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UNIVERSITY

Flexible Workplace Essentials

Quick start guide for your
journey to a flexible workplace

Guiding principles

[Ohio University's Flexible Workplace Project](#) is creating a model for the workplace that will redefine where and when our employees work. A flexible workplace can include many different plans depending upon the role and function of the unit and the individuals who make up its work force, but it should be grounded in our guiding principles:

- Any supervisor-approved flexible work arrangement that does not impede teamwork, reduce productivity, efficiency, or availability, or degrade internal or external service levels is permissible.
- Flexible work may look different for each position depending on the needs of the department. Evaluation of a position will be given equitable treatment, but the outcomes of those evaluations may be different across departments to ensure productivity, availability, and service levels.
- We must maintain a connection to each other and the campus experience.
- We are here to support the University mission. Departments and employees must practice good judgement and know when to deviate from a flexible work arrangement to meet deadlines or honor commitments.

I want my unit to pursue adopting a flexible workplace.

What's next?

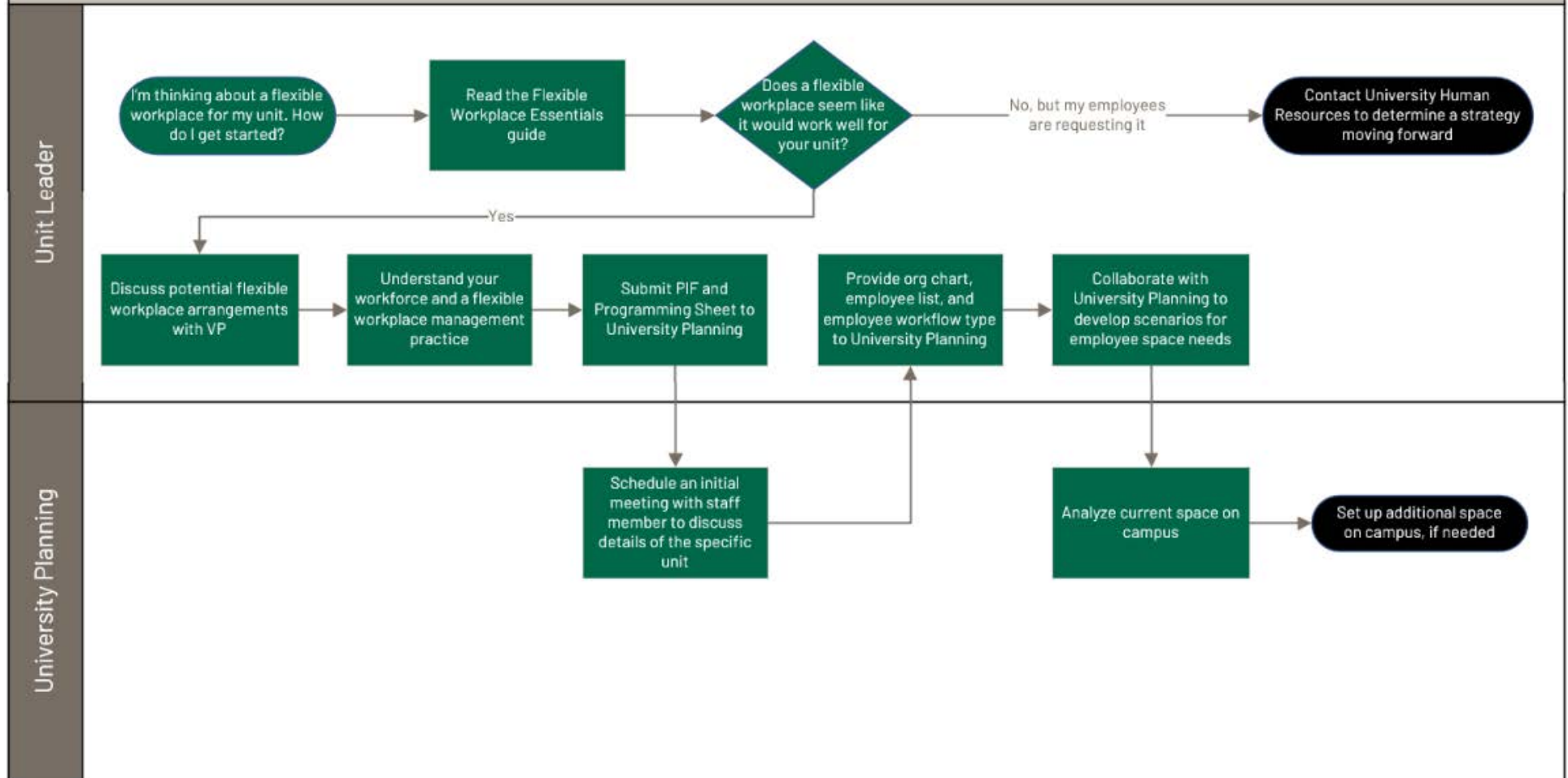
The first step in adopting a flexible workplace is focusing on employee functions, their approach to work, and the digital and physical implications of these factors.

