

FLEXIBLE WORK CASE STUDY: HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL LIFE

BACKGROUND

Unit Description

- 208 Professional Staff
- 479 Student Staff
- Housing operates on-campus housing for approximately 8,000 students – more than 7,600 undergraduate students and 300 graduate students – living in 23 dorms and one graduate housing apartment complex.

Types of Flexible Work Offered

- ✓ Flexible Schedule - variations in arrival and departure times
- ✓ Hybrid Work Week

Overview of Flexible Work in Housing & Residential Life (Housing)

Housing launched a Flexible Work Pilot Program starting in the Fall 2021 semester. The program is open to benefits-eligible employees only.

Employees whose job duties can accommodate working off campus may request a hybrid workweek, with up to two days per week of remote work, with remote days being the same days each week.

Employees with job duties that require them to be on campus may request a flexible schedule, with variable arrival and departure times.

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PLANNING FOR FLEXIBLE WORK

During the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 pandemic semesters, students continued living in the residence halls, necessitating in-person work among some Housing staff members. In Fall 2021, as part of a unit-wide return to in-person operations, Housing planned and launched a Flexible Work Pilot Program after a phased return to in-person work over the summer. As part of the planning process, Housing worked to develop flexible work options that would be inclusive of their unit's range of job types, which includes facilities, programmatic, and administrative staff.

Employees can request either a flexible space or flexible schedule option depending on the type of job duties they perform. The flexible work program is subject to be adjusted based on the ability to meet unit business needs and any required changes to university practices or policies. The program was evaluated at the end of the Fall 2021 semester and most recently again in May 2022 with the decision made to continue offering both the flexible space and flexible schedule options based on job type.

IMPLEMENTING FLEXIBLE WORK

How were flexible work options communicated in Housing?

Housing sent an All Employee Memo detailing the practices, procedures, and guidelines for participating in the Flexible Work Pilot Program.

How have flexible work arrangements been documented in Housing?

A [Request & Agreement Form](#) must be submitted by the employee and approved by the employee's supervisor and Director once a year.

How often are flexible work arrangements revisited?

Flexible work arrangements are reviewed annually as part of an employee's Career Conversation. However, a flexible work arrangement can be adjusted whenever is needed to best fit unit needs, such as due to vacation coverage, dorm move-in, or other business needs.

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How do you communicate flexible work arrangements when recruiting new staff?

Housing includes the option for flexible work arrangements in job descriptions and as a discussion point during candidate interviews.

How do you encourage employee engagement and team collaboration with your flexible work arrangements?

Areas offering hybrid work have found that having a day each week when all employees are required to be in-person and scheduling team meetings, trainings, and group events on this day seems to promote more collaboration and builds trust among team members, especially when there are new staff.

Employees are encouraged to use Zoom and Teams for impromptu video conversations as a form of face-to-face interactions.

If a meeting includes both remote and in-person employees, all participants use Zoom to help ensure that everyone is able to participate in a similar manner.

Unit-wide social events (e.g., unit open house, appreciation breakfast) are held in person on campus approximately once each semester to provide the opportunity for social interaction.

MONITORING SUCCESS & ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY

How do you monitor productivity in a flexible work environment?

Productivity can be measured in different ways depending on the type of job, such as email responses, phone calls answered/messages returned, data entry deadline met, area being cleaned within variable start and end times. Housing continues to look for ways to improve efficiencies in how work is performed. For example, encouraging the use of Teams instead of back-and-forth emails.

What challenges has Housing faced while implementing flexible work?

There continues to be discussion around flexible work differences between facilities and administrative staff, even with offering different types of flexibility depending on job role.

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What solutions has Housing implemented to respond to these challenges?

Housing continues to evaluate ways to provide additional flexible work options for different job roles while meeting customer service expectations and business needs.

What resources or support have you found to be helpful while implementing flexible work?

Referencing the [Flexible Work Guidelines and Resources HR website](#) that provides a common language on types of flexibility has been helpful for employee and supervisor conversations.

Housing has made an effort to ensure that HR staff are available to help with conversations should questions or issues arise.

Ensuring that HR staff are up to date on workplace trends and how the workforce is changing has helped to ensure that HR staff bring an informed perspective to consultations.

What benefits have you observed from offering flexible work?

Benefits of offering flexible work options include employees using less sick time and improved employee morale.

Who to contact with more questions?

Norma Ortega, Director, Housing Human Resources | ortegan@arizona.edu

For official UArizona Guidelines, visit

Human Resources | [Flexible Work Guidelines and Resources](#)
Office of University Initiatives | [2022 Flexible Work Initiative](#)