

PROPOSED UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING POLICY

PURPOSE: The university system supports the use of flexible work scheduling (or flex-time) to help diminish the commuting costs for its employees and to promote conservation of natural resources. The availability of flexible work schedules is not intended to change the department's regular hours of operation or to alter the responsibility of department heads to establish and adjust work schedules.

SCOPE: The Flexible work schedule policy applies to SPA and EPA Non-Faculty employees. Eligibility for participation in Flex-Time will depend on an assessment by the department head to ensure that the employee's proposed work schedule will enable the employee to fully meet job responsibilities and performance expectations, that all service needs are met during normal business hours, and that the department's operations will not be interrupted. While it is not required that flexible work schedules be uniformly available to all positions in a department, the department head is responsible for ensuring the fair and equitable administration of this policy to eligible employees.

POLICY: Generally, the university system's regular office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, some campus departments may have official office hours that differ in order to provide appropriate service to their clientele. This may include departments with multiple shifts. Departments are encouraged to consider flexible schedules when it is in the best interest of the university in providing services to students.

Flex-Time is only appropriate when the work schedule is beneficial to the department and the University. Eligibility for participation in this program will be determined by the department head on a case-by-case basis, with business necessity being the primary consideration. An employee requesting a change in work schedule should give sufficient notice and justification to their department management.

Working a flexible schedule is a privilege, not an employee right and flexible schedules are not appropriate for all job situations. An employee cannot use the university grievance procedure to grieve a decision on a request for a flexible work schedule.

DEFINITIONS: FLEX-TIME or FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULING – an arrangement that may include a consistent daily schedule with individualized starting and ending times that are the same throughout the week or a daily schedule that starts or ends at different times each day. The varying schedule may include a consistent eight hour day throughout the week or a varying daily schedule of more or less than eight hours. For full-time employees participating in flex-scheduling, the total weekly hours worked per week must be forty hours for the work week. Part-time employees must also work their appointed number of hours per week.

COMPRESSED WORKWEEK – an arrangement that enables an employee to work longer days in exchange for a day off each week. For example, an employee may work four ten hour days and be off on the fifth day. Part-time employees may also be eligible to participate in a variation of the compressed workweek arrangement at the discretion of the department head.

CORE WORK DAYS – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are considered to be “core work days”, i.e. work days when all employees will be expected to be at work.* The core work days are established to provide designated days and time periods when the department is fully staffed for the purpose of managing peak periods, coordinating work among staff, scheduling meetings, department events, etc. The days that may be flexed off are Monday and Friday. Requests for flex days other than Monday or Friday will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as long as the requested schedule will not disrupt operations.

*Note: The core work days may vary for departments that typically work a schedule other than Monday through Friday.

CORE WORK HOURS – The core hour concept (CHC) would enable departments to allow flexible work time within a narrowly focused time frame, (i.e. 6 AM to 6 PM). The CHC will enable employees to shift their work schedules to allow for transportation alternatives, such as carpooling and public transportation, at the same time ensuring that the department maintains and maximizes coverage and reduces lost time due to sick days, vacation and absenteeism. Employees will be expected to work within the “Core Hours” of the department (i.e. 9 AM to 3 PM). These “Core Hours” ensure that each department has ample personnel on hand to carry out its assigned tasks during the University’s peak operating hours. The only exception to an employee not working the “Core Hours” is during scheduled time off or with their supervisor/manager’s approval. The flexible hours are from 6 AM to 8 AM and again from 4 PM to 6 PM. Employees can use these hours to add flexibility to their schedules. (See Appendix A)

COVERAGE: The implementation of a flex time schedule is contingent upon assuring at least minimal coverage during normal business hours. Department heads should design flexible work schedules so that adequate supervision is provided.

CROSS TRAINING: A department using flex-time should take appropriate actions to ensure proper cross training in order to maintain levels of service for the duration of the normal operating hours of the department.

POLICY COMPLIANCE: Flex-Time schedules must be implemented in accordance with applicable university, state and federal policies and regulations. Flex-Time schedules are not intended to alter the basic understanding that full-time staff employees are expected to work 40 per week, including appropriate lunch periods. Flex-Time schedules do not change normal attendance requirements. An employee participating in the Flex-Time scheduling option should note that when a holiday falls on their scheduled extended workday, that they may need to use vacation or compensatory leave to cover the additional hours on the holiday or the department as a whole changes back to a regular schedule for that holiday week.

KEY ISSUES to be ADDRESSED BEFORE APPROVING FLEX SCHEDULING: When contemplating implementation of flexible work schedules, the staff member and supervisor need to consider both university and individual issues. Key issues that must be addressed for flex scheduling to succeed include:

- *How will university and departmental needs be met?
- *How will the needs of the customer/client be met?
- *Does the job contain tasks that can be done at non-traditional times?
- *Are staff members sufficiently cross-trained to cover core departmental functions?
- *Have the support needs of the staff member and the supervisor been carefully assessed?
- *Can the employee's performance be successfully monitored during the extended work hours?
- *Other employees must not be unduly burdened by a flex-time staff member's schedule.
- *A good communication process must be in place to keep all informed and coordinated to get the job done within the unit.
- *Accountability and performance expectations must be clearly identified.

LUNCHES: Lunches and/or scheduled rest periods should not be eliminated when staff work flexible schedules.

NEW EMPLOYEES: Staff members should expect to work the standard schedule (i.e. 8 AM to 5 PM) during their probationary period to assure appropriate training and interaction with others in the department.

TELECOMMUTING: Telecommuting is a flexible work arrangement where hiring managers direct or permit employees to perform job duties at alternative work locations in order to promote work efficiencies. Full-time or part-time employees with probationary, permanent, trainee or time-limited appointments are eligible to telecommute with supervisory approval. Temporary employees may not participate in telecommute arrangements. Employees are subject to the same performance expectations as if they were at the central work site and written agreements are required for telecommuting arrangements.

PROCEDURES:

APPROVAL of FLEX SCHEDULES: Some jobs are suited to flexible schedules, others are not. If an employee wishes to be considered for a flexible work schedule, he/she should submit the request* in writing to their supervisor/manger. The supervisor/manger should carefully review the job description and how the adjusted schedule might affect the completion of duties, how it would impact other staff and faculty and how it affects any customers served. After a careful evaluation of the pros and cons of a flexible schedule, the supervisor/manager should explain clearly why these arrangements are or are not approved. In cases where two or more employees with similar duties request a flexible schedule, the supervisor/manager may not be able to approve all requests. The supervisor/manager should assess the work to determine how much flexibility is possible. Factors such as seniority, merit, skills and personal circumstances may be considered when a choice must be made. (*See Appendix B)

MODIFYING or RESCINDING a FLEX SCHEDULE: The flex schedule agreement includes a detailed work schedule and a provision for modifying the schedule or reverting back to the normal work schedule within a reasonable time period if necessary. The supervisor/manager may terminate the agreement because of other employee needs, new responsibilities within the department or other conditions. It is understood that the supervisor/manager has the right and responsibility to modify or eliminate a flexible schedule as circumstances change.