

Pilot Voluntary Reduced Work Schedule Guidelines

June 2009 - June 2010

As a university sponsored cost saving measure, many schools within the university are offering, where appropriate, reduced work schedules on a time limited basis for staff members. A reduced work schedule is when an employee voluntarily chooses to work fewer hours than their normal schedule. A reduced work week can be a powerful management tool to accomplish work more effectively while caring about the needs of employees. These guidelines are designed to assist department managers in evaluating the potential for this type of work arrangement and to provide consistency across HSPH.

Definition

A reduced schedule is an agreement between a staff member and their manager whereby the staff member would work less hours as specified below. A Voluntary Reduced Work Schedule (“Reduced Schedule”) is being offered to HSPH staff members who are currently working five full days (35 hours per week) or four full days (28 hours per week). If a staff member qualifies and their manager agrees, the staff member can reduce his or her number of days and number of hours. The Reduced Schedule for a five-day work week would be four full days (28 hours) and the reduced schedule for a four-day work week would be three full days (21 hours) respectively. These two options are the only reduced work options that HSPH is offering at this time.

A reduced work week can help employees manage a wide range of personal responsibilities in their lives, such as attending college, raising children, volunteering in the school or community, caring for elderly parents or pursuing other interests. Employees can also seek a reduced work week to scale back work hours to ease into retirement, accommodate a disability or long-term illness, or reduce a long commute.

Eligibility

Current staff, including new hires, who have successfully completed their 90-day probation period are eligible to participate in the Reduced Work Schedule if they meet the following criteria:

- The Reduced Schedule is open to administrative, professional, and clerical staff members including union and non-union.
- Employee must be in good standing regarding their performance and cannot be on a performance improvement plan.
- The selection process is based on the specific skills and knowledge needed to effectively perform the required duties of the department or unit.

The manager will make the final determination as to whether a Reduced Schedule is appropriate for a staff member who has requested it, based on the following factors:

- The amount of cost savings provided
- The units, programs or schools affected
- The type of work the staff member is engaged in performing
- The other positions in the department to be affected
- The number of staff in the department on a reduced schedule

Each request for a Reduced Schedule must be evaluated on the particular circumstances surrounding the request in question. In evaluating requests, managers should use their best judgment and should exercise discretion in reaching a final determination.

Note: These guidelines may not be used to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, veteran's status or political affiliation.

Application and Approval

A staff member who volunteers for a Reduced Schedule must complete and return the "Trial Voluntary Request for Reduced Work Schedule Application and Approval Form" to their manager. In determining whether to grant a request for a Reduced Schedule, managers must ultimately determine whether the work needs of the department can accommodate the request in question. Managers must give all particular staff members at least two week's notice in writing prior to implementation of the new work schedule.

Implementation

Once implemented, a Reduced Schedule cannot be changed before the agreed upon end date without department manager approval.

The duration of the reduced Schedule will be at the discretion of the manager.

The term and hours of the Reduced Schedule must be agreed upon for a specific period of time. When the period has lapsed, the manager and staff member will agree to either continue the Reduced Schedule or to resume the previous regular schedule.

This is a voluntary pilot program and a manager cannot require that a staff member participate in a reduced work schedule.

This program is not intended to be used as flextime. It is a set schedule that reduces the number of hours worked.

Employees, participating in this program, are still allocated their lunch break.

The duration (beginning and end dates) of a Reduced Schedule must be submitted and approved through an application process.

Salary, wages and paid time off will be apportioned on a pro-rata basis. Work expectations will be clearly defined along with the hours and work week schedule.

Employees on a Reduced Schedule should not be called on to work beyond the agreed upon schedule. For non-exempt staff overtime should not be allowed except in the occasional emergency situations.

Seniority of the staff member may be taken into consideration if more than one employee is being considered for a Reduced Schedule, but it should not be the sole determining factor.

The staff member has the right to request to return to 100% of their previous regular status at anytime. In such circumstances, the staff member shall submit this request in writing to their manager, including the date on which they will return to their previous regular status.