



**Manager's Guide:  
Framework for  
Workplace  
Flexibility**

## **Mission, Values, and Principles**

Bentley University's mission is to change the world with a transformative business education, integrated with arts and sciences, that inspires and prepares ethical leaders who will confront the challenges of today and shape the opportunities of tomorrow. This mission, as well as our [core values](#) and [positive leadership principles](#), guide the work of faculty and staff. Three principles also guide Bentley:

- We are a place-based institution open for business 24/7.
- We are committed to providing a full, vibrant on-campus experience for our students, with corresponding classroom learning, student services, and campus life.
- We will provide workplace flexibility where possible so long as we are meeting the two principles above and all business goals and objectives.

We are committed to offering workplace flexibility where we can in our continued effort to provide a positive, dynamic, and attractive work culture.

## **Utilizing this Guide**

Our goal is to ensure that we deliver all services in line with the university's on-campus mission while providing flexibility to employees where possible. Remote and flexible work arrangements can be successful when managers and individual contributors work together to set goals and expectations and have open, frequent communication.

Because every division provides different business functions and varying levels of student-facing support, workforce flexibility cannot be one size fits all. Each vice president, along with their management team, needs to develop an approach to workplace flexibility that works for the respective divisions. Not all positions lend themselves to certain flexible arrangements, but we expect managers to be as fair and equitable in the consideration process as possible.

This document is a framework, along with the guiding principles, to be used as you define your workplace expectations.

Please note that this document is intended to be used as a resource for your decision-making process. We understand that each employee's situation may be different and may produce a different outcome. This resource should be used as a tool to ensure that you are following an equitable process in making decisions.

## **Workplace Flexibility**

Many staff employees believe that their positions lend themselves to flexibility. We think it is important that managers consider flexible work arrangements, engage in an open discussion with their employees, and consider whether flexibility might work, even if it has not been done in the past. Equally important, staff members should understand that not all positions lend themselves to flexible work arrangements and that business needs may not make a flexible arrangement feasible.

It is important for the decision-making processes to first focus on the work and the VP’s vision and expectations for how best to deliver the work, services, programs, etc. Individual positions should be looked at within this context and determined to be in-person, hybrid, remote, or other flexible work arrangement. Once that is determined, the focus should shift to identifying and providing the necessary support tailored to each employee’s specific needs to be successful and thrive.

In this context, it is important to distinguish between equity and equality. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the resources needed to reach the same desired business outcome (i.e., goals achieved, productive, etc.). In contrast, equality would mean each employee is given the same resources, assuming everyone’s needs are the same and that they benefit from the same support despite their unique needs and situations. We are striving for equity.

Below is a list of various work modalities to consider during the assessment process. This is not an exhaustive list of considerations, and each can intersect. Flexibility may look different for each employee.

Consideration	Description
Employee works hybrid work schedule	A work schedule in which the employee completes part of their work onsite and part of their work at a remote location while maintaining the same number of scheduled work hours for the week. i.e., 1-2 days remote, 3-4 days on campus.
Employee works alternate work schedule	A work schedule in which an employee alters the start and/or end time of their workday while maintaining the same number of scheduled hours for the workday and/or workweek.
Employee works a compressed work schedule	A work schedule in which an employee maintains the same number of scheduled hours for the workweek but alters the scheduled hours in the workday.
Employee returns fully to campus with specific work hours and days.	All of the work is connected to being physically on campus with specific set days and hours.
Employee works fully remote/off campus	All of work can be performed away from on campus work location or it can be performed hybrid or on-campus, if desired by employee.

# Manager's Guide: Framework for Workplace Flexibility

## Expectations

- Managers are encouraged to be compassionate, flexible, and responsive when making equitable decisions based on the work and guiding principles.
- As much as possible, and while meeting the division's expectations and the university mission, employees who perform work that is best done on campus should perform that work on campus. At the same time, many lessons have been learned about the benefits of flexible work arrangements, which should be integrated into planning. It is important to take this new flexibility into account when assessing the work to be done and offering options for flexible work when possible. This will help to build a positive, dynamic work culture that attracts and retains the best talent.
- Managers will be inclusive, collaborative, and respectful in working through and communicating these decisions.
- Employees should be informed as far in advance as possible to prepare for the changes.

## 1. Understand the vice president's vision for workplace expectations for the division/departments

It is important to keep in mind the university's guiding principles and understand the vision and expectations of your vice president and what that means for your department. Once you have a clear sense of expectations, it will be important to determine the work that needs to be performed on campus. If you have supervisors on your team, it will be important to collaborate with them and your HR (Human Resources) representative(s) using position descriptions as the basis for understanding the work.

### Steps to take:

- Engage in open discussions with your manager or vice president to make sure you have a solid understanding of the workplace expectations.
- What are the critical functions of the positions in your department?
- Categorize the work that is performed in a manner that makes the most sense for your department. Are there elements of the position that require in-person customer/student-facing activities? Would allowing flexibility such as a compressed workweek, flex hours, or working from home compromise those critical functions? If so, how?
- Identify what work is necessary to be conducted in person or on campus and why. Would flexibility (see flexibility considerations – page 3) enhance or expand the department's work? Would flexibility (see flexibility considerations – page 3) cause an undue burden on the department? Why or why not?
- Assess what has been learned about the nature of the work if it has been done remotely in the past. What are the benefits of remote or hybrid work that your team has identified?

## 2. Assess Individual Employee Roles/Assignments

At this point, you understand the workplace return expectations for your department, and you have determined the best way for the work to be completed effectively and efficiently. Now is the time to assess individual employee roles and responsibilities.

### Steps to take:

- Review individual position descriptions to identify current work responsibilities and how that work is assessed (and if it lends itself to flexibility).
- Consider the employee feedback collected to understand what employees think and are looking for.
- Connect with employees to discuss their role and work responsibilities, as well as the assessment of where, when, and how often that work should be completed during specific hours, on certain days, remotely, or in-person.
  - Consider team dynamics (i.e., do team meetings happen at a specific time or on a certain day where everyone needs to be available to join? Can employee join in-person or virtually?)
- Make decisions with employee collaboration and input and discuss with employee. Decisions should be based on the nature of work and have no bearing on the value or appreciation of the job or person.

To ensure that a flexible work arrangement is successful for both the employee and the department, it is recommended that changes should be on a trial basis. After that, flexible work arrangements may continue and should be reviewed frequently but at least once a year. Employees with a flexible work arrangement should understand that they may be asked to change their schedule, return to a previous work schedule or to work on-site at any time.

## 3. Employee Communication

On-going, frequent communication is critical. As workplace decisions and changes are made, managers should notify employees of these changes as soon as feasible.

### Additional Support

#### **Human Resources**

For additional support with planning, please contact your unit [Human Resources Business Partner](#).

#### **Employee Assistance Program**

The [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#), Bentley-sponsored counseling and work-life programs, is available to all employees and their adult household members in need.

#### **Ombud's Office Reach Out Initiative**

The purpose of this Reach Out initiative is to encourage all leaders to consider a retreat for their group. The Ombud's Office will be happy to collaborate and help in any way it can. As we embrace our positive culture, the

retreats may help provide a landscape for us to share ideas, ask questions, express gratitude for the support we receive and the collaboration we experience from colleagues as we strive to meet our goals. For more information, contact Eliane Markoff at [markoff@bentley.edu](mailto:markoff@bentley.edu)

Bentley's [Flexible Work Arrangement Policy](#) was used for the creation of this document.