

**To be posted to the *Daily Bulletin* and published in *StaffNews* and *HRNews*
From the Staff Relations Committee**

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Flextime

Prompted by comments made by staff in response to the Staff Association's survey, *How's the Climate*, the Staff Relations Committee examined the use of flextime as a method to manage variable workloads, help staff meet family and other demands, and ensure that hours worked in addition to one's normal hours are accounted for and taken as "free" time when appropriate.

Although not all departments and jobs may be suited to flextime, the Committee thought it useful to report on this system of scheduling. As with every system, there are advantages and disadvantages; this report addresses both.

Flextime is a system of scheduling work hours based on the premise that employees will make responsible judgements in adjusting their working hours to handle both job and personal demands. Flextime is also based on an expectation that employees will contribute the normal number of hours in a four-week period (e.g., for a 35 hour-a-week position, that would be 140 hours). Adjustment of working hours takes place within a band width of acceptable working hours (e.g., 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.) and within a "core" period (hours when all staff are expected to be in attendance at their jobs unless taking vacation or agreed time off). Departments determine the maximum number of hours that can be "banked" for future use or "made up" in the next four-week cycle.

For example, a staff member might come in at 7:00 a.m. and leave at 3:00 p.m. on a day when they need to be in attendance at school for a parent/teacher interview. Assuming their normal work hours are 8:30 to 4:30, there are no hours to "bank" or "make up". If a staff member came to work at the normal time and stayed until 6:00 p.m. to finish a project, the additional 1.5 hours would be "banked" for future use. If a staff member came to work at the normal time and left at 3:00, 1.5 hours would need to "made up" in the next four-week cycle.

Advantages

- job gets done with enhanced cooperation and cross training
- employees are empowered because they manage their own workload (peaks and valleys)
- family friendly; allows employees time to manage personal appointments / commitments
- service can be provided over longer periods than standard work hours because of differing time commitments and preferences of staff
- additional hours worked during a peak in workload, for example, can be taken during less critical times

Disadvantages

- not all departments and jobs are suited to flextime; positions that are time related in the service they provide (e.g., shift operations) are not suited to flextime, nor are small departments where there is only one person to provide service during standard hours
- additional hours are “lost” if they exceed the maximum bankable hours

There are three major areas of employee obligation within flextime:

1. the nature of the job being performed determines the degree to which flexibility is possible during any particular period
2. all employees must be present except by special approval during certain core hours each day
3. a fixed number of hours must be worked during each flex time schedule with a maximum debit or credit each cycle

A number of departments on campus including the Library, Human Resources and IST use flextime arrangements with success.

Along with the Staff Relations Committee, the senior administration at UW encourages staff and managers to discuss the feasibility of implementing flextime in their work areas. Visit HR's website <http://www.hr.uwaterloo.ca/facstaff.html> for more detailed information on how flextime works or talk with your Staff Relations Coordinator to find out if flextime will work in your unit.