

# Mississippi University for Women

## Summer 2019 Flex Program Guidelines

**Introduction:** In summer 2019, the University is offering a special Summer Flex Program to allow eligible staff to work a flexible schedule with either a 4-day, 4.5-day work week or other flexible schedule options. This program will last for ten (10) weeks over a twelve-week period during the summer, from Sunday, May 12, through the work week ending on Saturday, August 3.

The weeks beginning May 26 and June 30 are ineligible for flex scheduling because they are holiday weeks and are 4-day work weeks due to Memorial Day and July Fourth holidays. For these holiday weeks, offices are expected to operate under normal working hours from 8am-5pm.

The program may not be appropriate for all staff or departments, and it is up to deans, directors and vice-presidents to determine whether participation is appropriate for each department and position. Individual employees will decide if they wish to participate. For those individuals and departments who do take advantage of the program, the Summer Flex program is intended to promote employee work-life balance and reward employees for continued contributions to our university. Where applicable, it is strongly encouraged that departments and offices cross train employees so that the office is not dependent on a single person to do certain functions.

**Note:** No department is required to work summer hours, and some departments may not observe them at all if their duties and responsibilities are better served by working the standard schedule during all or part of this time period. Individual department observance of summer hours is determined by the department with approval from the cabinet-level supervisor.

Any office choosing to participate in the Summer Flex Program may forward their phones to a single administrator, to be announced prior to the commencement of the program in May, at noon each Friday.

**Eligibility:** Full-time or part-time, benefits-eligible employees are eligible to participate in the 4-day or 4.5-day work week schedule. Individual employee participation is voluntary; any employee will be allowed to maintain his or her regular schedule if he or she prefers. Participation is also not automatic or an entitlement. Each director/dean, with approval from their cabinet-level supervisor, will work with their respective areas to determine whether a specific position, function or department can achieve its goals and maintain services while allowing flexible schedules.

**Advantages of a Flexible Schedule:** Flexible schedules work best when they meet both the departmental and university's operational needs in providing effective services and the needs of employees in balancing work and personal life. Some advantages of a flexible schedule may include:

- Enhanced recruitment and retention
- Reduced absences and tardiness
- Improved morale and productivity
- Extended departmental work hours
- Increased cross training for some shared duties and coverage
- Uninterrupted time for creative or detailed work

**Considerations for Supervisors in Reviewing Requests for Flexible Schedules:**

1. Will your department be able to satisfy your operational responsibilities and meet student needs?
2. Will every major function be covered Monday through Friday between 8am-5pm?
3. Does your department's work flow allow a lesser staffing level during the summer and specifically on Fridays?
4. A flexible schedule may not be appropriate for a new employee or for any employee whose last performance appraisal was less than satisfactory.
5. Can group meetings be rescheduled to days when all can be present?
6. Can you effectively monitor the work of employees that occurs outside of your schedule?
7. Have you considered the effect of flexible schedules on those employees who cannot participate?
8. Have you reminded employees (those flexing and not) to pre-plan now any vacation or medical appointments so that your master schedule for the department takes most time off requests into account?
9. Evaluate conflicting requests for flexible schedules basing decisions on functional coverage needs, employee's relative performance and relative seniority.
10. If a flex schedule for the entire period is not feasible for a particular function or employee, have you considered whether just a week or a few weeks of the 2019 Summer Flex period could be 4-day or 4.5 days for that person/function?

**Employee Responsibilities:**

1. Each employee must do his or her part to ensure that the department's productivity and student needs are being met.
2. For those on a flex schedule, unplanned time off, whether full days or tardies/early leaves and should be avoided to the extent possible. Those not on a flex schedule should keep in mind that a supervisor's ability to approve unplanned time off requests may be constrained by the planned time off already approved for a requested day/time.
3. Planned days off using leave may be requested along with your flex schedule if they can be accommodated within your department. Keep in mind that such additional time off by multiple staff members may affect how many flex schedule weeks you and other staff members in your department can take.
4. Emergency time off during the period will be charged to your leave time based on the schedule on file for that period (i.e. 10 hours for someone working four 10-hour days).
5. State law requires that employees use "one day of personal leave for each absence due to illness." If the need arises to use medical leave, you will be charged personal leave for your first day of illness based on the flex schedule that you have agreed upon with your supervisor and that is on file with Human Resources (i.e 10 hours for someone working four 10-hour days).

