



INTEGRATING WORK AND PERSONAL LIVES FOR EXTENSION PERSONNEL

Extension supports alternative work arrangements and flexible scheduling to enable employees to integrate work and personal lives. We believe this contributes to the physical and emotional well-being of individuals resulting in more productive employees.

MISSION

to create an organizational environment which, in the pursuance of our organization's mission, vision, and values, respects and supports quality of life and work issues of our employees. Our ultimate goal is to create a work environment that enhances employee effectiveness in their work and personal life.

VISION

OSU Extension believes in and offers programs related to improving the quality of life for individuals, families and communities. Employees need to be dynamic examples of people who are successfully integrating their personal and professional lives.

To accomplish this mission and vision, Extension employees will:

- Prioritize their educational programs and activities;
- Be responsive to prioritized clientele issues while meeting their own individual and family needs;
- Partner with colleagues, clientele, and funders in recognizing and respecting the varying work/life issues that individuals face.

Ohio State University General Policy Statement

The University supports departments/units using flexible work schedules to create a flexible work environment that is compatible with the needs of the individual and functions of the unit. This management practice is intended to foster a positive work environment and support the recruitment and retention of qualified individuals, while maintaining or enhancing the departmental mission.

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION WORK AND FAMILY PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT FOR COUNTY EDUCATORS, CENTER SPECIALISTS, AND ADMINISTRATORS

Educators, specialists, and administrators are expected to meet their work objectives and as professionals, are entrusted with the flexibility of balancing their work schedules. This is not a formal policy statement. Rather it is a philosophy or guideline for professionals to use in approaching their work. An assumption is made concerning this principle: a full-time Extension professional's responsibilities typically require more than 40 hours per week or portion thereof (for part-time professionals) and often at non-routine work hours. Professional scheduling is not designed to equitably compensate (hour for hour) for work outside the normal 8 am – 5 pm workday or 40 hour work-week. Performance of professionals is a top priority and professional scheduling is intended to support and strengthen performance. It is the individual's responsibility of controlling one's schedule to meet the needs of clientele while achieving a balance in professional and personal time that is healthy for both the individual and the organization.

The following points should serve as a guide:

- Extension educators, specialists, and administrators are accountable for their time and also for fulfilling their assigned job responsibilities.
- Extension professionals working extensive hours at night and on weekends should schedule some personal time. This does not mean the professional must work a certain number of hours per day or week to be eligible to use professional scheduling. Professional scheduling is an individual responsibility.
- Personal time should be taken at the convenience of both the organization and the individual. Professional courtesy requires that employees communicate with their immediate supervisor and/or secretary in advance when they will be taking personal time off.
- It is not the intent to negotiate a specific number of days off with employees in lieu of professional scheduling. Such a practice violates the intent of the guidelines. Rather, professional scheduling is primarily a responsibility of the employee.
- Pilot efforts followed by an evaluation are highly encouraged. Feedback needs to be sought from co-workers, supervisors, and as appropriate, County Commissioners and Advisory Committee members.

Adapted from Colorado and North Carolina Statements

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION WORK AND FAMILY PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT FOR STATE DEPARTMENT OF EXTENSION PERSONNEL

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OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY WORK AND FAMILY GUIDELINES FOR OFFICE SUPPORT STAFF AND PROGRAM SUPPORT PERSONNEL

The University has developed a Work and Family policy that covers Classified Civil Service (CCS) and program support personnel (program assistants, FNP, technicians, etc.). These categories of employees generally have defined workweeks. The alternatives included in the OSU guidelines which follow are intended for long-term changes. Short-term, temporary arrangements may be handled on an individual basis with one's immediate supervisor. Arrangements should be communicated with co-workers so other may communicate appropriately to clientele.

General Policy Statement

The university supports departments/units using flexible work schedules to create a flexible work environment that is compatible with the needs of the individual and functions of the unit. This management practice is intended to foster a positive work environment and support the recruitment and retention of qualified individuals, while maintaining or enhancing the departmental mission.

Benefits of Introducing Alternative Work Patterns Into Your Department

Benefits to Manager/Unit Head

- Increases flexibility in work structure, scheduling and staffing
- provides alternative strategies during tight budget conditions
- can improve employee productivity
- enhances employee morale and commitment thereby reducing turnover and training costs
- can help counterbalance declining monetary compensation
- creates innovative environments: opens up possibilities for matching projects with the right people based on talents and schedules
- inexpensive way to offer skills development. cross training, job enrichment
- reflects respect for employee's ability to responsibly handle more complex work arrangement
- demonstrates an understanding of and commitment to responding to diverse needs of the work force

Benefits to Employee

- employee gains greater control over personal time in exchange for work responsibilities
- offers individual in his or her current position more opportunity to experience new projects and responsibilities

Options for Full-time Employees:

- Flextime
- Compressed Work Week

Options for Less-than-full-time Employees:

