



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

Flexi Time Scheme

1. General Information

- 1.1 The aim of this scheme is meet the requirements of the College and, as far as reasonably possible, the individual employee, to enable the College to meet peaks and troughs in service delivery and thus contribute to the efficient delivery of services. Some employees are required to work fixed hours (including shift workers) because of service delivery requirements or other reasons. These employees are not eligible to participate in the scheme.
- 1.2 The scheme is intended to provide individuals with a degree of choice in the pattern of hours worked within a framework of the employees' contractual weekly hours, while maintaining output and standards of service. It does not give an employee the right to vary his/her working pattern if this does not meet operational requirements. The scheme can benefit employees and the College when the scheme is operated on the basis of mutual respect of the needs of other employees and the needs of the service.
- 1.3 The College supports the principle of work life balance, recognizing the need to effectively deliver College services whilst at the same time allowing flexibility to accommodate the needs of individuals. This contributes towards the maintenance of a healthy, motivated and committed workforce.
- 1.4 A number of elements of the scheme (such as core and standard working hours, flexi bands, carry over permitted) may be amended to meet the needs of different departments. Where the scheme is to be varied, the line manager should record any agreed changes which are to apply within their team and issue the revised document to all members of the team who are eligible to participate in the scheme.
- 1.5 This scheme is offered as a privilege and is not part of one's conditions of employment.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The scheme is, in principle, open to all employees with specified working hours in the contract, whether employed on a full-time, part-time or job share basis (subject to 1.1 above).
- 2.2 Given the relatively small size of the College, and the existence of a number of one person staffing units in some departments, it may be difficult to facilitate flexible working arrangements some areas. Therefore, the scheme should be made available to as many employees as possible, **but is always subject to operational requirements.**

- 2.3 Participation in the scheme is voluntary. This means that an individual employee may choose not to participate and remain on his/her standard working pattern.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 **Management Responsibilities:**

The line manager/supervisor must ensure that:

- details of the scheme are communicated to eligible employees, and those who are not eligible to participate are advised why they cannot avail of the scheme;
- each eligible employee has the appropriate documentation to complete;
- he/she receives, from every staff member participating in the flexi time scheme, the appropriate timesheets for countersignature on a monthly basis;
- each timesheet is an accurate record of time worked and leave taken.

3.2 **Employee Responsibilities:**

Employees who participate in the scheme must:

- Accept that when agreeing start/finish times with line management they must take into account
 - personal work responsibilities,
 - those of the department,
 - the overall pattern of work in the department and/or work area,
- Ensure that flexi sheets are completed on a daily basis and are an accurate record of time worked. ***It is a condition of the scheme that any participant passes his/her timesheet the line manager every month for sign off and ensures that the timesheet is available for the manager to inspect at any time.*** This can be done, for example, by keeping an electronic timesheet in a shared drive, or keeping a hard copy of a timesheet in an accessible location within the department.
- Ensure that accrued hours are used as flexi (where service provision allows) before the end of the accounting period.
- Contribute to effective communication and co-operation between individuals to ensure that the scheme works smoothly. This will be particularly apparent when there is a need to cover annual leave and sickness absence or at times when the department experiences peaks or troughs in demand.

4. Scheme Operation

- 4.1 Full-time members of staff are contracted to work a 36.5 hour week. The hours of work for part-time and/or job share staff are as specified in the contract of employment.

4.2 The standard working hours for most office based staff are:

Monday to Thursday	8.50 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.
Friday	8.50 a.m. to 4.25 p.m.
Lunch	45 minutes.

Some departments may operate different working hours. In such cases, the scheme may be amended to reflect these working patterns.

4.3 Only hours accrued on Monday to Friday, excluding Bank/Public Holidays and College closure periods may be counted as flexi time. Weekend working and hours worked outside the flexi-time bands are counted as overtime, unless the staff member's normal working week includes weekend working. Overtime working is separate from flexitime. If it is necessary for a member of staff to work hours over those allowed for in flexi time or, exceptionally, at weekends, this must be agreed in advance with the line manager.

5. Flexi time Periods

5.1 Flexi time periods are normally as follows (due consideration is to be given to building opening hours and any relevant health and safety considerations):

	Time Band
Flexible starting band:	8.00 – 9.45
Core time:	9.45 – 12.00
Flexible lunch period:	12.00 – 2.00
Core time:	2.00 – 4.00
Flexible finishing band:	4.00 – 6.00

5.2 Core time refers to those periods within which everyone must be at work, unless absence (such as annual leave or a half-day flexi) has been authorised in advance.

5.3 Time is to be recorded to the nearest 5 minutes.

5.4 Any member of staff using the system shall ensure that there is sufficient work available to allow an earlier starting time. The time recorded must be the actual time at which work is commenced, rather than the time at which the employee arrives on campus.

5.5 A break of at least 30 minutes is to be taken for lunch. If an employee cannot take a lunch break between the hours shown above because of work commitments, for example because of attendance at a meeting, he/she should take a minimum 30 minutes break at a convenient time (agreed with line management) on that day. An employee who wishes to take a lunch break in excess of one hour should agree this in advance with line management.