**Schedule Options:** The current regular schedule is for the employee to work from 8am-5pm, a nine-hour day with hour off for lunch, resulting in 8 hours worked. During the Summer Flex period, eligible employees and their supervisors will determine a 4-day or 4.5 day, 40-hour schedule, within the following parameters:

- The extra day off (if a 4-day week) will usually be Monday or Friday. In addition to allowing employees a long weekend, having all or most employee participants off on common days will allow meetings, search committees, interdepartmental projects, etc. to schedule/collaborate on Tuesdays through Thursdays with the expectation that all employees will be available. In a function that does not require such interaction with others, a flex schedule may be approved for a different day off, if the employee and supervisor agree. The same applies to the half-day.
- The start and end times for an employee will normally fall between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- A shorter lunch may also be used to achieve a desired schedule, but a minimum of a 30-minute lunch should be taken.
- The flex schedule will be predetermined by employee and supervisor and, to facilitate planning for departmental coverage, will apply for each week of the 2018 Summer Flex period, except for any pre-planned vacations.
- The following examples are for full-time employees working 40 hours per week. Supervisors may also flex schedule employees who work 30, 25 or 20 hours (must be benefits eligible) within their departments and adjust their schedules accordingly.

**Examples of Working 4-Day 40-hour Week:**

<b>Example No. 1</b>	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Start Time	7am	7am	7am	7am	--
End Time	6pm	6pm	6pm	6pm	--
Lunch	1 hr.	1 hr.	1 hr.	1 hr.	
Working Hours	10	10	10	10	0
Total Hours (Week)	40				

<b>Example No. 2</b>	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Start Time	7:00am	7:00am	7:00am	7:00am	--
End Time	5:30pm	5:30pm	5:30pm	5:30pm	--
Lunch	½ hour	½ hour	½ hour	½ hour	n/a
Working Hours	10	10	10	10	0
Total Hours (Week)	40				

**Examples Working 4.5 Day 40-hour Week:**

<b>Example No. 3</b>	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Start Time	8am	8am	8am	8am	8am
End Time	6pm	6pm	6pm	6pm	12pm
Lunch	1 hr.	1 hr.	1 hr.	1 hr.	n/a
Working Hours	9	9	9	9	4
Total Hours	40				

<b>Example No. 4</b>	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Start Time	7:30am	7:30am	7:30am	7:30am	8am
End Time	5pm	5pm	5pm	5pm	12pm
Lunch	½ hr.	½ hr.	½ hr.	½ hr.	n/a
Working Hours	9	9	9	9	4
Total Hours	40				

**Procedures and Forms:** After consultation between supervisor and employee, the employee will complete a Summer Flex Request Form for their supervisor’s approval. Supervisor within each department will retain a copy of these forms for their records and provide a copy to their supervising cabinet member. Prior to the start of the flexible schedule period (and no later than May 3, 2019), the supervising cabinet member will submit to Human Resources all approved summer flex schedules within their respective areas. If any substantial change is made to the summer flex schedule after it is approved by the supervisor, a new summer flex schedule will need to be signed and sent to Human Resources. Questions as to what constitutes a substantial change may be emailed to [hrinfo@muw.edu](mailto:hrinfo@muw.edu).

Please refer to FAQs for more information about flexible schedules and for guidance.

**Important Deadlines:** Offices are encouraged to consider the summer flex program and commence having discussions now about how the summer flex program could work within a particular department or office. Employees are encouraged to decide whether they will participate in the summer flex program by January 18, 2019 so that the university can create a list of offices who will be participating. The actual flex schedules for employees do not need to be finalized until May 2019. Approved schedules must be submitted to Human Resources by May 3, 2019.