- **Understand your workforce and a flexible workplace management practice:** At its core, a flexible workplace is about the mindset over the process. Supervisors should understand each position within their unit and evaluate if the essential functions of each role can be performed in a flexible work environment. Additionally, supervisors are encouraged to practice a [management style that supports employees in a flexible workplace](#).
- **Develop the programmatic utilization that informs the approach to physical space (space planning):** University Planning will assist in designing a space plan that makes sense for your unit. This plan will take into consideration how you interact with partner units across campus and any client and/or service needs your unit must provide. Working with the organizational chart and employee designate, University Planning will work to map organizational and staff functions to space.

To initiate this process, the unit leader should:

1. Begin discussions with the Vice President of your unit. All flexible workplace arrangements must be approved by a Vice President.
2. Submit a [Project Initiation Form \(PIF\)](#)
3. A representative from University Planning will schedule an initial meeting to discuss details specific to your unit.
4. You may be asked to complete the [University Planning Programming Sheet](#) (Appendix A).
5. A Planner will work with you to develop space options unique to your team that may include dedicated, shared, and flexible spaces.

Flexible Workplace Project



Appendix A: University Planning Programming Sheet

The following questions serve as a guide to better understand the space needs of a department or team. Not all information will apply for every request, but the intent is to gather all known information to initiate the space planning process.

Submit the completed sheet to University Planning at planning@ohio.edu or directly to your designated Planner.

Please submit supporting documents, if available:

- Organizational chart(s), staff list, or other departmental staffing details
- Departmental mission and/or future strategic direction and changes

1. What department(s) or unit(s) are you seeking space assistance for?
2. What is the space request?
 - New space
 - Space relocation
 - Space modification or reorganization of existing space
 - Interdisciplinary collaboration with another unit
 - Flexible workplace environment
 - Portfolio reduction
 - Research space, shared or otherwise
 - Learning space request
 - Other University initiative
3. Is there a specific initiative or event that is prompting this inquiry or a goal/objective you hope to accomplish through this project?
4. What is the core function of the department seeking space? (Student facing, administrative support, wellness, etc.)

People, Function and Location: University Space Principles direct that space is for function. When sharing the needs of those that occupy the space, please focus on how the employee or visitors need to interact in the space.

5. Who will be occupying the space? How do they engage with the team or with others?
 - a. Employee type, number of staff

 - b. Space needed to support work duties

 - c. Share more about the employee roles and what core functions are important to consider regarding how they would occupy space?

6. Consider customer/external-facing functions of your department(s).
 - a. Who does this space primarily serve? Are there visitors to the space?

 - b. Do you have walk-in/drop-in traffic or in-person appointments? If so, with whom?

 - c. What type of space/amenities are needed to support this function?

7. Consider adjacencies with other campus department(s).
 - a. Who do you collaborate with?

 - b. Are there synergies that would impact the approach to space?

8. Is there a campus location you desire to be near or that you believe is key to your programmatic needs?

Shared and support space

9. Consider team, conference, and collaboration spaces needed by your department(s).
 - a. Describe the types of gatherings and quantity of people that you routinely get together.

 - b. On a weekly basis, how frequently do you have groups of people meeting? For what type of activities?

 - c. Beyond routine weekly needs, are there other activities or events that require additional space?

10. Do you utilize a reception space? If so, please describe your needs.

11. Consider storage needs of your department.
 - a. What type and how much storage would your department need in the future?

 - b. Are there business processes that would enable reduced storage or change the physical records of the department?

12. Are there any other space needs that are not tied to specific staff?

Timeline

13. Are there drivers that impact timeline?

14. Is there a completion date by which you would like to complete this space planning project?

The following resources are foundational information that University Planning will draw upon, coupled with information that a department will provide:

1. Space and building data, including locations and types, and amount of space currently occupied by the department
2. Floor plans
3. University Strategic plans including physical master plan and initiatives to understand synergies and alignment where possible.

Submit this completed University Planning Programming Sheet to University Planning at planning@ohio.edu or directly to your designated Planner.

Appendix B: Flexible Workplace Guideline Highlights

Core considerations

Adopting a flexible workplace can seem overwhelming and many University leaders are unsure where to start. Begin by evaluating the positions and core functions of your unit:

- Determine your core hours (period of hours each day and week when your unit must be staffed at an appropriate level), then determine whether a physical presence is needed during those core hours.
- Determine if your unit has peak periods (cyclical times of the year when business activity or work volume is high during which the unit must be staffed on site at a specified level) that would require individuals to be on-site.
- Review the primary accountabilities of positions and determine to what extent those accountabilities can be performed in a remote work setting.
 - If it is determined the position has any requirement of time to be on-site, the position should be considered as on-site or hybrid by default
 - If the position is considered for remote work, then review the unit determinations for core hour and peak period requirements. Even if a position is classified as remote, there still may be times the employee is required to come on-site

