Hello, my name’s Katie Holmes. I’m Professor of History and Director of the Research Focus Area, Transforming Human Societies.

This video gives you guidance and information on how to manage flexible work requests.
The University recognises that flexible work arrangements can improve outcomes, and help staff work more productively at the same time as meet the requirements of the role and the work area. The University also recognises that offering flexible work arrangements is a way to enable staff to manage their work, family and life commitments – those impossible juggles.

This video outlines how to respond to a request for a Flexible Work Arrangement. It guides you through the process, raises some issues you might want to consider and aims to help you become more confident in responding to flexible work arrangement requests.
The second video guides you through the process of assessing a request for a Flexible Work Arrangement.

The information in this video can be found in the Flexible Work Arrangements Policy, Procedure, Guidelines for Managers and Flexible Work request form. There’s a form for everything as you know. These documents are available on the Human Resources intranet pages, on the Diversity and Inclusion page.

First of all, what is flexible work and who can request a Flexible Work Arrangement?
As you’re no doubt aware, as a manager you can have formal and informal flexible work arrangements with your staff. The information in this video concerns formal flexible working arrangements but may be useful in managing informal flexible work arrangements too.
A formal Flexible Work Arrangement is a negotiated agreement between a manager and staff member to determine when, where and how work is done.
You and your staff member can agree what form the flexible work arrangement takes but some of the more common types of arrangements are flexible working hours and flexible work location. Working one day a week from home or another location, for example, might be the basis of a Flexible Work Arrangement.

La Trobe’s Flexible Work Arrangements policy states that any permanent staff member who has worked for 12 months continuously and any casual staff member who has worked regularly for 12 months is eligible to request flexible work arrangements. It’s an option available to academic and professional and administrative staff at whatever level they work - whether or not they have parental or caring responsibilities.
An important point to remember is that it is up to you as manager to accept or deny a request for a Flexible Work Arrangement, and up to you and your staff member to work out what best suits your work area.
Another important point to remember is that La Trobe is committed to providing flexible work arrangements whenever practicable, while taking business requirements into consideration. Information about the kinds of things you might want to consider in reaching a decision is outlined in the next video.

Now I’d like to tell you about how to respond to a staff request for a Flexible Work Arrangement.
When a staff member first makes a request for a Flexible Working Arrangement, it’s a good idea to think about whether flexibility is suitable for your work area and what would work best for the staff member and your team.
Firstly, you might want to review the Flexible Work Arrangements policy, procedure, Guidelines and Flexible Work request form. This will help you manage the process and set you up for a positive and productive conversation. It’s a good idea for your staff member to review the documents too, if they haven’t already done so.

If you have any questions, you may also want to contact Human Resources through Ask HR before you meet with the staff member.
After you’ve had an initial discussion with your staff member, she or he should complete the staff section of the Flexible Work request form and submit it to you.
The Request form is designed to help you and your staff member think through some of the relevant issues and how they will be managed. These include resource planning, team culture and information flow.
Once you’ve received the formal Flexible Work request form, you should meet with the staff member again to discuss the request and review the form.
You don’t need to make a decision at this stage. The meeting is to clarify and review the details of the staff member’s request.
Assessing the request is a separate step in the process and will be discussed in the next video. You’ll also hear about approving the flexible work request and reviewing arrangements.
The important thing about all this is that La Trobe be a productive and constructive working environment and that’s what these requests and arrangements are designed to enable.