



FLEXIBLE WORKING : GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES

HR 39

These guidelines are intended to help you make a request for flexible working and should be read in conjunction with the [Flexible Working Application Procedure](#). There are also a series of forms designed to support this process and help you make your request in the correct way. You do not have to use the forms, but if you don't, you must ensure that you provide all required information – failure to do so could delay consideration of your request.

If you are in any doubt about any aspect of the procedure, please speak to your Human Resources Officer.

BEFORE YOU CONTINUE

Make sure that you are eligible and that the circumstances in which you are making the request are only to help you care for your child. The eligibility criteria are set out in full in the procedure and in the application form.

MAKING A FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

The initial onus is on you to provide a written application well in advance of when you want the changes to take effect. The written application must state the date when you would like the new working pattern to start. The proposed date should allow time for the application to be considered and implemented. There is no set time you can expect it to take around fourteen weeks or longer if a problem arises.

The easiest way to make an application is to use the form provided, but you don't have to so long as your application is in writing and contains all the information listed in the application checklist set out in the procedure.

You must also state your relationship to their child, e.g. you are the adoptive father of a child aged under six years old (or eighteen if disabled) and confirm that you have responsibility for their upbringing. You must also state if and when any previous application was made.

The level of detail required will depend on the desired change(s) to your existing working pattern. In all cases it is in your interest to be as clear and explicit as possible and to think through the implications as carefully as possible. The application provides you with the opportunity to set out the reasons why your preferred working pattern is compatible with the needs of the business, as far as you are able to tell. It must therefore provide an explanation of what effect, if any, you think the proposed change would have on Channel 4 and how you feel any such effect might be dealt with. For example, you could argue that arriving half an hour later will have minimal impact on the business as this is the quietest time of the day and you can make up the time during the lunch period when it is far busier.

This does not mean that you are expected to know every factor that might influence the channel's decision. It simply means that you should show you have considered the

factors that you are aware of that are likely to influence it. Evidence shows that applications for flexible working patterns succeed where they are soundly based on the business needs of the employer.

HOW TO HELP US CONSIDER YOUR REQUEST

- A new working pattern will normally be a permanent change unless otherwise agreed. So think carefully about your request as you have no right to revert back to your former hours of work.
- Think about the date you when you would like your new working pattern to begin. Be aware that the process can take up to 14 weeks to complete, and sometimes longer where a problem arises.
- Remember, the more notice you provide, the more likely we will be able to implement the change when it suits you. So once the application is complete send it in straight away.
- Remember, if you request a flexible working pattern that will result in your working fewer hours, your pay and pension contributions will reduce too.
- It is to your advantage to provide as much detail as possible about the pattern you would like to work.
- Take time to consider how your colleagues will manage if your working pattern is changed. If you have any colleagues or friends who are already working flexibly, ask them about their experiences.
- Think about what effect changing your working pattern will have on your job. You should aim to show in your application that your plans will not harm Channel 4's business and may in fact enhance it.
- Think about how any potential problems your plans may present could be overcome and ensure that you include these in your application.
- Check who will consider your application and ensure that you submit it to the appropriate person. If the person is absent remember that an automatic extension to the time limits for setting up a meeting will apply.
- Make sure your application is complete – if you have missed anything out then you will have to re-submit and this could delay the process. Your manager is not obliged to consider it until a complete application is provided.
- If you are due to go on maternity leave think carefully about when to make your request. You might wish to mention before you take leave that you are interested in applying to work flexibly on your return. Bear in mind that you may need to attend meetings with us so that your request can be properly considered. If you want the changes to start on your return from maternity leave, you should make your application in good time.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The meeting is an opportunity for you and your manager to talk through your application in depth and consider how it might be accommodated. Both you and your manager should be prepared to be flexible, and consider alternatives where the working pattern you have proposed cannot be accommodated.

BRINGING A COMPANION

You can be accompanied at the meeting. Your companion must be a Channel 4 employee – either a colleague or trade union representative. Your companion is there to support you but not answer for you.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE MEETING

- Be prepared to expand on any points within your application.
- Prepare to be flexible. There might be other working patterns and you should be willing to consider these, or consider another start date or a trial period.
- If you are taking a companion along, make sure they are fully briefed on your request beforehand, provide them with a copy of your application, and tell your manager that you're bringing a companion, and who they are. This will save time during the meeting.
- Familiarise yourself with this guidance and other sources of information on flexible working before the meeting.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T MAKE THE MEETING

You must let your manager know as soon as possible so that it can be rearranged. Remember if you simply don't turn up for two meetings without a reasonable explanation, then your manager could treat your application as withdrawn.

MAKING AN APPEAL

The procedure sets out the possible outcomes from the meeting. If you are unhappy with the decision you can make an appeal. There are no constraints on the grounds under which you can appeal. It may be that you wish to bring to attention something your manager may not have been aware of when they rejected the application, for example, that another member of staff is now willing to cover the hours you no longer wish to work. Or it may be to challenge a fact your manager has quoted to explain why the business reason applies.

We hope that by following the procedure there should be very few instances where people remain unsatisfied at the end of the formal procedure – because even if the decision has been made to refuse their request, the reasons why have been explained and they understand these.

Last Updated : March 2003