

Employee and Employer Expectations/Responsibilities – Flexible Work Arrangements

Faculty of Health

In consideration of the University's support for and commitment to Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA's) where operationally feasible, new positions at Dalhousie are being advertised with the following language (option dependent on operational requirements of the position/unit):

- **On-Campus:** Due to operational requirements, you are required to report to work in-person on campus.
- **Hybrid:** This position is eligible for hybrid work, a combination of remote work and work on campus as agreed by all parties based on operational requirements and university guidelines.
- **Majority work from home:** Much of your work will be done remotely, with occasional presence on-campus to meet client needs and operation requirements.
- **Flexible:** You may work on campus, remotely, or perform a hybrid of the two as agreed by all parties based on operational requirements.

These options may also be afforded to current Dalhousie employees.

Considerations before initiating flexible work arrangements will include Collective Agreement and policy considerations and needs of the unit.

In alignment with the comprehensive University's Flexible Work Guidelines, <https://dalu.sharepoint.com/sites/rtc/Shared%20Documents/Guidelines%20for%20Flexible%20Work%20Arrangements.pdf#search=Flexible%20Work%20Policy>, the Faculty of Health recognizes the value of flexible work arrangements for both employees and the University. Some of those values/benefits include improved employee well-being, employee retention, space utilization and more. Flexible work arrangements may be considered when both operational needs and service excellence can be achieved. The decision to offer FWA's remains at the sole discretion of the Director of Schools/College/Units. In addition, the Faculty has established a minimum of at least one day per week on campus to support collaboration and connection and overall improved sense of team. Units may require mandatory on site attendance at faculty/staff meetings. The University has established the following guidelines and principles to help inform leaders, supervisor and employees in their decision making re FWA's. Please see University agreement (above link) for full text explanations:

1.

2. Excellent Service
3. Employee Experience
4. Dual Responsibility
5. Integration of Practices.

General FH Guidelines to Augment University Guidelines (following FH FWA Survey – 2021)

The Faculty of Health supported FWA's initially and as a trial in response to COVID-19 pandemic during University on-campus curtailments/closures. In follow-up to the FH Survey we are pleased to continue to offer FWA's, as operationally feasible, as a new way of work. In summary, responses to the Survey highlighted the following:

Majority of respondents agreed that:

- Work expectations were clear
- Quality and consistency of the communication from School/College/Faculty leadership was supportive and informative
- Employees had the equipment and remote tools needed to complete the work
- The ability to participate in FWA's was significantly important to them
- FWA's offered increased health benefits, less stress, greater productivity, less absenteeism, enriched team spirit, improved well-being and personal time.

Respondents described the biggest challenges (although many reported no challenges) as:

- Balancing on-site availability with FWA amongst the staff (ensuring appropriate on campus resources) (managers)
- Communication errors or misunderstandings (all employees)
- Managing expectations (all employees)
- Evaluating productivity is more challenging (managers)
- Limited in-person time being disruptive to team dynamics (all employees)
- More of a challenge to simply turn off work at the end of the day (all employees)
- Working in a remote area free of distractions (all employees)
- Less than ideal remote work spaces (all employees)

Respondents felt the Faculty of Health could enhance University FWA guidelines by including messaging around:

- Weekly schedules expectations
- Signed telework agreements
- Alignment of principles with central university

- No need for FH specific guidelines but clarity around University guidelines helpful
- Reference to remote work while out of province
- Managing sick leaves during remote work
- Improved messaging regarding bad weather

In an effort to enhance clarity to the University FWA's and in recognition that the majority of respondents felt the University guidelines were mostly clear, the following augmentation can apply specifically to Faculty of Health.

- Employees must sign the University's telework policy: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/human-resources/telework-policy-and-procedures.html , a copy of which is placed in the personnel file.
- As FWA's are not an employer requirement, employees are responsible for ensuring they have the furniture, equipment and technology needed to perform their work at their remote workplace.
- Given the nature of a position's responsibilities, some positions may only be eligible for limited flexibility with respect to on-campus work versus remote work while others, given the nature of the responsibilities may have more flexibility. In fact, some positions may not be able to participate in FWA's, given the nature of the work.
- FWA's are routinely assessed and can be modified by the employer, and if necessary, revoked.
- Once a schedule of on-campus/remote work has been assigned any change to a schedule needs the approval of a supervisor.
- While working remotely or on campus, employees expected to be in their remote or campus workspace during these times and available.
- Despite working remotely employees are representing the Faculty and the University and are to dress appropriately and be ready for work at the assigned time.
- If an employee is feeling unwell on a day they would normally be on-campus, but prefer to work remotely, with the approval of the supervisor, that on-campus day can be shifted to another day in the week(s). As an employer however, we do not encourage employees who are feeling unwell to work, even when working remotely.

- If travelling outside of Nova Scotia and travel is unrelated to vacation, remote work may continue, if approved by the supervisor, for up to 10 business days, so long as there is a FWA already established/approved with guaranteed availability during regular business hours (Atlantic Standard Time).
- Messaging regarding University curtailment during bad weather and/or infrastructure issues, comes directly from the University, not the Faculty of Health.

Any issues/concerns that arise with the application of FWA's can be discussed with direct supervisor, Director, or Director of Human Resources, Faculty of Health.

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Approved by B. Merritt, Dean, FH – July 18, 2022