## Summer 2019 Flex Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is eligible for the Summer 2019 Summer Flex program?  
Any full time, benefits eligible employee.
2. When does the program start? End?  
The program commences Sunday, May 12 and ends Saturday, August 3. The weeks of May 26 and June 30 are holiday weeks, recognizing Memorial Day and Fourth of July, and are excluded from flex scheduling.
3. I am the only person in my department. Am I eligible?  
Possibly. Your supervisor and supervising cabinet member will need to determine whether a specific position, function or department can achieve its goals and maintain services while allowing flexible schedules.
4. Do I have to take a lunch break?  
It is recommended that you incorporate at least 30 minutes of unpaid time for lunch.
5. I want to participate. What do I need to do?  
Review the program guidelines and listen to any parameters provided by your department. Determine your desired schedule and complete a 2019 Summer Flex Request form and submit to your supervisor. Keep a copy of your approved Summer Flex Request form to aid you in completing your leave at the end of each month.
6. Am I required to participate in the Summer Flex program?  
No, your participation in this program is strictly voluntary.
7. My flexible schedule proposal was denied by my supervisor. What can I do?  
Keep in mind that employee participation is not an entitlement. Departmental goals and customer service must be maintained. If you feel your proposed schedule will not disrupt the work in your area, you may discuss your proposal with the next level supervisor and/or Human Resources.
8. What are the schedule options available to me?  
You may work either a 4-day work week or 4.5 work week wherein the total number of hours worked for each week is 40 hours, if you are a full time employee. You may do this by working 4 10-hour days or 4-9 hour days and 1 4-hour day. Some examples of possible schedules are below:

**Examples Working 4-Day Week:**

<b>Example No. 1</b>	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Start Time	<b>7am</b>	<b>7am</b>	<b>7am</b>	<b>7am</b>	--
End Time	6pm	6pm	6pm	6pm	--
Lunch	1 hr.	1 hr.	1 hr.	1 hr.	
Working Hours	10	10	10	10	0
Total Hours (Week)	40				

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End Time	5:30pm	5:30pm	5:30pm	5:30pm	--
Lunch	½ hour	½ hour	½ hour	½ hour	n/a
Working Hours	10	10	10	10	0
Total Hours (Week)	40				

**Examples Working 4.5 Day Week:**

<b>Example No. 3</b>	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Start Time	8am	8am	8am	8am	8am
End Time	6pm	6pm	6pm	6pm	12pm
Lunch	1 hr.	1 hr.	1 hr.	1 hr.	n/a
Working Hours	9	9	9	9	4
Total Hours	40				

<b>Example No. 4</b>	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Start Time	7:30am	7:30am	7:30am	7:30am	8am
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Lunch	½ hr.	½ hr.	½ hr.	½ hr.	n/a
Working Hours	9	9	9	9	4
Total Hours	40				

9. Can I change my participation in the program?  
Commitment to your flexible schedule is crucial to ensure that your department can achieve its goals and maintain student services during normal business hours. However, there may be extenuating circumstances that warrant a change in your participation. Discuss our concerns/reasons for wanting to change your participation with your supervisor. Any substantial changes made to your approved flex schedule will need to be submitted to Human Resources immediately. You may contact [hrinfo@muw.edu](mailto:hrinfo@muw.edu) concerning what constitutes a substantial change.
  
10. What if I need an unplanned day off?  
If you are working a flexible schedule, you should make every effort to schedule your medical and other appointments on already planned time off time. If you still have an unavoidable absence, you should use and document the appropriate leave time. Assuming you miss on a day you are scheduled to work 10 hours, you will take 10 hours of leave.
  
11. How does my flex schedule apply to medical leave?  
State law requires that an employee take “one day of personal leave for each absence due to illness.” The number of hours for your personal leave to be taken will depend upon the flex schedule that you have agreed upon with your supervisor and that is on file with Human Resources (i.e. 10 hours for someone working 10-hour days).
  
12. Is this an ongoing program?  
The Summer 2019 Flex Program is in effect from May 12 through August 3, 2019 only.
  
13. What if I need an unplanned partial day off?  
If you are working a flexible schedule, you should make every effort to schedule your medical and other appointments on already planned off time. If you still have an unavoidable absence, you should use and document the amount of leave time used.
  
14. What if a 4-day or 4.5-day work week won't work for me or my department?  
Communicate with your supervisor to determine whether any part of the summer can be accommodated to the 4-day or 4.5 day work week.
  
15. Can I flex across weeks, i.e. work 50 hours in one week and then 30 hours in the next?  
Unfortunately, you cannot count time worked over 40 hours in one work week and apply it to the subsequent work week.