

Voluntary Reduced Hours Policy

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1. Policy

1.1 The University Voluntary Reduced Hours Policy compliments existing options for flexible working and outlines the University's approach to staff requesting to voluntarily reduce their hours of work on a temporary basis, or to request up to 4 weeks unpaid leave (Voluntary Time Off arrangement).

1.2 The University recognises that staff may wish to reduce their hours temporarily for a variety of reasons and will seek to facilitate the granting of a reasonable request.

2. Scope of the Procedure

2.1 All staff on a permanent or fixed term contract, regardless of length of service are eligible to submit a request to voluntarily reduced their hours.

3. Voluntary Reduced Hours (VRH)

3.1 Voluntary reduced hours involves employees choosing to work fewer hours than the standard full-time schedule, typically with a proportionate reduction in salary and benefits.

3.2 Whether or not to allow a VRH arrangement is entirely at the discretion of the line manager and the Director/Dean.

3.3 Where a request for VRH is approved, it will usually be granted until the end of the financial year in which the request was made, however departments/faculties may have discretion on the length of the voluntary arrangement.

3.4 VRH will only be approved where the department/faculty work schedule allows. Any reduced hour arrangement must not put additional work pressure on other department/faculty employees, though there may be some revision of work responsibilities.

3.5 The nature of the VRH will be agreed in advance and will be maintained for the duration of the reduced hours arrangement.

3.6 Employees entering into a reduced hours schedule will have their salary reduced proportionately.

3.7 Sickiness and annual leave will accrue at a reduced rate proportional to the reduced hours worked. Employees on VRH arrangements will receive only prorated holiday pay during the period of reduced hours.

3.8 Departments/Faculties may not replace the employee with extra resource during the period of VRH.

3.9 Should the University be required to make redundancies in the financial year 2024/25, the redundancy payment for those on a reduced hours arrangement agreed after 3 December 2024 and in accordance with this policy, will be calculated on the basis of the hours they worked prior to the reduced hours arrangement being agreed.

3.10 The VRH Hours Policy cannot be used to extend a period of medical leave.

4. Voluntary Time Off (VTO) Arrangements

4.1 Should an employee wish to take from one to four weeks off rather than reduced hours, such an arrangement would also be allowed under this policy.

4.2 Time must be taken in blocks of a week.

4.3 Whether or not to allow VTO is entirely at the discretion of the line manager and the Dean/Director.

- 4.4 VTO will only be approved where the department/faculty work schedule allows. Any voluntary time off must not put additional work pressure on other department/faculty employees.
- 4.5 Employees entering into a VTO agreement will have their salary reduced for any time not worked.
- 4.6 Employees will still continue employment for continuous service purposes.
- 4.7 Sickness and annual leave will not accrue during the VTO period.
- 4.8 Departments/Faculties may not replace the employee with extra resource during the period of VTO.

5. Types of request

5.1 Examples of the type of Voluntary Reduced Hours or Voluntary Time off Arrangements staff can request are highlighted below:

- Work a four-day week;
- Work Term Time Only (based on the calendar of your child/children's school);
- Work a 9-day fortnight (mainly for full-time staff that work Monday to Friday);
- Have the last Friday of the month off;
- Start at 10am or finish 4pm (mainly for full-time staff that work Monday to Friday)
- Have a month off in the 24/25 academic year i.e. take all of January 2025 off with no impact on annual leave entitlement but with a one-off reduction in FTE and pay;
- Reduced hours for phased retirement;
- Reduced hours after returning from maternity or paternity leave – new parent may request a reduced schedule such as working only 25 hours per week;
- Seasonal reduction in hours – where the University has fluctuations in workloads an employee may voluntarily reduce their hours during low periods of work.

6. Procedure

- 6.1 VRH or VTO requests should be discussed informally with the appropriate line manager, prior to a formal application being made.
- 6.2 Formal applications should be made to the appropriate line manager, by completing the Voluntary Reduced Hours application form . The employee will be invited to attend a meeting with the line manager to discuss their application within 10 working days.
- 6.3 The aim of the meeting is to explore the request and to discuss how it might be accommodated.
- 6.4 The staff member may be accompanied at the meeting by a recognised trade union representative or work colleague.
- 6.5 If the employee and/or their representative cannot attend the meeting on the proposed day and time, the meeting will be postponed to an alternative day and time, normally within 5 days of the original meeting.
- 6.6 Notification of the outcome of the meeting will normally be sent to the employee within 5 working days of the meeting taking place.
- 6.7 No application will be approved or rejected without consultation with the relevant senior manager and Human Resources, to ensure consistency across the department/university.

6.8 If the request is unsuccessful, the employee will be notified in writing. The line manager should provide a clear and accurate explanation for the refusal, including the business reason. The line manager should provide the employee with sufficient reasons to allow the employee to understand the decision.

7. Withdrawing a Request

7.1 Requests will be deemed to be withdrawn if:

- The employee withdraws their application either verbally or in writing;
- The employee fails to attend the meeting to discuss the request

Relevant Policy Headings

[Flexible Working Policy](#)

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Voluntary Reduced Hours / Voluntary Time Off Request Form

Personal Details	
Name:	Date of application:
Faculty/Department:	Line Manager:
Please outline your Voluntary Reduced Hours or Voluntary Time Off request in the box below:	
Describe your current working pattern / hours below:	
<p>Voluntary Reduced Hours are for a temporary period, with the expectation that the arrangement will cease at the end of current financial year, at which point you will return to your previous work pattern / hours. If you would like the arrangement to continue for longer than the current financial year please discuss with your line manager.</p>	
Date you would like the new arrangement to be effective from:	To:

Signature.....Date.....