

### **Policy 412.3 Implementation Guidelines**

The following guidelines articulate best practices for managers and employees when implementing this policy. If these best practices are followed, then it is more likely an FWA will be successful. These guidelines may be incorporated into unit level guidance when there is delegation of approval authority.

#### **A. Statement of Unit Mission, Objectives, and Values**

The University of Arkansas is the state's land grant institution. It exists to provide a high-quality residential academic experience to its students, a vibrant research and scholarly culture for its faculty, and a professional and collegial workplace for its staff. FWAs should support these objectives.

#### **B. Basic Considerations for Flexible Work Request Review**

- Before approving any flexible work requests, managers should complete the FWA training for managers.
- Before discussing a flexible work request with the manager, employees should review Fayetteville Policies and Procedures 412.3 and complete the FWA overview training.
- If a current employee requests an FWA, then the manager should identify similarly situated employees within the team as part of considering whether flexibility is feasible.
- If there is a position vacancy, the manager should review the job description and determine whether FWAs may be permitted. If not, the position and other similar positions on the manager's team should be identified as on-site only.
- Good communication between managers, HR partners, and unit leaders is essential. Unit leaders may wish to address any unique attributes of their unit that require special consideration when evaluating flexible work requests. Any unit level guidelines must be consistent with policy 412.3 as well as other campus policies and applicable law.

#### **C. Development and Implementation of FWA**

When designing an FWA, managers should include the following elements:

- The manager will establish the work schedule, including days and hours, in advance. When possible, a manager should ensure team members understand work schedules across the team;
- State when the employee must be on site to attend meetings, training sessions, or similar activities, and acknowledge that the employee must be on site to attend meetings at the direction of the manager;
- Set the expectation that the employee maintains a normal workload, equivalent to their work when in the office, as outlined in their position or as identified by their manager;

- State with clarity that an employee who is not performing work during work hours must use appropriate leave;
- Emphasize that the employee is responsible for the safety and security of all University property and proprietary information;
- Acknowledge that employees must cooperate with their managers' efforts to monitor their work schedule and location and evaluate the quantity and quality of work, and are required to certify their work location upon request; and
- Provide information to the employee about the cadence of meetings for updates, planning, and feedback.

#### **D. Criteria to Evaluate a Position for Flexible Work**

The criteria used to assess whether an FWA is permissible for a position include the following:

- Whether the nature of the work to be performed is appropriate for an FWA;
- Whether quality of service can be maintained for students, faculty, other members of the University community, and the public;
- Whether the proposed FWA would present an undue difficulty to the University, its students, or the public;
- Whether the unit or manager has identified and documented measurable performance objectives for the position;
- Whether the employee has demonstrated sustained productivity and the ability to work independently;
- Whether the University reasonably anticipates the employee can maintain the expected quantity and quality of work;
- Whether the employee's manager will be able to effectively monitor the employee's performance;
- If the proposed FWA involves an alternative work location, whether the employee can provide assurances that the location is a safe, private, and productive work environment;
- and the impact that the FWA would have on others, including impact on job responsibilities, informal communications, cross-training and mentoring, and the use of office space.

#### **E. Pre-approval Criteria**

When applying the approval criteria, managers should, at a minimum:

- Discuss and identify the business rationale that shows how flexible work serves the University's core mission and on-campus experience with the employee requesting the FWA;
- Managers are expected to articulate what "quality of service" means for their employees e.g., responsiveness to communications, meeting participation, processing of a certain volume of transactions or resolution of a certain number of tickets.

- Managers should discuss with the employee how productivity is measured and the process by which any changes in expected productivity will be addressed.
- Managers may choose to implement a short-term trial period to assess the long-term viability of a flexible work agreement.
- Managers should set expectations with their employees regarding the degree of independence the employee must demonstrate and how that independence is measured e.g., accurate work completion without extensive coaching or regular employee-initiated reports on task status.
- Managers should discuss with their teams the tools that managers use to monitor performance (e.g., regular 1:1 meetings, email reports, use of project management apps such as Microsoft Planner, Microsoft Teams chat or similar app offered by the University; summary reports from the employee).
- Managers should have a team engagement plan that allows coworkers to build positive working relationships and trust regardless of schedule or work location.
- If the employee request is denied, hold a 1:1 meeting to discuss that decision and the reasons for it within 30 days of the application.

#### **F. Restrictions on Approval of Flexible Work Arrangements**

Requests for an FWA should not be granted when:

- The nature of the position requires the employee's physical presence, including, for example, positions that involve regular on-site interaction with students, faculty, staff, visitors, or the general public; that require the use of laboratory and other fixed equipment and facilities; that involve work on campus physical facilities; or that require in-person work as part of a team or for the purpose of accomplishing an on-site task;
- Where an employee is currently in the position:
  - The employee's performance evaluations do not indicate sustained productivity;
  - The employee's observed productivity levels are less than identified performance expectations and those observations have been discussed with the employee;
  - The employee requires close supervision as indicated, for example, by the employee's consistent need for guidance, or the employee's current assignment requires frequent supervision, direction, or input from others who are on-site;
- The employee is a manager of other employees requiring on-site supervision; or
- The schedule would create a pattern of overtime work or cause undue difficulty for the department or unit.

This list is not exhaustive. Managers should consult their HR partner or unit leader to discuss whether specific circumstances indicate an FWA is not permissible.

#### **G. Monitoring for Accountability**

Managers are accountable for monitoring the productivity of remote employees and reviewing the appropriateness of a remote work assignment if performance does not meet expectations.

#### **H. Other Considerations**

- The manager should accurately track and monitor any temporary FWAs to ensure they do not exceed 30 days or if they do, that they follow the policy.
- Managers should consider any current and potential FWAs when making purchasing decisions or assigning office space.

Effective July 1, 2025.