

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

SEEDA's terms and conditions of employment state:

"The standard working week is 37 hours. Actual start and finish times for most employees can be flexible to cater for family responsibilities, varying workloads, etc, and there may be opportunities for employees to work from home from time to time, although it is not SEEDA's policy for an employee's place of work to be their home. However, all arrangements need to be agreed with line managers to ensure service standards are adhered to and business needs met."

SEEDA accepts that employees are happier if they feel they have some control over their working lives. Where possible, therefore, SEEDA will try to give employees some say in where and when they undertake their work, although this cannot be to the detriment of business operations.

Start and finish times

You will probably have a preferred working pattern (i.e. preferred start and finish times to which you generally stick – although there will always be exceptions and some individuals may have more complicated working patterns). Provided this working pattern is acceptable to your manager and there is sufficient cover within your team during business hours, it should be possible to accommodate your preferred working pattern without your manager having to insist on particular working hours. However, as a general rule, you would normally expect to be at work by 9.30am at the latest and not to be leaving before 4.30pm. If you need/wish, for example, to arrive significantly later or leave significantly earlier on a particular day(s), you should let your manager know, and he/she should try to accommodate reasonable requests wherever possible.

Unavoidable appointments, e.g. doctor, dentist, etc, fall outside the above arrangements, although you should out of courtesy keep your manager informed of appointments you need to take during your normal working hours.

Compensating for additional hours worked

SEEDA would like to encourage a working environment where staff are motivated to get the job done rather than work exact hours (i.e. "clock-watching"), but at the same time does not want to endorse a culture of long hours working.

If, for example, you need to work additional hours due to a peak in workload (perhaps a particular project), then, you might agree with your manager to work shorter hours at a point where your workload is slightly less heavy. This is something SEEDA would expect to happen to a greater extent – although not exclusively - at more junior levels, since the more senior a member of staff is, the more their salary reflects the fact that they may sometimes be required to work additional hours.

Generally speaking, this flexibility should be driven by workload. If, say, you want to take an afternoon off work then you would normally expect to take this out of your annual leave entitlement rather than work additional hours to compensate; however, there may occasionally be situations where it is appropriate for this to happen.

Working from home

As a general principle, staff should, when not out on business, work at the location from which they can make the most effective contribution to SEEDA's business. However, in determining this, it should be borne in mind that working from SEEDA's offices allows staff to have face-to-face contact with colleagues and to make full use of office facilities, equipment and networked software as well as non-computerised sources of information within the office.

However, there are certain circumstances where it can be more effective for employees to work from home from time to time, for example:

- (a) Where you spend part of the day out on business at some distance from your SEEDA office and can make better use of your time by working from home before and/or after the business trip rather than travelling to and from the SEEDA office at the start and/or end of the day.
- (b) Where you are out on business on several consecutive days and need to catch up on "office" work between visits (although SEEDA would not want to encourage extensive evening working).
- (c) Where, very occasionally, you have a specific piece of work which can more efficiently be undertaken at home without disturbance (e.g. writing a complex paper in a short timescale).
- (d) Where you are physically unable to get to work but are physically and mentally capable of working (e.g. transport breakdown).

- (e) Where one-off personal circumstances make it more sensible for you to work from home. For example, if you live some distance from the SEEDA office and have a hospital appointment in the middle of the day you may find it more practical to work from home before and/or after the appointment; you may need to wait at home for a delivery/tradesperson appointment; or occasional childcare difficulties may mean that you are able to work but need to remain at home.

The above examples in no way represent hard and fast rules and it must be up to you and your manager to agree a solution, which, as far as possible, is in the best interests of both SEEDA and yourself. The only clear "rules" are that:

- Work colleagues must be able to contact you by phone when you are working at home.
- If working at home you must only undertake SEEDA work.

The provision by SEEDA of a full set of IT and other office equipment (PC/software, printer, fax, phone line) is expensive and should not be necessary for occasional homeworking. If it is agreed you may work at home but you do not have a computer at home, it may be possible for you to borrow a lap-top which should always be returned to the office when not required. SEEDA will also reimburse business phone calls made from home upon production of an itemised bill.

In exceptional cases where it is agreed that an individual should work on a regular basis from home, Chief Executive agreement will be sought to provide the necessary office equipment. (SEEDA has written to the tax office requesting dispensation in respect of office equipment loaned to SEEDA employees solely for business use).

Summary

Flexible working can be beneficial to SEEDA's business in terms of staff motivation and office cover; however, it does rely on full and open communication and trust between individuals and their managers. If a reasonable request for flexible working is refused, the refusal will be based on business reasons rather than a lack of trust between the manager and individual.

The above can only provide general guidance. If you are unsure about how to deal with any particular circumstance, please speak to your manager or a member of the Personnel team.