

Flexible Work Policy

Purpose

The Ministry promotes a flexible working environment that is built on trust and good faith and which provides flexible working arrangements that best suit each individual, their team and the Ministry.

As part of Public Service-wide expectations, the Ministry is committed to being flexible-by-default. Flexible-by-default means treating all roles as suitable for flexible working and exploring how flexibility could work unless there is a genuine business reason for any role not to be flexible.

The Ministry provides services to the Education Sector. A primary consideration when considering flexible working requests is to ensure there is no negative impact on delivering these services.

Employees have the right to request flexible working arrangements from their first day on the job, with no limit on the number of times they can make such a request. This is a right created in the Employment Relations Act 2000.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all current employees (permanent, fixed term or casual) of the Ministry
- all persons seconded to the Ministry.

Contractors may agree specific flexible working arrangements with the relevant manager. In doing so, Health and Safety considerations should be discussed and agreed to in accordance with the contract terms.

Principles of policy

The following principles for flexible working are common across the Public Service:

If not, why not? – All roles are treated as flexible unless there is a genuine business reason for a role not to be.

Works for the role – Every role should be suitable for some form of flexibility but not every type of flexibility will work for every role.

Works for the Ministry and teams – The impact of flexible working arrangements should be considered on teams and the Ministry as a whole.

Requires give and take – Flexibility requires give and take between the employee, manager and team.

Mutually beneficial – Flexible working needs to work for the ministry, teams and employees.

Actively championed by leaders – Leaders support, champion and model flexible working for their teams and themselves.

Policy Statements

- The Ministry will agree to flexible working requests unless there is a genuine business reason for any role not to be flexible. What constitutes a genuine business reason is outlined in our Flexible Work Guidelines.
- Rationale for genuine business reasons will vary depending on the nature of roles in the Ministry.
- Decisions on flexible working arrangements will ensure no negative impact on service delivery to the education sector.
- In considering flexible working requests, Managers should prioritise diversity and inclusion considerations. This includes:
 - Flexible working contributes to eliminating or preventing gender or ethnic pay gaps.
 - Flexible working is a means for providing reasonable accommodation for some disabled people.

- Flexible working can contribute to reinforcing cultural identity.
- All flexible working requests made in writing must be considered and responded to in writing, with a decision, within one month.
- If your flexible working request has been declined and you would like a reconsideration of the decision, you can request a review. If you would like support with this, you can speak to your union representative. The Flexible Work Guidelines have more details on problem resolution and the review process.
- Flexible working arrangements must meet our health, safety and wellbeing obligations. Specific requirements for working from home arrangements are set out in our [Working From Home Health & Safety checklist \[PDF, 219 KB\]](#). If an employee is appointed or seconded to a different position, any existing flexible arrangement will not automatically transfer and will need to be agreed in the context of the new position.

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