Flexspace design

The University currently has centralized flexspace available for employees who do not have personal offices. These spaces are either reservable or are available on a first-come, first-served basis. These centralized flexspaces consist of a variety of workspace types:

- Individual work stations: Private, semi-private, and shared workspace options are available to support individual work, focused tasks, and participation in virtual meetings and calls
- Collaboration spaces: Spaces to convene meetings, gather team members, brainstorm, engage with a group, with consideration for some participants connecting virtually
- Informal space: To foster unscheduled engagements, team collaboration, and unstructured activities
- Group space: Space for multiple employees to gather together for an extended period of time (beyond a 1-2 hour meeting); Space with multiple desks or a meeting table, designed for informal or extended engagement or project work
- Outdoor gathering and work areas: Outdoor seating, tables, and meeting areas to support connection to campus life and informal activities

Additionally, support spaces and amenities should be available within or near your workspaces:

- Single user restroom(s)
- Lactation room
- Kitchenette or food preparation area
- Storage or lockers available for personal belongings
- Printer and copiers
- Office Supplies

If your unit needs its own unit space, not centralized University flexspace, University Planning will assist in setting up the workspaces mentioned above.

Workspace Examples

Individual Work Station



Informal Gathering Space



Medium Collaboration Space



Large Collaboration Space



Space access

When utilizing a flexible workplace, access to appropriate high-quality spaces must be dependable, simple, and consistent. The University will be using EMS Scheduling Software to request and maintain space access in all designated flexspaces. This software allows for:

- Booking spaces on either your desktop or mobile device, integrated within Outlook and Teams
- Viewing room size and equipment available within spaces during the booking process
- Work stations and collaboration spaces available to book up to 3 months in advance
- Ability to schedule multiple spaces concurrently (example: an employee can book an individual work station for a full day and a collaboration space for a meeting during that same day)
- 75% of individual work stations are reservable through EMS Scheduling Software. The remaining 25% are identified as first-come, first-served, drop-in work space.
- Informal gathering spaces are available for use without the need to reserve
- Equitable access to all collaboration space; priority scheduling for certain units or functions is not available
- Closed hours designated for custodial and maintenance service; flexspace will not be available for use 24/7

Financial guidelines

Sharing campus workspaces across units will allow for greater collaboration and will offset or reduce costs to be repurposed as savings or investment in prioritized programmatic needs. The University has outlined financial guidelines and practices that will support units wishing to pursue flexible workplace arrangements:

- Plan and allocate annual resources for lifecycle costs, such as furniture, fixtures, and technology
- Review units' budgets for furniture, repair, and technology allocation; Increase understanding of the spend for furniture and technology at the unit level that may drive towards resource reallocation or prioritization
- Plan for one-time investments. As more units utilize flexwork arrangements, one-time investments for space improvements, space reassignments, and/or increases or decreases in University flexspace.
 - Items that increase functionality of the space (e.g. privacy screens, sound-dampening panels, wayfinding and signage)
 - Amenities such as break space, access to refrigerators/microwaves, reasonable improvement of functionality and aesthetics of the space
 - Identify and allocate costs associated with divestment of space
- Allocate costs to support recommendations of other groups utilizing flexspace (e.g. tax investments, reimbursements or provision of equipment related to remote work, travel, space reservation system)
- Increase the level of service for maintenance and custodial care in consideration of the public nature of shared space

- Operationalize a one-stop shop for information and support for flexspace users, on campus or remote
- Continue to calculate the savings and benefits for deploying this new model with respect to things like portfolio reduction, increased collaboration, or employee satisfaction.

Management guidelines

Managing employees who utilize a flexible workplace might seem like a massive shift from your current processes, but the University has identified guidelines to support managers who oversee flexible workplace units:

- Set expectations with your employees.
 - Employees should be responsible, respectful, and should avoid being distracted by others.
 - Their work location should enable them to meet obligations and should enhance their productivity, not inhibit it.
 - Suggest employees establish a schedule with their family for when they are available and unavailable. Employees are expected to make appropriate childcare arrangements to ensure the safety and well-being of their family when focusing on work duties.
 - Employees are expected to conduct meetings in a quiet private area to reduce interruptions.
 - Employees will schedule PTO requests when they need to be away from work during their core hours, regardless of where they are working.
- Any business mileage and travel reimbursement should not include the normal commute to and from work.
- Employees are not to take risks when dealing with sensitive data or information.
- Supervisors and employees should have performance-related discussions in a private space when meeting on-site or online via Microsoft Teams.
- Focus on collaboration and sharing when selecting technology to support your unit's work.
- Ensure you're staying in regular contact with your employees, regardless of where they're working. The University recommends regular one-on-one meetings between supervisors and employees.
- Treat all workplaces equal. Working remote or on-site should not impact a team member's ability to contribute to a meeting.
- Ensure your Outlook calendar is up to date and reflects your workplace arrangements and encourage your employees to do the same.