
SFC Flexible working hours

Introduction

1. The SFC is committed to supporting flexible working hours to enable staff to balance the competing demands of work and life. We regard this flexibility as being of benefit in helping the SFC to attract and retain staff whilst maintaining operational efficiency. This document sets out the rules for operating our flexitime system.

General principles

2. Flexitime allows staff choice over when to start work, have lunch and leave work to respond to personal and organisational needs. Further guidance on organisational needs and working arrangements are contained in the SFC Colleague guidance on hybrid working.
3. To record and monitor flexi staff and line managers must use the Imperago flexi system (unless it is offline).
4. You should comply with the following rules of the flexitime system.
5. Any abuse of the system may lead to temporary removal from flexitime and, in serious or repeated cases, formal disciplinary proceedings.

Eligibility for participation

6. All staff will participate in the flexitime system, with the following exceptions:
 - Your contract specifically exempts you.
 - Your post has responsibilities requiring you to be present at set times (e.g. receptionist).
 - Chief Executive
 - Directors; or
 - Eligibility has been removed due to abuse of the system(temporarily) or following disciplinary proceedings (temporarily or on permanent basis).

Rules of the flexitime system

Standard hours

7. A standard working day for full-time staff is 7 hours. This will be pro-rated for staff working flexible patterns, such as part-time days or a compressed working week.

Bandwidth

8. Staff should start and finish work within the flexitime bandwidth which runs from 07.30 to 19.00hrs having regard to their specific role, contract, operational requirements and colleague guidance on hybrid working (available on the intranet). Any time worked outside the bandwidth will not be credited unless exceptional circumstances require work to be done urgently. These circumstances include important deadlines, exceptional workload or meetings.
9. Absence from the office (or normal working space) during your working day, e.g. for a medical appointment, requires prior approval by your line manager

Flexitime period

10. The flexitime system operates on four-week accounting periods. These can be accessed in the SFC calendar dates folder. If you have any queries on these please contact Human Resources.

Credit and debit balance

11. At the end of each flexitime period staff should be no more than 7 hours (pro-rata) in debit or 21 hours (pro-rata) in credit. Any excess credit will be lost at the end of each period.
12. For part-time staff, maximum credit and debit limits are pro-rated at 60% and 20% of contracted weekly hours respectively. For example if you work 20 hours per week, your maximum credit will be 12 hours and your maximum debit will be 4 hours.
13. When in exceptional circumstances staff cannot reduce their flexitime credit within these limits, due to work commitments, line managers can authorise the carryover of excess hours.
14. There may be pre-determined "peak times" within departments, making it more likely that staff will accrue excess flexitime and not be able to reduce it within the above limits. These will include, for example, the end of the financial year for Finance Staff and finalisation of outcome agreements (e.g. November - January). In these circumstances, line managers can make an exception and authorise the accrual and carry over of excess flexitime in advance by first notifying HR and then confirming to staff and HR in writing of:
 - The reasons excess flexitime is to be accrued during this time period.
 - How long the pre-determined "peak time" is expected to last (for guidance, it would not be expected that a pre-determined "peak time" would exceed three months).
 - When flexitime should be brought back within normal limits (this should be no more than two months after the end of the pre-determined "peak time").

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15. Line managers are responsible for monitoring flexitime debit/credit and discussing with staff any instance of flexitime balance falling outwith the allowed maximum and minimum.

Flexi leave days per period

16. Within each period staff may take up to three days flexi leave (pro-rata to your contracted hours) with prior approval by their line manager via the Cascade system.

Lunch breaks

17. Staff must take a lunch break of at least 30 minutes when working work for 6 hours or more in any one day, but this should not exceed 3 hours. If you plan to take a lunch break of more than 2 hours we expect you, as a courtesy, to clear it with your line manager.

Absences and updates

18. Staff are responsible for submitting an update request to their line manager as soon as reasonably practicable after any absence or clocking error. The following are given as guidance on how to deal with particular circumstances.

Annual, special and sick leave

19. Staff should submit an update for each complete day (7 hours) or half day (3 hours 30 minutes). This will be pro-rated for part-time staff. Special and sick leave adjustments are processed through Human Resources.

Public holidays

20. Staff do not need to submit a manual update for public holidays, as they will be updated globally.

Absence from office on business

21. Where staff are out of “the office” (or other place that you are working that day) for part of the day, you should claim the exact time spent working (at any location), plus any travel time which is more than your normal travel time to the office.
22. Where staff are out of “the office” (or other place that you are working from that day) for the day, and your working hours (excluding meal breaks but including travel above your normal travel) amount to more than 7 hours, you should claim the total time (e.g. if you are working for 7 hours and travelling for 3 hours, you should claim the total 10 hours). Updates should normally not exceed the total bandwidth (11 hours 30 minutes) per day. However, in exceptional circumstances your line manager may authorise more than 11 hours 30 minutes.

Training courses and conferences

23. If the hours of the course or conference are within one hour less than 7 hours (excluding meal breaks) you should claim 7 hours , plus any additional travelling time. If the course lasts less than 6 hours (excluding meal breaks), you should claim for the exact time spent on the course, plus any travel time which is more than your normal travel time.

Medical or dental appointments

24. When staff are out of “the office” (or other place that you are working from that day) attending a medical or dental appointment they should claim no more than their normal working pattern. For example, if your appointment is at 9am and you arrive/start at work at 11am but you would normally arrive/start at 10am then you would claim one hour flexi credit or if you leave work at 3pm for a 4pm appointment but would normally work until 5pm then you can claim two hours’ credit. Where possible line manager should have prior notice of absence for appointments.

Arrangements for the Christmas and New Year holiday period

25. To provide staff with the opportunity to meet the Christmas closure through flexi leave, each year the rules relating to the maximum amount of credit and debit which you may carry over will not apply at the beginning and end of the four-week flexi period in which the Christmas and New Year closure falls. You are allowed a full carry over of flexi credit from the flexi period prior to the Christmas holidays. But you should be in compliance with the limits by the end of the next flexi accounting period.

Further information

26. For further information please contact Human Resources or refer to the following policies:
- Holidays, Flexi Leave and Special Leave.
 - Overtime.

Note: For all staff working at SFC the contractual normal place of work remains Apex 2 until otherwise advised. Through application of SFC’s Hybrid working guidance there is flexibility based on operational requirements to work away from the office, e.g. from home. The term “the office” in this policy is taken to mean Apex 2, though it is recognised that through Hybrid guidance and agreed business arrangements colleagues may be working from elsewhere.

Document history

This Policy and Procedure is a contractual document. It is negotiated between Management and Unite collectively on behalf of staff.

Owner: Human Resources

Version number	Changes	Date approved
1.1	Policy updated to reflect reduction in working week to 36 hrs standard work week.	17/11/2022 Ratified by JNCF
1.2	Policy updated to reflect reduction to 35hr working week and formal removal of core hours	23/08/2023 Ratified by JNCF