MANAGING FLEXIBLE WORK REQUESTS

Hello, my name's Mark Engel, I’m the Chief Marketing Officer here at La Trobe.

This video is the second of two videos for managers to help guide you through the process of managing requests for Flexible Work Arrangements.

This video outlines some things to consider when assessing a flexible work request. It also provides information on approving or denying a request, and reviewing flexible work arrangements.

To recap from the first video, a Flexible Work Arrangement is a negotiated agreement between a manager and a staff member to determine when, where and how work is done.

The assessment step of the process happens after you’ve received the Flexible Work Request form from your staff member, and met to review it.

Some key areas and questions to consider when assessing a request are:

- what is the possible impact on the team and how can it be managed?

– will there be any additional costs or savings to the work area?

– what changes, if any, need to be made to day-to-day communication in the team?

– will the staff member’s work goals or objectives need to be realigned?

– how can you help stakeholders feel comfortable with flexibility in the team?

– are there any health and safety considerations?

These and other questions are included in the Manager’s section of the Flexible Work Request Form that you need to complete. The Managers Guidelines on flexible work, available on the Human Resources pages of the intranet, also provide more information to help you assess a request.

Working through these issues and questions will help you make a better informed decision about whether to approve or deny a flexible work request. It will give you some clarity about what the arrangement will look like and, more importantly, how it will work.

Again, you’re welcome to contact Human Resources through Ask HR if you have questions or would like some assistance with the assessment.

Now I’d like to tell you about approving or denying a Flexible Work request.  
An important point to remember is that you should respond to a request for a Flexible Work Arrangement in writing, within 21 days. If you approve a staff member’s request for a flexible work arrangement, you should set up a date to review the agreement after, say, a 3 month trial period.

The trial period will allow everyone to test the arrangements and make changes if needed. After that, it’s good practice to review Flexible Work Arrangements annually.

You can deny a staff member’s request for a flexible work arrangement on ‘reasonable business grounds’. Some examples of reasonable business grounds are:   
- it’s too expensive to implement the arrangement   
- it would result in less efficiency or productivity  
- it’s not possible to change the work arrangements of others to accommodate the request.   
If you decide to deny a request, the reasonable business grounds should be in writing and communicated to the staff member within 21 days.

Although there may be valid reasons for denying a request for Flexible Work Arrangements,

it’s worth bearing in mind that the goal is to enable a productive and collaborative workplace.