section on the Flex Work site
- Once signed by you and your supervisor, submit a copy of the FWA agreement form to your Executive/Administrative Office

Quick Tips

- Be realistic and clear in your request to your supervisor
- Remember that the goal of the conversation is to reach a balanced agreement that is mutually beneficial to you and the operational needs of the Department/Office
- Bring any notes you’d like and be ready to document what you have agreed at the meeting
- Be professional and make it clear that you are committed to making the arrangement work for all parties involved

Want to further prepare?

Worksheet 3: Preparing for the initial meeting discussion

Provides the staff member insight as to what the supervisor might ask about the overall impact of the FWA request during their one-on-one meeting.
Step 3: Implementing

After your FWA request has been approved and implemented, the next step is to determine the success of the FWA agreement and assess if any adjustments are required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What can your supervisor expect of you?</th>
<th>What can you expect of your supervisor?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ A well thought-out request for an FWA</td>
<td>□ Careful consideration of and prompt response to your FWA request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ A commitment to share the responsibility to make FWAs successful</td>
<td>□ Clear and consistent communication on expectations and agreed outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Regular communication on the progress made towards your outputs/potential setbacks</td>
<td>□ Feedback on the implementation of the arrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ A collaborative approach towards teamwork</td>
<td>□ Regular feedback on performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quick Tips**

- Consider a trial period so that you and your supervisor can 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 your supervisor

**Want to further prepare?**

**Worksheet 4: Maintaining a successful implementation of FWAs**
Provides a list of tips for the successful implementation of FWAs.

**Worksheet 5: Reviewing the FWA agreement**
Provides the staff member insight as to what the supervisor might ask when the FWA agreement is up for renewal.
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 guarantee approval, it can help identify your strengths and whether FWAs are the right choice for you.
Worksheet 1
Assessing your skills & work habits

How well prepared would you say you are to avail 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 read each statement carefully and select only one answer for each statement- Always, Often, Sometimes and Not at all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am able to make some work decisions on my own</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My work results and outcomes can be measured</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor and I trust each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My co-workers and I communicate well and trust each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a good system in place to help me be organized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I keep to my professional commitments and complete tasks within expected timeframes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I keep my supervisor informed of my work progress and results and indicate potential setbacks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am self-disciplined, highly motivated and not easily distracted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I possess good written and oral communication skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take responsibility for the level of communication needed to be successful in my work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am efficient at using a computer, email, and telephone for communication and I am comfortable utilizing available technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have problems setting boundaries between work and personal life responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How well did you do?**

Give yourself 5 points for every “Always” answer, 3 points for each “Often” answer, 2 points for “Sometimes” and no points for any “Not at all” selection.

A perfect score is 60 points. A score above 50 means you may already have what it takes for a successful FWA. A score less than 50 means you may have some areas to work on before you consider FWAs.

You can also build on your planning and organizing competencies by taking the Skillport courses and by reading the articles identified below found under the iSeek Flex Work site e-Library section:

**Flex Work**
- [ ] Myths and Facts about Flexible Working Arrangements

**Skillport**
- [ ] Project Management Fundamentals
  This course will enable someone to learn the necessary skills to successfully manage small to medium sized projects related to their area of responsibility within the Organization.
Worksheet 2
Identifying the right FWA option

To help you decide on the FWA option(s) that best suits your needs, answer the questions below. This will assure that you are approaching your decision to request an FWA with responsibility.

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.

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

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will scheduled meetings be affected?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can your job duties be performed equally well under the proposed FWA?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you develop a reasonable work schedule for completing your work?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you identify potential work problems or obstacles related to your request and think of ways to overcome them?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will the working environment be adequate to perform your work responsibilities?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your job require daily face-to-face time with other staff members?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will scheduled meetings, coordination of projects, etc. be affected?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you self-directed and comfortable working without close supervision?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can your job duties be performed equally well away from the office?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you develop a reasonable work schedule for completing your work?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have access to technology/equipment at the alternative job site to perform the essential functions of your job?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would the proposed work schedule negatively affect communications with your supervisor and/or colleagues?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you identify potential work problems or obstacles related to your request and think of ways to overcome them?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you accept that business needs may necessitate you coming to work on your telecommuting day?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you take care of dependents, do you have adequate support/care while you telecommute?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Worksheet 3
Preparing for the initial meeting discussion

To help facilitate the conversation during your one-on-one meeting, the supervisor may use the questions below as a guide when responding to your FWA request.

Your responses may help the supervisor make an informed decision to determine if the FWA request will be a successful experience for both yourself and for the Department/Office.

To help prepare you for the conversation with your supervisor, 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?
Maintaining a successful implementation of FWAs

Once the request has been approved by your supervisor, the list below can provide you with the guidance to maintain a successful implementation of FWAs.

- Focus on performance and results.
- Demonstrate your continued attention and dedication to meeting and/or exceeding performance expectations.
- Establish clear objectives and expectations with your supervisor and make sure that your accomplishments, outcomes and deliverables are visible to supervisors and co-workers, as appropriate.
- Consider the needs of the Organization and your team.
- Be flexible. Remember that the demands of the Organization may occasionally make it necessary to be in the office at times you might otherwise be working off-site.
- Be proactive. Communicate project status, potential issues and next steps to appropriate stakeholders.
- Invite and encourage feedback from co-workers and supervisors. Be open to feedback both positive and negative.
- Be accessible and responsive. Use appropriate technology to stay connected with your supervisor and co-workers.
Worksheet 5
Reviewing the FWA agreement

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

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?