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## Introduction

The Temporary Reduction in Hours Scheme has been introduced as one of a number of voluntary initiatives to support the financial sustainability of the University in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It provides employees with the opportunity to apply to temporarily reduce their working hours without it affecting any future compulsory redundancy payments should a compulsory redundancy situation arise while employee is working reduced hours under this Scheme.

## Eligibility and Criteria

The Scheme is open to all staff and is subject to approval by the relevant senior manager (ie Head of School/Department).

Requests should be considered within the context of the University's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and within the context of the operational and associated implications of any proposed temporary change in hours, including the impact on colleagues' workloads.

Employees have the opportunity to apply for a temporary reduction in hours initially from 1 February 2021 until **30 September 2022**, and can apply to reduce their hours for a fixed period from a minimum of three months to a maximum of 12 months.

If the arrangement goes beyond three months, the arrangement should be reviewed regularly to ensure that the arrangements continue to be viable. If circumstances change, either for the University or employee, then this should be discussed with a view to gaining mutual agreement to any changes by both parties eg if a reduction in hours is agreed for 12 months and the employee's circumstances change at the six-month point, they may request to return to their normal hours of work earlier than previously agreed. The manager will then need to consider if this can be accommodated or whether the change needs to stay in place for the period agreed. The expectation is that the employee would return to their normal contracted hours at the end of the fixed period, unless other arrangements have been agreed eg via a permanent change which would be requested and considered in line with the Flexible Working Guidelines.

If the employee's substantive role is made compulsorily redundant during the time hours are reduced under the temporary scheme, any redundancy payment will be calculated based on the contractual hours worked before the temporary reduction; where an employee works variable hours, the calculation will be based on actual hours worked in the 12 weeks prior to the temporary reduction beginning.

Employees wishing to request a permanent change to their working hours can do so via the Flexible Working (<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/worklifebalance/flexibleworking/documents/flexible-working-guidelines-managers.pdf>) request as outlined in the guidelines. Where any permanent changes are agreed, any future redundancy payments would be calculated on the new permanent agreed hours.

The reduction in hours may have an impact on pension benefits. Employer contributions to pension schemes will be altered to reflect the reduced hours. Employees should be aware of any impact this might have on their final benefits.

Employees may wish to continue to make employee pension contributions where enabled by the relevant pension scheme. Employees are advised to speak to the University Pensions Team (email: [pensions@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:pensions@nottingham.ac.uk)), or your pension provider prior to the temporary reduction in hours period, to discuss the options available during the period to ensure that any implications for their pension membership and benefits are understood.

Annual leave will need to be adjusted accordingly for the period of reduced hours and this should be recalculated using the calculators available on the HR web site at: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/absenceandannualleave/annualleave/calculators.aspx>.

## Examples

Examples of a temporary reduction in hours could include:

- Working fewer days in the week eg temporarily not working on a Monday each week
- Working less fewer hours over the week eg reducing daily working hours from 7.25 to 5 hours
- Reducing hours on a flexible basis, ie reducing hours from 30 to 20 per week with the working pattern to be flexible to be agreed between the manager and the employee

## Application and Approval Process

Employees should discuss their request with their immediate line manager, complete the Temporary Reduction in Hours Application Form (<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/coronavirus/voluntary-savings-initiatives.aspx>) and submit this to their line manager, who will then complete the relevant section on the form and submit this to the relevant senior manager (ie Head of School/Department).

Where appropriate, it may be necessary to discuss the application in more detail if the full request cannot be approved. For example, a request to not work on a Friday may not be operationally viable due to work cover/business critical activities, however, a working pattern of not working on a Wednesday could be accommodated.

The relevant senior manager should consider the request based on the considerations above, make a decision and notify the employee within 28 days of the request being made. Once a request is approved, the employee will receive a confirmation letter from Human Resources and their temporary hours will be adjusted in the payroll system.

Arrangements should be regularly reviewed with the expectation that employees will return to their normal working arrangements/contracted hours at the end of the agreed period, unless other arrangements are approved ie a permanent arrangement agreed via the formal flexible working request route.

Where a temporary reduction in hours cannot be accommodated due to operational reasons, the employee will be informed along with the reasons why the application cannot be approved. There is no right for the employee to appeal against the decision.

## Further Information

For further advice and support please refer to your manager or contact the HR Employment Relations team (email: [hrrer@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:hrrer@nottingham.ac.uk)).