

**University of Colorado at Boulder**  
**Flexible Schedule Guidelines**  
**For Full-time Employees That Are Eligible For Overtime**  
May 22, 2006

**A. Introduction:**

As with any business practice, it is important to understand how the use of flexible schedules may be possible in the course of fulfilling the university's role and mission. Implementation of flexible schedules can be approved by appointing authorities after considering how a flexible schedule may enhance or detract from the accomplishment of business objectives. Given the changing demographics of the workforce and increased competition for qualified employees, it is increasingly important to find alternative ways to compete in today's labor market. Flexible schedules can be a cost effective way to enhance the existing salary and benefit package while also serving to reinforce the university's commitment to work-life balance, professional competence, and organizational performance.

Since 1973 when Hewlett-Packard became the first U.S. company to institute flex-time, flexible work arrangements have grown in popularity and use. Data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in July of 2005 shows that in 2004, 27.5 percent of all full-time workers in the U.S. had flexible work schedules. In November 2005, research from the Society for Human Resource Management noted that one of the most common employee retention practices by companies is the offering of more flexible work schedules. In a recent Nelson Motivator survey of 1500 employees in the U.S., flexible work hours were cited as the second most important point considered when choosing a new job.

There are a number of State of Colorado Executive Orders that pertain to work-life issues. The first, issued December 11, 1989, made it the policy of the State of Colorado to promote flexibility and innovation in scheduling, job design, work hours, location, environment, leave policies and benefits in order to create an environment that encourages positive solutions to work-life issues. This Executive Order further states that supervisors and managers make every reasonable effort to deal with personal issues that carry into the workplace equitably, flexibly, and compassionately without adversely affecting accomplishment of the mission of the department. Another Executive Order issued April 10, 1998, re-emphasizes many of the same policies and also provides for accountability by requiring performance plans to incorporate a factor that evaluates the application of basic business skills and sound judgment in following work-life policies and using work-life options.

Flexible schedules can provide a powerful tool for management that can be used to fulfill business needs, assist with recruitment and retention, improve productivity and creativity and accommodate a changing workforce by helping employees achieve a better work-life balance.

**B. Definition of Flexible Schedules:**

Flexible schedules can be used to redesign or restructure work schedules so that a full-time employee that is eligible for overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act may work daily hours that are different from regular office hours, or work a full schedule in fewer days. Appointing authorities are encouraged to consider options that may satisfy institutional or department objectives while also considering the interests of the employee. Final decisions about flexible work schedules remain with the appointing authority. Some examples of flexible schedules are:

Daily Flextime: A work schedule that varies from the customary office hours while also meeting business necessity.

- An employee typically works the same set hours each day, but the schedule varies from standard office hours. For example, working 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in an office that is usually open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Alternate Work Schedules: A work week that is compressed to allow employees to work longer days in lieu of the typical 8 hours per day while also providing coverage to achieve business objectives. Three examples used most widely on the Boulder campus are listed below:

- The 4/10 schedule where appointing authorities authorize an employee to work ten hours per day for four days which results in completion of the 40 hours per week for full-time employees.
- The 9/80 schedule where appointing authorities authorize an employee to work four nine-hour days and one eight hour day in one week; during the following week, the employee works four nine-hour days with one day off. In accordance with FLSA requirements, the work week is adjusted to reflect that the employee works 40 hours per week and over a two week period, the employee works nine days rather than ten.  
*Note: The 9/80 schedule requires an adjustment of the defined work week and must be approved by the Director of Employment Services (sample forms available.)*
- The 3/12 schedule where appointing authorities authorize an employee to work 12-hour shifts on a rotating four-week schedule.  
*Note: The 3/12 schedule is only used in departments that require 24 hour operation, for example, the Facilities Management power plant.*

It should be noted that full-time employees are expected to work a minimum of 40 hours per week. Additional hours may be required as dictated by operational needs. This may involve working at times other than those detailed in an approved flexible schedule, including working on scheduled days off.

### **C. Advantages of a Flexible Schedule:**

Flexible schedules work best when meeting both department/work unit operational needs in providing efficient and effective services **and** the needs of the full-time and overtime eligible employee in balancing work and personal life. Some benefits of a flexible work schedule may include:

- Enhanced recruitment and retention
- Reduced absences and tardiness
- Improved morale, commitment and productivity resulting from support for personal work style preferences
- Reduced stress through the ability to better balance work and personal responsibilities
- Improved coverage and extended departmental work hours
- Improved scheduling for peak workloads
- Increased cross training due to some shared job duties and coverage adjustments
- Potential for more office space options
- Potential for improved transportation and parking options

- Uninterrupted time for creative, repetitive, or highly detailed work
- Expanded use of equipment due to shifts in peak use

#### **D. Points for Supervisors/Appointing Authorities to Consider:**

The role of an appointing authority, supervisor or manager is critical in creating a flexible work environment. While the operational needs of the work unit must be considered first and foremost, appointing authorities have an opportunity to consider an employee's personal issues, create an environment conducive to enhanced productivity, job satisfaction, and the retention of quality employees.

In reviewing requests for flexible work schedules by full-time employees that are eligible for overtime, supervisors and appointing authorities should consider the following:

Operational and customer needs:

- type of work and size of the work unit
- establishing schedules based on customer traffic patterns
- customer interactions, including how communication and customer requests will be handled in the employee's absence
- consideration for departmental and unit meetings where all staff need to be present
- team structure and participation, e.g. the employee functioning as part of a team that would require a corresponding schedule for team members
- the work unit being able to provide coverage for functions handled by the employee in his/her absence without undue burden on other employees in the unit
- consistency to the extent possible when determining which staff can participate in flexible schedules
- impact on employees whose positions are not appropriate for flexible work schedules
- effective monitoring of employee work that occurs outside the supervisor's regular schedule
- effective communication regarding attendance, work product, and when and where work must be performed
- adherence to federal wage-hour regulations regarding work that occurs outside the employee's regular schedule
- documentation of expectations between supervisor/appointing authority and employee

It is fundamentally important to fulfill operational needs in order to accomplish the university's mission. It is also important to our workforce to provide some flexibility in work schedules to help employees balance the pressures of work, family life, and other personal needs. The unique needs of each operating unit will dictate how much flexibility can be provided depending on the nature of the work and individual work assignments. Employees should understand that a flexible schedule must adhere to the business needs of the work unit and as such is not an entitlement. The approval of a flexible work schedule is at the discretion of the employer.

If your department is interested in putting a program in place for flexible schedules, please contact Employment Services at 303-492-6475 for additional information and assistance with program agreements.