

WORK LIFE BALANCE IN THE WORKPLACE

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS



In any workplace managers can receive a variety of requests for flexible work arrangements that promote work life balance. These arrangements may be used to assist working parents, parents of a child with a disability, workers caring for elderly family members, students or any employee who just needs some time to deal with personal commitments.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENT	FEATURES
Flexitime	<p>Flexible working hours allow employees to start and finish work earlier or later between an agreed range of times, provided they work a set number of hours each day or week. For example, employees may be able to start an eight hour day at any time that suits them between 7 am and 10 am and finish at any time between 3.30 pm and 6.30 pm.</p> <p>A supervisor might be responsible for ensuring enough coverage of business service needs. You may want to stipulate core hours to meet business demands e.g. peak client times, meeting times or deliveries. Employees usually keep track of their flexitime using special software.</p> <p>Flexitime helps staff who need to take children to or from school or care, attend school events, train a sports team etc. Other staff may use flexitime to avoid rush-hour or take advantage of quieter times at work to get things done.</p> <p>Giving staff this option increases your chances of recruiting and retaining skilled employees. It also means you may be able to cover the workplace across longer periods of the day which extends customer service and accessibility.</p>
Quality part-time work	<p>Reduced working hours has obvious benefits for parents and carers seeking to balance their work and family commitments. Offering quality part-time roles can help attract and retain these skilled employees, and can also assist staff to combine work with study/community work or to phase into retirement.</p> <p>Part-time employees are permanent employees who have a set number of weekly working hours. They receive the same entitlements as full-time employees, but on a proportional (pro-rata) basis, and should be seen as full members of the team and treated in the same way as full-time employees.</p>
Career, study, community participation breaks	<p>The employer and employee agree on an extended period of leave to enable the employee to up-skill, study or contribute to the community through volunteering.</p>
Compressed working hours or rostered days off (RDOs)	<p>Compressed working weeks, fortnights or months provide a regular work pattern, the predictability of which can be attractive to some parents and carers in organising their lives. There are any number of variations, but the most common compressed working options are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-day week where employees work four 10-hour days and take the fifth day off • 9-day fortnight where employees work four 9-hour days per week, and an 8-hour day on the fifth day of the first week, taking the fifth day off in the second week.

Managing the competing demands of work, family and social life is an issue that affects many South Australians. By promoting a work life balance culture and environment in the workplace, employers can improve their ability to attract and retain employees, in turn enriching our health and wellbeing and building stronger communities.

The South Australian Government is committed to work life balance through South Australia's Strategic Plan Target 2.12 *'Improve the quality of life for all South Australians through the maintenance of a healthy work-life balance.'*

SafeWork SA is the lead agency for the target through the Work Life Balance Strategy.

www.safework.sa.gov.au/worklifebalance



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Job sharing	<p>Job sharing is a form of permanent part-time work in which two or more people share the responsibilities, hours, salary and benefits of one full-time job. Restructuring a full-time position to a job share allows employees to reduce their hours, thus enabling them to care for family while maintaining interesting, challenging work. The performance of job-share employees is evaluated separately.</p> <p>Supervising more people doing a single full-time equivalent role may seem like more work, but there are many benefits for employers. Job share partners or teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can fill in for each other when family commitments come up, ensuring that business service needs are covered • tend to be more productive as team members contribute different skills, fresh ideas and perspectives • usually stay on track and avoid errors, because they work collaboratively and check in with each other • are more likely to remain in your workplace because of the flexibility afforded to them. <p>For job sharing to work there must be excellent cooperation and communication between the job share partners or team and their supervisor. It is advisable to schedule some regular 'crossover' time where employees can talk face-to-face about their work issues.</p>
Time off in lieu (TOIL)	An employee can choose not to be paid overtime when they work extra hours. They can take an equivalent amount of time off at a later date instead, by agreement with their employer.
Purchased leave	This enables an employee to purchase an additional period of leave during the course of a year. For example, by working a 48/52 purchased leave arrangement, the employee receives an additional 4 weeks leave per year while their 48 week salary is spread over the course of the entire 52-week year. Other variations of this leave include 46/52 or 50/52.
Grandparents leave	Unpaid leave of up to 52 weeks is made available to grandparents and can be taken as a select number of days per week, or in blocks of one month through to 12 months.
Term time	Unpaid leave during school holidays is made available for employees with school-aged children.
Working from home	<p>Many companies enable people, from the chief executive down, to work from home because they recognise the value of offering flexible work arrangements and supporting people to work remotely. It has been estimated that around 2.6 million Australians are employed externally or run their own business from home. The main areas of growth for home-based work are community services and financial/business outsourcing services.</p> <p>Employers and employees need to maintain enough social contact to avoid boredom, lack of motivation and loss of involvement in decision-making for the home-based employee. Often a balance between work at home and contact at work in a larger office setting is needed to avoid isolation.</p> <p>Employers have a duty-of-care to provide a healthy and safe working environment under occupational health and safety (OHS) legislation, and common law. A home working area should be inspected to check for risks and hazards. Policies and procedures should also be developed to cover the OHS issues of working at home, including job design, hours of work, breaks and task variation.</p>
Paternity leave	A set period of leave is provided in addition to the standard legislated minimum to enable fathers to spend time with their newborn baby and to assist and support the new mother.
Employee choice rostering	This is a system whereby employees take responsibility for arranging their shifts in consultation with management and within set guidelines. Setting it up involves identifying staff needs, documenting their preferences and running a transparent system that aims to meet those needs.
Flexible annual leave	<p>Flexible annual leave options for employees can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking annual leave one day at a time, or even for a few hours, rather than in blocks of a week or longer, and possibly making up time to replace the hours lost • electing to receive 4 days leave in addition to the standard 4 weeks, in lieu of annual leave loading • working extra time each week in order to accumulate extra days leave per annum to take between Christmas and New Year.

DISCLAIMER

This publication contains information regarding occupational health and safety. It includes some of your obligations under the occupational health and safety legislation that SafeWork SA administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate Acts and Regulations. This publication may refer to legislation that has been amended or repealed. When reading this publication always refer to the latest laws.

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www.safework.sa.gov.au

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