



Flex@X Frequently Asked Questions for Managers

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What is Flex@X?

StFX is committed to providing a safe, inclusive workplace environment for all employees. Where appropriate, this can include opportunities for flexible scheduling and hybrid work arrangements. Flex@X and the Flexible Work Policy govern the University's flexible work arrangement programs.

Flex@X provides employees the opportunity to request a flexible work arrangement while maintaining the necessary level of productivity, engagement and performance required by the University.

Requests are formalized through a Flex@X Agreement and are subject to the Flexible Work Policy.

Why can't we go back to the old way? It worked perfectly fine.

Flex@X and the Flexible Work Policy can improve talent acquisition and retention, enhance our efforts related to EDIA, improve physical and mental health and provide additional work-life balance. Employees are consistently more happy, healthy and productive when provided with opportunities such as Flex@X. Some advantages include:

- **Inclusion** – video conferencing technology promotes collaboration across geographical locations (even on a small campus) and makes individuals feel more included when all on the same platform.
- **Work-Life Balance** – workers with greater work-life balance are healthier, more productive and less likely to seek other opportunities.
- **Sustainability** – reducing travel and energy costs would decrease StFX's environmental footprint.
- **Retention and Engagement** – flexibility enhances our attractiveness as an employer which leads to improved recruitment, retention and diversity.

What are the challenges?

The challenges will vary based on the type of Flex@X arrangement is in place. In general, employees working modified schedules but working full-time on campus will face less challenges than those with Hybrid arrangements. Some of the challenges include:

- Being out of the flow of day-to-day information.
- Being away from the hub of activity.
- A misperception that employees working remotely are not as available as those working on campus.
- Distractions by the employee's spouse, children, pets and others in the workspace.
- A tendency to be available outside of "normal" business hours and work longer hours.

From an administrative standpoint, there may be additional work needed to:

- Establish expectations, trust and unique methods of performance evaluation and leading from a distance.
- Adapt strategies and procedures to manage hybrid workers.



- Help employees who are disappointed if their roles do not allow them to participate in Flex@X.

What are my obligations under the Flex@X program?

Managers/supervisors and department heads have several obligations under Flex@X:

- Evaluating departmental services and operations to determine the suitability of Flex@X arrangements.
- Reviewing and approving Flex@X applications.
- Monitoring Flex@X working arrangements to ensure ongoing suitability and effectiveness.
- Promoting employee engagement and providing frequent feedback to employees, particularly those with Hybrid arrangements.

What are the criteria for evaluating Flex@X requests?

In making the decision to approve a Flexible Work Arrangement, the following must be considered:

1. Operational and service needs and safety requirements can be effectively and efficiently maintained (student service needs will be prioritized in assessing and approving regular Arrangements).
2. Job requirements can be productively and effectively performed remotely to the needed quality standards.
3. If Hybrid or Remote, the work does not require close supervision and the duties can be performed with a degree of independence from the Employee's supervisor/manager and co-workers.
4. The Arrangement will not have a negative impact on the work of other Employees or on the delivery of services and supports to students and community members.
5. If Hybrid or Remote, the Employee has a suitable remote workspace (e.g. privacy, free from distractions, ergonomic workstation set-up) and reliable internet access to allow for needed connectivity.
6. The Employee does not have any performance concerns or unresolved workplace issues that would inhibit the success of a Flexible Work Arrangement.

If Flex@X arrangements are available to many employees, how will supervisors manage all the requests and ensure adequate coverage?

Traditional schedules meet the demands of many employees. Employees who do request Flex@X arrangements most often ask for slight changes in their daily arrival and departure times, changes that pose the least challenge for an employee's supervisor and co-workers. If there are multiple competing requests, contact your People and Culture Advisor for assistance.

As we launch Flex@X, we recommend setting a date where your employees submit any requests so you can evaluate the requests you receive as a group.



If a supervisor receives multiple requests that cannot all be accommodated, how do they rate the needs of the requesters to decide which requests to approve?

Reasons for the requests should not be used as the only factor in making the decision. If the employee's requests are similar in terms of their ability to continue to meet job requirements, seniority and performance may be factors in determining which request to approve. The manager/supervisor may ask the employees for input into a solution that would enable them to meet their needs and the needs of the unit. For assistance, contact your People and Culture Advisor.

How do you supervise employees with a Hybrid arrangement?

For those employees, then supervisors should set up a structured system for management. The emphasis will focus on the completion of tasks. Performance measures should be agreed and then monitored. Agreement on performance goals and communication expectations is especially important for those working remotely. These discussions on expectations should happen before a Hybrid work arrangement is put into place.

People and Culture will be providing workshops on how to manage teams working in a Flex@X arrangement.

Can I allow my employees to work from home or change their hours occasionally without a Flex@X agreement?

Yes. The Flex@X program is designed to address longer term changes to employee work locations or schedules. You still have the flexibility to allow your employees to work from home or flex their hours on a short-term basis (generally, less than three months).