5.6 In exceptional circumstances, an individual may be required to work outside these time periods (e.g., when attending an event involving substantial travel). In such cases, the individual should discuss and agree how to record any extra hours worked and how these hours are to be addressed. The College will normally permit the recording of all travel time except that which the employee would normally have

spent travelling to and from work.

- 5.7 If an employee plans to work after the building in which they are based is locked by Portering or Security, the employee must notify either Portering or Security that they are working late and when they leave the building.

6. Accounting Period

- 6.1 The accounting period is the calendar month.
- 6.2 A credit of up to 15 hours may be carried forward to the next accounting period. Any credit in excess of 15 hours will be lost at the end of that accounting period, except in circumstances outlined in paragraph 5.4 below.
- 6.3 A debit of up to 7.5 hours may be carried forward to the next accounting period. Debits of over 7.5 hours are not permitted. This is pro rata for part time/job share staff.
- 6.4 College management acknowledges that various departments may have different busy periods during the year, such as during the Registration period in September/October. During these times, flexi credit may be accrued but it may be difficult to facilitate time off due to operational demands. In such cases, line managers and staff may agree that flexi credit accrued may be carried forward, so that time off can be taken after the peak time for that department. Where an extended carry-over is to be permitted, line managers will:
- brief all staff in the department (who are participating in the scheme) when such arrangements are put in place, and
 - keep a record of what carry forward is being allowed.

7. Requesting and Taking Flexi Leave

- 7.1 Line management will need to consider the ability to staff the office throughout the period in question when making decisions about flexi requests.
- 7.2 Leave related to excess hours worked may normally be taken up to a maximum of two half days or one full day in any month. After particularly busy periods (as outlined in paragraph 6.4 above) or in exceptional circumstances, the employee and line manager may agree that leave in excess of one day may be taken. In such circumstances,
- all staff in the department who participate in the scheme must be advised of the variation of the scheme to allow leave in excess of the norm,
 - any leave to be taken must be agreed between the employee and line manager, and
 - a record must be kept of the variation operated within the department, and of any leave taken.
- 7.3 For those working the hours noted at section 3.2, a half day's leave commences at 12.30 p.m. (This applies to both flexi and annual leave). Anyone taking a morning half day starts work that afternoon at 1.15 p.m.

- Members of staff may supplement a flexi half day with an annual leave half day in order to make a complete day.
- Flexi may be used to increase an annual leave half day in order to leave work before 12.30 p.m. or to start after 1.15 p.m. as long as the start/finish time complies with the requirement to work core hours as set out in section 4.1.

7.4 Any flexi leave which an employee wishes to take must be agreed in advance with the line manager. This includes lunch breaks in excess of one hour, late starts and early departures, in order to ensure that offices are staffed adequately during working hours.

7.5 An employee who leaves the College's employment must balance his/her flexi-leave to zero before leaving. The College will not make payments in lieu of credited hours, but the College is under an obligation to withhold payment for debit hours, i.e. hours not worked by the employee by the date s/he leaves.

8. Records

8.1 Each member of staff must record his/her time of starting and finishing work on the Flexi Timesheet and must keep a running total of the hours worked each month. Times must be recorded to the nearest 5 minutes.

8.2 Each individual who is participating in the scheme must

- complete and sign a monthly flexi-time sheet each month, ensuring that is an accurate record of time worked and leave taken,
- keep the timesheet in a location accessible to the line manager (see 3.2)
- pass this to the line manager every month.

8.3 The Flexi Timesheet must be signed off each month by the line management of the department. The timesheet should be retained, after being signed off by the line manager, for a period of 12 months.

9. Authorised Absence

9.1 If an employee has an appointment with the doctor or dentist, prior notice must be given to the line manager. This time will be credited but members of staff are encouraged to ensure that such appointments are made for early or late in the day to avoid breaks in hours. The appropriate record must be made on the Flexi Time sheet and no flexi credit can be earned on such days of absence.

9.2 Only where the Principal gives express permission for offices to close early will full hours credit be allowed. The exact time of departure must be recorded in all other cases.

9.3 Time recorded for Sickness Absence, Annual Leave, and/or Public & College Holidays will be the normal contracted hours that the employee would have usually worked that day.

March 2011

10. Use of the Scheme

- 10.1 The use of the Flexi Time scheme is optional and any member of staff not wishing to participate may work the hours specified in the contract of employment within the normal working hours of that person's department.
- 10.2 The integrity of the system depends on staff keeping accurate records. Any abuse of the system or failure to comply with the scheme guidelines may result in the privilege being withdrawn from that individual and may lead to disciplinary action.

11. Advice

- 11.1 Advice or guidance about the operation of the scheme should be addressed to the line manager or the HR Department.

12. Variation of the Scheme

- 12.1 The College reserves the right to vary or suspend the scheme should circumstances warrant it.

March 2011.