

WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITIES

Guidance for Employees with Childcare Needs

Employees who are parents, guardians, or caregivers may face challenges this fall as K-12 students attend school virtually and as childcare facilities close or reduce numbers. UW–Madison understands this. To support employees and to lessen these challenges, the university encourages units to work with employees to identify and offer workplace flexibilities. Units, together with employees, may create a customized plan that meets both the employee's personal needs and the unit's business needs.

The guidance below is for employees working on-site or telecommuting. It provides an overview of what you can do if you have concerns about caring for a child due to in-home virtual learning or a lack of childcare. If you have a medical or disability related concern, see Accommodations & Workplace Flexibilities: Employee Guidance by visiting hr.wisc.edu/docs/covid19/accommodations-and-workplace-flexibilities-employee-guidance.pdf.

What to do

- You are encouraged to first contact your supervisor to discuss your concerns or questions. They can help you explore possible flexibilities to address your needs. Your supervisor may work with your school, college, or division human resources (HR) representative.
- You may also contact your school, college or division HR contact. To find your local HR contact, visit hr.wisc.edu/contact/.

What happens

Every employee concern will be individually evaluated based on duties, work environment, and workplace needs.

Workplace flexibilities

Requests need to be balanced with workplace needs. Some examples of modifications may include:

- **Telecommuting** - Employees may work remotely (could be part of a reassignment).
- **Options for a flexible workplace** - Including but not limited to the following:
 - **Job share/split** - Job sharing is an arrangement between two part-time employees which splits the responsibility of one regular, full-time position. For example, two employees work 50 percent (20 hours per week per employee) to accomplish the work of one full-time position. This arrangement provides organizational benefits such as less absences and allows each employee to use their unique skills and experience. *If you are a full-time employee who enters a job-sharing arrangement, with a reduction in the percent of time you work, you should contact the benefits office at your school, college or division to confirm your benefits will not change.*

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- **Alternative work week** - An alternative work week plan allows a full-time employee to work the required 40 hours per week in fewer than five-full days. Unlike flextime, hours are standardized by an agreement between the employee and supervisor. (For flextime, an employee may vary their work schedule daily around core hours of operation.) An example of an alternative workweek is a four-day, 40-hour work week (four 10-hour days).
- **Variable hours** - Employees may use this option to permanently change their start and end times to adjust for personal situations such as riding in a carpool or childcare needs due to the pandemic. Variable hours, unlike flextime, are fixed schedules that are different from the standard work unit schedule. Variable hours may include early mornings, evenings, and/or weekend hours. In most situations, employees and supervisors can work together to develop schedules that cover the main hours of operation.
- **Reassignment** - Units may temporarily reassign employees to different duties or shifts to meet the employee's needs and the unit's business needs.
- **Leave of absence** - Employees may qualify for a paid or unpaid leave of absence. This includes the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Wisconsin's Family and Medical Leave Act (WFMLA), or Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) including the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) or the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA). For more information visit hr.wisc.edu/covid19/emergency-leave/.
- **Use earned leave** - Employees can check their leave balances on the Time and Absence App on My UW or at my.wisc.edu where they log hours or furlough and submit absence requests.
- **Voluntary leave without pay (VLWOP)/Voluntary FTE reduction** - There may be benefit impacts to VLWOP and voluntary FTE reduction. Contact the benefits office at your school, college or division HR for information and guidance.

For more information contact smartrestartHR@ohr.wisc.edu

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