- Regular part-time employment
- Reduced appointment options
- Job Share
- Voluntary Reduced Time

Source: OSU Office of Human Resources Work and Family Office – Guide to Understanding Alternative Work Patterns

DEFINITIONS OF FLEXIBLE WORK OPTIONS

Flexible Work Options for Full-Time Employees

FLEXTIME

Description

- Permits flexible starting and quitting times within 40 hour workweek
- Flexible periods occur at either end of the day, with a “core time” set in the middle, during which all employees must be present
- Variations include starting and quitting times that are fixed or varied daily; length of days may vary

Advantages

- Flextime is a no-cost employee benefit that raises morale while enabling the organization to improve coverage, extend service hours, and reduce tardiness
- Flextime allows employees to accommodate dependent care needs, take care of personal business, avoid rush hour, and expand their leisure time

Disadvantages

- Primary disadvantages relate to periodic under-staffing, extending supervision over long hours, communication over more hours, scheduling meetings, and coordinating work among employees on different schedules

COMPRESSED WORK WEEK

Description

- 40 hour workweek compressed into fewer than 5 days
- Various scheduling options include 4/10 hour days, 3/12 hour days or 5/9.5 hour days followed by 4/9.5 hour days (option for exempt employees only)

Advantages

- Allows employee longer blocks of personal time and reduces commuting time and expense
- Beneficial to manager wishing to improve the allocation of work time or decrease the cost of operating equipment; may improve employee morale and aid in recruitment

Disadvantages

- Longer workdays can cause fatigue and negatively affect performance: must consider adequate work coverage, rescheduling in the event of absences, communication, and supervision

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES FOR COUNTY, REGIONAL AND CENTER PERSONNEL

A. INITIATING THE PLANNING PROCESS

- Planning may be initiated by any employee: secretary, Educator, County Director, technician, etc. A director and/or Regional Director may also need to initiate discussion when observing that a need exists and the employee is reluctant to initiate a request. It is important to remember that alternative scheduling is intended as a tool to support the personal needs of employees while meeting the productivity and operational needs of the county/region/campus office.
- The office team has the responsibility to determine appropriate flexible work schedules. An individual may develop proposed alternatives, but the team must decide on what will work for the benefit of the total office.
- Determine office goals for establishing flexible schedules. Consider individual and organizational needs.
- Talk with staff members to determine the needs for flexible scheduling and interest in participating in alternatives.
- Consider what schedule option or combination of options are appropriate considering the individual and office functions and mission.
- Contact the Regional Director for assistance in developing your plan.

B. DEVELOPING THE PLAN

- Office teams must work together to plan alternative work arrangements that consider the needs of the individual, other team members, and clientele. This could be a total team effort or based upon the size of staff, a “flex” committee of staff with different functional responsibilities can conduct an assessment and propose a plan. A committee member or volunteer may have experience in this area and could contribute to the planning.
- Develop a draft proposal, including the following components:
 - goals/expectations for the plan
 - who is eligible and under what conditions
 - parameters for alternative scheduling such as...
 - departmental operational hours open to the public
 - core time – the hours or days all employees must be present
 - band time – range of hours employees can work
 - lunch/breaks



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- Guidelines need to include procedures for...
 - scheduling procedures such as preparing and posting, dealing with unexpected absences, scheduling changes and conflicts
 - communication process to maintain workflow such as posting schedules and alternative means of communicating
 - leave time (vacation/sick leave) usage guidelines
 - holidays
 - overtime – exempt and non-exempt considerations
 - work/time keeping system
 - Regional Directors and OSU Extension Human Resources personnel are available to review drafts to assure compliance with existing University policies

C. IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

- It is suggested the flexible work programs be implemented as a pilot for a pre-determined period of time to assess plans and make changes before implementing long-term. Depending upon the decision to be made, key leaders such as the Extension Advisory Committee, County Commissioners and key volunteers may need to be involved in the planning as well as evaluation of the effectiveness of pilot efforts to ensure that clientele needs are being met.
- Communicate implementation plans, guidelines, evaluation criteria and problem solving strategies to all staff. Keep the Regional Director, County Commissioners, and Extension Advisory Committee members informed about flexible work scheduling plans and involve as needed. Both the Regional Director and OSU Extension Human Resources are interested in flexible work scheduling and evaluations of its effectiveness.

D. PROBLEM SOLVING OPTIONS

The team should decide how to handle conflicts before they arise. One option includes forming a mediation group of staff to develop problem-solving strategies and assist with conflict resolution.

E. EVALUATING THE PLAN

First, develop a timetable for evaluating the pilot program before initiating a more permanent policy. Criteria should be developed for evaluating the success of a plan and as a basis for making modifications.

Criteria should be based upon:

- productivity expectations of OSU Extension and the particular office
 - operational needs of the office
 - employee satisfaction
 - effective clientele service
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