

## FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

University leadership has supported being flexible to help manage through this crisis thus far and this fall will be no different. These times require new ways of thinking about how work gets done at ISU, how managers manage their teams, and how everyone can collaborate and create a culture of trust. The following will help employees, supervisors and teams think through how they can enable and support flexibility based on their own unique circumstances.

The following guidance is designed to help employees work with their supervisors to support the flexibility needed to manage family flexibility, and other COVID-19 changes in order to keep ISU running. We recognize that the current situation is unprecedented and wanted to provide some guidance that will help employees to successfully work together with their supervisors in the current environment. As K-12 schools begin to announce their plans for reopening in the fall and various adjustments related to COVID-19, the needs of our employees may vary.

## TALKING ABOUT FLEXIBILITY

When thinking about creating a culture of trust, it helps to recognize the concerns of employees and managers to help understand each other's perspectives.

### Employees

- Decisions will be made based on preference with biases and potential discrimination
- I will be treated differently for requesting flexibility
- My supervisor is unlikely to allow any of the options
- How will decisions be made?
- What if my request is denied?

### Managers

- Multiple requests will make it impossible to grant every request and run the unit
- Flexibility will make it difficult to know who is available when
- How will customers of services know about people's availability?
- How do I make fair decisions when there are conflicting requests?

## EMPLOYEE GUIDANCE FOR REQUESTING FLEXIBILITY

Your manager won't know your situation until you ask. Thinking through all the implications and finding solutions to potential issues will go a long way in helping managers make a decision. Ultimately, it is the manager's decision and even agreed upon flexible arrangements may need to be changed to meet the needs of the unit.

### Primary questions to consider before asking for flexibility

- How would your request affect you personally, how would it affect your ability to do your job, and what impact would it have on your team?
- How might flexibility relieve personal stress caused by other time restrictions (such as childcare or elder care demands, your commute to work, class schedule, doctor appointments, etc.?)
- Would your personal productivity improve if you could alter your current work schedule?
- What type of flexibility would you like? What type of flexibility would work best in your position?
- How will your flexible work option affect your customers, co-workers, and manager?
- What would others have to do to accommodate your request, and how could you make it easier for them?
- How will you communicate with your supervisor and assure work is completed as expected?

### **For remote work**

- Do I have an appropriate space to work at home?
- Do I want to do this all the time or just some of the time?
- Will I be able to devote my full attention to work when physically at home?
- Will I need to block time that is dedicated to work?

### **For reduced work/hours (time off, temporary part-time, leaves of absence)**

- Can the work still be done with the reduced schedule?
- Will someone have to pick of the work? Who could it be?
- Am I able to coordinate with my co-workers or supervisors to ensure coverage for the semester?

### **For compressed work week**

- Will my energy be sapped by long days?
- Do I have enough work flow to fill 10-hour days?
- How do I handle weeks with a holiday falling on my off day?
- Will I be able to provide adequate customer service?
- Will long days negatively impact my family situation?

### **Making a business case**

- Put yourself in your supervisor's shoes and help them identify ways to ensure the work continues to meet expectations.
- Include suggestions about how you might be flexible to cover peak time coverage, meeting times, special events, communication with clients, co-workers, your supervisor, etc.
- Identify if there are any additional changes that need to take place in order for you to meet your job specific performance goals and objectives.
- Aim to be flexible and have a back-up plan when changes are needed to meet your department's business needs.
- Check with your [HR Delivery Team](#) or email [hr\\_delivery@iastate.edu](mailto:hr_delivery@iastate.edu) to review your plan and see if there are any unit or policy considerations.