

Guidelines for Establishing Flexible Work Schedules

These guidelines offer Northern Michigan University employees alternatives to traditional work schedules. Offering alternative work schedules have been proven to minimize employee stress, improve productivity, enhance employee morale and promote a better work-life balance. The purpose to explore different work schedule options is to assist in managing work and continue to meet the needs of the students and NMU's community.

At Northern Michigan University, work life balance is important and we encourage staff members, with their supervisors, to examine flexible work arrangements whenever feasible, realizing that not all departments can operate by offering alternative work arrangements. Each department is responsible for developing a work schedule designed to provide coverage during core operating hours based on the specific needs of the department.

All full-time employees must work a 40-hour week (or 80 hours each pay period) by one or a combination of alternatives described below:

- A Traditional schedule is working Monday through Friday at defined starting and ending times, such as 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- A Flexible work schedule is an arrangement that offers flexibility in an employee's arrival, departure and/or lunch times but does not change the total number of hours worked in a day. Employees can modify their arrival and departure time provided they work their scheduled hours. Another example of a flexible work schedule would be compressing the work week. A Compressed workweek is working a traditional work week in less than five (5) workdays. Examples would include working four (4), ten (10) hour days; or four (4), nine (9) hour days with one four (4) hour day.
- Telecommuting is defined as working outside of an employee's primary location either offsite or at home.

Flexible work schedules and telecommuting must not cause nor contribute to the need for additional staff, additional equipment, or for existing staff to work additional overtime hours.

Some considerations when changing work schedules are the effect on the operation of the department and whether the employee's work performance might be adversely affected. Does the employee have excellent time management skills and a demonstrated history of satisfactory, independent work performance? If an alternative work schedule request will result in the loss of supervisory oversight for an employee with performance and/or attendance concerns, a request for a flexible work schedule should not be granted.

Should multiple employees request a flexible work schedule, a method for the equitable allowance should be developed by the supervisor. One option is to rotate the availability of those schedules among staff requesting this consideration. Another option is to vary the starting or ending times, or the days in which employees report to work.

The decision to approve a flexible work schedule and/or compressed workweek schedule is at the sole discretion of the University and is not subject to any grievance procedure.

Certain criteria must be reviewed prior to taking or offering alternative work schedules so that there are no violations of applicable collective bargaining agreements or Federal Wage and Hour regulations. Some of the specific details which may be relevant for various employee groups include the following:

UAW Local 1950 (TOP)

- Article 5, Section 5.1 Workweek – The normal workweek consists of forty (40) hours in a one-week period with at least two consecutive days off for full time employees. Offices must remain open during university hours, which are normally from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. A flexible schedule of hours and staggered shifts may be maintained in some departments by mutual agreement of supervisor and employee(s).
- Article 5, Section 5.8.1 Overtime – Time and one half of the regular straight time rate will be paid for all time worked in excess of eight (8) hours per day and/or forty (40) hours per week. Individuals who are on a mutually agreed-upon flexible schedule (e.g., four (4) 10-hour workdays), which require more than eight (8) hours per day, will be eligible for overtime pay only after 40 hours per week.

UAW Local 2178 (AP)

- Article 13, Section 13.1 Workday and Workweek/Overtime Pay – the normal workday shall consist of eight (8) hours, exclusive of a lunch period without pay; provided, however, that this shall not constitute any guarantee of eight (8) hours per day nor does it affect the requirement that an administrative employee is responsible for performing the full range of the employee’s duties and responsibilities without regard to any fixed number of hours in any given workday.
- Article 13, Section 13.1.1 – The normal workweek shall consist of five (5) days of forty (40) hours per week; provided, however, that this shall not constitute any guarantee of five (5) days or forty (40) hours per week nor does it affect the requirement that an administrative employee is responsible for the full range of the employee’s duties and responsibilities without regard to any fixed number of hours in any given workweeks.
- Article 13, Section 13.1.2 – Upon approval of the appropriate Executive or Senior Management member, “flex-time” (i.e., a schedule of hours different from the regular workday) may be maintained in a department.

AFSCME Local 1094:

- Article 8 Work Schedules – the normal workweek shall consist of forty (40) hours between 11:01 p.m. Saturday to 11:00 p.m. Saturday.

An employee’s normal workday shall consist of eight (8) consecutive working hours excluding lunch periods. The Employer may provide the option of summer flex time hours depending upon the operational needs of each department.

- Article 9, Section A Overtime Premium – Time and one-half the regular straight time rate will be paid for all time worked in excess of eight (8) hours per day and/or forty (40) hours per week. For the purpose of computing overtime pay for over forty (40) hours in the employee's workweek, a holiday, vacation day, or an earned sick leave day, for which the employee receives pay, will be counted as a day worked.

It is understood for those AFSCME employees who are working voluntarily a flex schedule, overtime will only be applied to any hours over forty (40) hours in the workweek.

General Provisions:

- Vacation, sick leave and holiday hours accounted for any day will be equivalent to the scheduled work time for the affected day(s).
- If the designated holiday falls on a scheduled day off, the employee should record holiday pay and take a different day off in the holiday week. Hours recorded are those that would have been normally worked if scheduled to work that day.

Exempt Employees (not eligible for overtime pay):

Exempt employees, by definition, receive the same salary from pay period to pay period regardless of the schedule worked. Since exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis, hours cannot be docked nor is overtime pay allowed. It is expected that work duties will be fulfilled during the pay period, regardless of the schedule of hours worked.

The objective is to remain flexible but still stay in compliance with Federal Wage and Hour regulations and any applicable collective bargaining agreements.

The University reserves the right to suspend, cancel or amend the use of alternative work schedules at any time and to return an employee to his or her traditional schedule if the alternative schedule does not allow the department to operate effectively and efficiently, if changes in circumstances necessitate the return to a traditional schedule, or if an employee experiences performance problems deemed to be related to the schedule change. Such circumstances will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.