Flexible Work Arrangements Pilot Program

Town Hall

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Why FWA is important

Growing trend

- Benchmarking & Best Practices
- Attraction, Engagement, Retention
- McGill's Multi-generational Workforce

My Healthy Workplace (Principal's Priority)

- Work Life Balance
- Agility, Flexibility and Sustainability
- Measurability, Accountability, Continuous Learning & Improvement

Requested by HR Professionals

FWA Benchmarks

Canadian Universities

University of British Columbia

University of Calgary

University of Toronto

Ryerson University

Université de Montréal

Université du Québec à Montréal

U.S. Universities

Harvard University

Berkeley University

University of California, Davis

University of Michigan

Purdue University

Virginia Polytechnic & State

Pilot Overview

- It is a **pilot program,** not a policy

- February 2020 to December 2020

- Available to all **administrative and suppor**t staff

- **Not available** to those on TAWA, probation/trial periods or on performance improvement plans

- Participation is **<u>voluntary</u>** and **<u>conditional</u>** upon Manager's approval as per unit operational needs

- Request made by completing the relevant form(s)

- 3-month review and end of year assessment

Who is Eligible?

All Administrative and Support Staff

- Contingent on:
    - Operational needs of the unit
    - Nature of the Role
    - Employee Suitability
    - Approval of the Manager

FWA Options

1. Flex Time

2. Work From Home

1) Flex Time

- Employee elects a daily work schedule different from standard workday.

- Alternative start and end times BUT total daily and weekly hours worked unchanged (e.g. 33.75/35 hrs/wk).

- Can include a fixed core period (i.e. hrs during which all staff must be present each day) – set by manager.

- Same daily schedule **or** variable.

- Lunchtime **must be** at least 30 minutes.

- Breaks cannot be:
  - accumulated to reduce hours worked nor
  - taken at beginning or end of daily schedule

Flex Time - Examples

- Employee arrives at a set time each day (Ex., 7am) and takes 1h15 for lunch.

- Employee arrives at 7am on set days and 9am on the other days and takes 1 hour for lunch.

- Employee arrives at 10am on Monday to Wednesday and at 9am Thursday to Friday and takes 30 minutes for lunch.

2) Work From Home

- Can work from home for **up to 1 day/wk.**

- Arrangement can be for a short period of time (e.g. one month) or for duration of FWA PP.

- Arrangement is at Manager discretion; **must be** operationally feasible.

- Employee is responsible for providing *computer equipment, space, telephone, printing, networking and/or internet capabilities*

- Employee **shall not be reimbursed** for these or related expenses.

Work From Home - Examples

- Employee works from home every other Monday for the duration of the pilot program.

- Employee works from home every Wednesday for a 6-month period.

Work From Home Parameters

- Must not be used for the purposes of caring for children or family members (during work hours)

- Must not have a negative impact on work of others

- Employee must
  - be available to come into the office if a business need arises
  - remain accessible during the WFH schedule (i.e. for teleconferences)

- Duties, obligations, responsibilities, and standards of performance, remain the same as when working at the office.

Request Process

- Initial request period: January 16th to January 31st, 2020.
  - Managers to review requests and assess overall team and operational impacts.
  - Does not preclude requests submitted outside these dates.

- Employees are encouraged to discuss their intent to submit request with their manager.

- Employees complete Request Form, submit by email
  - to their manager
  - CCing their local HR representative

- Form available online at:
  https://www.mcgill.ca/hr/flexibility/fwa

Evaluation Process

- During initial request period, managers should aim to reply to requests by February 28, 2020.

- Outside that period, respond within 10 business days.

- Managers must carefully consider/evaluate all requests.
  - Personal reasons for the request are not required to justify consideration of the request.

- Decision to approve or decline must be fair + equitable.

- Examine requests objectively, devoid of personal biases.

- Consider <u>employee</u> suitability, <u>position</u> suitability, <u>Dept/Faculty/Unit</u> needs.

- If you have questions, seek guidance from your HR rep

Evaluation Process cont'd

- ***If a request is declined***, each manager must have a conversation with the employee to explain.

- Manager will send completed form to:
  - the HR rep
  - CCing Central HR for statistical purposes

- ***If a request is approved,*** you need to meet the employee within 3 months of start date to assess impact and ongoing viability.

- FWAs may be terminated at request of manager or employee with 30-day written notice.

- FWA can be shortened with agreement from all parties.

Roles & Responsibilities: Managers/Supervisors

- You will be managing an important process and playing a key role in the success of McGill's FWA Pilot.

