

GUIDANCE ON
PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A HEALTHY WORK / LIFE BALANCE

1. The School of Medicine recognises the benefit of working practices that support staff in achieving a healthy work / life balance whilst fulfilling the needs of the School. This is applicable to those who have personal requirements, have families, are carers or live alone. The School adopts the University policy in this regard; see <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/policy/staff-employee-relations-flexible-working/flexible-working-policy.pdf>
2. There are many benefits to a good work / life balance; healthy wellbeing, a more positive attitude to work, better working relationships, better relationships at home and an improved achievement of work goals. By promoting a good work / life balance the School of Medicine demonstrates the value it places on its staff and post-graduate (PG) students and aims to improve morale and productivity.
3. The School of Medicine acknowledges and appreciates the diverse mix of job roles, working styles and personal situations amongst its teams and their different requirements.
4. The School aspires that staff and PG students maintain a healthy work-life balance for all. This balance and the associated expectations will vary between line managers, but transparent and fair discussions between management and staff should allow a suitable balance for all. Line managers should act as role models in contributing to a culture of flexibility by following University policies and to work within these, or taking advice in exceptional circumstances.
5. There are several facets which relate to creating a work environment for staff and post-graduate (PG) students which are flexible and collegiate.

Flexibility in working hours and place of working

6. It is important that staff appreciate the impact 'off-site' working may have on the task, the team or the individual. Intra-team communication may be more challenging as it may suit other members of the team to communicate only during regular working hours. Inter-team communication may also be affected as face-to-face meetings or group discussions are essential and arranging meetings to suit everyone's schedules can be difficult.
7. Intrusion of an individual's private life with work-related issues may also be detrimental to a healthy work / life balance as discipline is required to stop working or to turn off technology. Members of staff who continue to work through the evening and at weekends may not get sufficient rest or time to attend to and enjoy their non-work life.
8. Some notes on flexible working are at Appendix 1.

Taking time-out

9. The School encourage all staff and students to create a healthy work / life balance by taking time for sport, mindfulness and general health. CAPOD and the University Sports Centre can provide advice.
10. It is important for staff and their managers to realise that working outside of 'normal working

hours¹ should not lead to the expectation of any task being completed early although a task completed early due to an individual's work choice may be commended.

Scheduling

11. The School policy is that timings and venue of School-level meetings are as inclusive as possible; typically meetings will be scheduled from 10am to 3pm or 4pm to allow attendance of those with parenting or caring responsibilities.

Collegiality

12. The School will foster a collegiate environment across all jobs, roles and positions in order to encourage inter-personal collaborations and make for a more genial workplace. This, in turn, can only have a positive effect on staff morale. A policy of introducing new staff and PG students will assist all individuals to feel valued and cherished. The School will support all-inclusive social events such as morning coffee, afternoon tea, Graduation lunch, Christmas or other holiday-associated events or end-of-year barbecue. A School Social Committee is encouraged.

Appendix 1

13. Task / team / Individual requirement:

- a. **The task requirement.** The "task" is the work that must be done; for which the employer pays a salary. Some task needs are fixed throughout term time. Others are more flexible, particularly out of semester time.
- b. **The team requirement.** The "team" is the staff of the School, or subsets of that. The team must plan, adjust and deliver output, much of which requires team members to achieve at work. It follows that the team must assemble at the School for much of the working week. However, the School also recognises that meetings can also be conducted over Skype and in other locations.
- c. **The individual's requirement.** The "individual" has needs and expectations about the quality of their life and their work / life balance. These are unique to them and not necessarily driven by the same factors as the team and the task.

¹ See Appendix 2
Version 06/11/2019 / dcm10

Appendix 2

14. Expectations about working hours vary across different job roles. There are a range of contracts and individuals have different definitions and expectations about the number of hours they work and which hours are worked. Hours should be defined in individual's contracts and line managers should be aware of these definitions and be sensitive to the differences and allowances. The range of commitments² undertaken by school staff dictate that neither a 'standard working week' or a single document statement is impossible but line managers are encouraged to be flexible considerate and fair.

Links

University accreditation: [Carer Positive Employer](#) and [Health working Lives](#) Bronze Award
 Working families – A UK [work-life](#) balance charity for working parents
 Fife Carers Centre – The University has built a partnership with the '[Fife Carers Centre](#)'
 University of St Andrews flexible working [policy](#) and application [form](#) and [carers](#) information
 Health and [wellbeing](#) at work initiatives

Author:	School manager	Approval Committee:	
Consultees:			
Location/s (Med Handbook):	Linked from School Organisation>Personnel Policies>HR Policies Map document		
Location of source file:			
Access Level: (Public/University/School Staff)	Public		
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Version Control Record *(expand table as required)*

Date	Revision Description	Major Changes
04/07/2017	Published version	
1 Oct 2019	Revision to point at University working from home policy	

² For example; University or School representation, grant or organisational representations, clinical commitments, conference attendance, course attendance, School teaching commitments, clinical placements, preparation.