- This is an opportunity to increase employee engagement (morale, trust, interdependency, creative problem solving, shared responsibility).

- Manage this as a **PILOT not a policy** – learning, tracking, giving feedback; reassessment is critical.

- Use guides, tools and resource people available to support you; consult your HR Advisor as needed.

Roles & Responsibilities cont'd

- Familiarize yourself with guidelines + scenarios.

- Encourage staff to speak with you if they intend to apply.

- Ensure requests contain all necessary documents (e.g. health & safety form, etc.).

- Review requests objectively, consider impacts on team and operations, possible mitigation strategies.

- Communicate decision in person and in a timely manner.

- Be clear about schedule, expectations, deliverables, modes of communication, terms for modifying agreement, monitoring progress.

- Engage in evaluation, measuring success and reporting.

Tips on Processing the Request

- When reviewing, ensure dossier is complete and any concerns are addressed with the employee.

- If approved, ensure employee understands the terms and that this is a **trial subject to review.**

- If declining a request, ensure conversation with the employee so they understand the decision.

- If really NOT eligible address ASAP.

NB. Approving or declining is NOT contingent on employee's personal reason (e.g. distance from work, children, etc.).

Roles & Responsibilities: Employees

- Consider reality of workplace situation (nature of duties, unit needs, etc.)

- If potential suitability appears to exist, advise supervisor of interest and complete request within timeframe.

- Provide all required documents, per guidelines.

- If approved, prepare home physical space; ensure you have all necessary equipment.

- Respect FWA terms including availability, deliverables, methods of communication, etc.

Considerations in Decision-Making Process

EMPLOYEE	POSITION	UNIT
• Eligible	• Nature of work (e.g. adaptability of tasks)	• Impact on clients, team members, and other key stakeholders
• Performance	• Consideration for exceptions (peak periods)	• Other requests
• Established in role		
• Impact of decision +/-		

Manager assessment for suitability of an FWA request

- Are there specific peak or critical periods when a WFH or flex schedule may not be viable?

- Does the situation require that all or most of the work be done on campus (e.g. facilities maintenance, frontline client service, labs)?

- Has employee demonstrated the need for more coaching or direct support/structure to effectively fulfill responsibilities more autonomously (e.g. new to role, change in task, performance issue…)?

- Does the position require access to equipment that is only available on campus (e.g. research lab equipment)?

Manager: Things to Consider to Operationalize a FWA

- How could work schedules best address operational needs and ensure office/department coverage?

- How to best accomplish communications, teamwork?

- How to assign tasks and provide support during WFH days?

- Establish clear goals, deliverables and deadlines for which employees are accountable.

- Establish clear methods by which to supervise/monitor workload + results.

- Before approving a WFH, consider Health and Safety issues that may be involved in working outside normal working hours AND/OR working outside the office and to be addressed?

Employee Readiness For a WFH

- Can responsibilities be accomplished efficiently from home?

- Can they engage exclusively in McGill work during agreed upon times?

- Do they have the required equipment to complete work tasks (e.g. computer, high-speed internet, phone connection, utilities)?

- Does their proposed workspace meet health & safety requirements? (Include home office safety checklist with FWA). Distraction-free?

- How will they adhere to privacy and confidentiality requirements set by the unit/department and the University? (SEE CHECKLIST)

- Are they self-directed, comfortable working alone and able to manage time effectively?

Managing Risks

- Demotivating those employees refused or sense of "holding the fort"
- Impact of a "failed attempt"
- Prioritizing multiple requests
- Managing individual productivity
- Managing team effectiveness
- Maintaining client service
- Grievances, accusations of unfairness, discrimination, etc.

FWA Pros and Cons

PROS	CONS
Can improve work/life balance and wellbeing: •reduced time and stress commuting •more opportunity for family, school, community	May increase complexity of managing team: •Juggling unit, team, individual needs •Tracking mechanisms
Increases individual productivity	Decision-making process
Empowers employees, displays trust	Not all employees or positions are suited
Reinforces importance of their role @ McGill; their Interdependence with their team	Lack of consistency across McGill Faculties and units
	Perceived "Haves & Have Nots"
	Cultural attitudes

Faculty of Medicine - Key Messages

WE WILL:

1. Respect the guidelines of the pilot program

2. Demonstrate flexibility and sound judgement

3. Ensure equity and adopt consistent standards

4. Establish mechanisms to monitor outcomes (individual and team)

5. Ensure unit needs, team functioning and individual performance are not compromised

6. Provide information to HR about any existing flexible work arrangements (for tracking and assessment during pilot)

Thank you!

Questions & Comments