THINKING OF WORKING AT THE WESSEX INSTITUTE?

Here’s our approach to flexible working

Find out more:
www.southampton.ac.uk/wessex-institute
Flexible working at the Wessex Institute, University of Southampton

Unless otherwise stated, the Wessex Institute is open to discussing flex working for all of its vacancies. If you wish to come and work with us on a flexible basis you should raise your flex working preferences during the recruitment process and at interview, for further information see our working with us website https://jobs.soton.ac.uk/display.aspx?id=1091&pid=0. To view and apply for our vacancies go to: www.jobs.soton.ac.uk

Our aim is to empower our people (both those already working with us and those that aspire to) to work where, when, and how they choose (subject to business needs), to maximise their productivity and deliver the greatest value to the business. We want to be an organisation that values empowering people to prioritise their professional and personal lives with a high-performance and high-trust culture, which allows us all to succeed together. As at December 2018, just over 83% of the Wessex Institute workforce already work flexibly on a regular basis and the types of flex working in use across the Wessex Institute are illustrated on the right:

Types of flexible working already in use across the Wessex Institute
(Ref: Wessex Institute Flex Working Survey, Dec 2018)

- **43%** part-time
- **55%** home/off-site & remote working
- **25%** flexible start & finish hours
- **0%** term time work
- **1%** job share
- **4%** compressed hours

The Wessex Institute Flex Working Definitions

Flexible working is the way in which an individual’s location or base, working pattern or hours are organised, and includes:

- **Part-time** – working less than 35 hours per week
- **Off-site working** – working at home or other sites for part of the working week
- **Remote working** – working Off-site most of the time with only occasional visits to Wessex Institute premises
- **Job sharing** – two part-time employees sharing the work and pay of a single, usually full-time job
- **Compressed hours** – usually full-time hours but over fewer days, for example a 9 day fortnight
- **Staggered hours** – usually full-time hours but with different start and/or finish times to the usual 9am to 5pm.
- **Flexible retirement** – enables employees to achieve a mix of retirement and continuity at work by reducing their hours and giving up part of their salary in exchange for a part payment of their pension.

Versatile working refers to individuals moving within teams around the organisation following where their interests and development align with business need.

Wessex Institute colleague’s flex working experiences

We hope the following examples from existing Wessex Institute employees will empower you to have conversations with us to find flex solutions that work for you and us. We believe that flex working can work for everyone that wants it.

Name: Doreen (Dee) Tembo  
Job: Senior Research Manager

What is your flexible working pattern?

I generally don’t have fixed core start and finish times and I don’t currently have a fixed remote working pattern. I am in the office all of some weeks, but can be working remotely for up to two and a half weeks at certain times in the year.

Why do you work this way?

Working this way allows for better work life balance and meeting of family commitments. Sometimes I work remotely to be able to better focus on work pieces and minimise the distractions that come with working in an open plan office. I am also fortunate to have longer periods of remote working to help me to visit family and friends in Zambia. I work while they are at work and socialise when they get off work.

How did you go about arranging flexible working?

I discussed polices around remote working with my line managers at the interview stage, especially with respects to being supportive of long periods of remote working abroad.

What are the benefits?

I definitely have a better work life balance, productivity and the pace of work projects moves on as planned even when I am unable to physically come into work. I am also able to maintain close links with my friends and family though they live over 7000 miles away.
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Name: Adam Spake
Job: Senior Finance Manager

Who am I?
I’m a Senior Finance Manager. I am responsible for overseeing income and expenditure totalling around £21m per annum through the Wessex Institute.

How do I work flexibly?
In various ways.
Firstly we have a flexible and relaxed approach in our office. Our goal is not to clock watch, but to ensure we work collectively and effectively to get the job done. If for example someone has to leave early at short notice, perhaps because their child is unwell, it’s not a problem. We take responsibility both individually and collectively to make sure we deliver what we promise.

Secondly many of the team take the opportunity to work from home, perhaps one day a week. For me, some tasks (like writing up a document) are just performed better when away from the hustle and bustle of a busy office.

Finally, I also work longer hours on certain days, allowing me to take a day off every other Wednesday – this is known as compressed hours.

Why?
Life doesn’t always fall into neat little packages where you can say “I will always work during these hours and nothing more or nothing less.” Both my work life and personal life have their peaks and troughs, times when I am busy and time when I am less so. Having flexibility at work gives me the ability to be where I need to be at the time I need to be there. This allows me to be more effective both at work and in my personal life.

What are the benefits?
I think flexible working allows me to be a better version of myself. It helps to reduce stress which is better for me, my family and of course work. It also allows me greater clarity of thought. Working slightly longer days suits the way I work and my lifestyle while also ensuring that the office has sufficient cover at the end of the day.

Name: Gary Hickey
Job: Senior Public Involvement Manager

What is your flexible working pattern?
I work, for the most part, remotely (i.e. full time from home in London). I do tend to stick to a ‘9-5’ pattern but flex when appropriate.

Why do you work this way?
It’s an arrangement that benefits me and the Wessex Institute. My role has a remit covering the whole of England and the Wessex Institute want staff to be out and about at events and meetings across the country (often London) – so it makes sense for some staff to work remotely.

How did you go about arranging flexible working?
It was something I raised prior to my job interview. The Wessex Institute were very happy with this arrangement, explaining that it would work for both parties. It made me think that I was joining a modern, progressive organisation. The agreement is that I come into the office two days a fortnight. And that works well – on the days I’m in it’s a great chance to catch–up face-to-face with people.

What are the benefits?
This work arrangement means I can get through more work than I would with the noise and distraction of an office environment. In addition my role involves lots of telecons, Skype calls etc. and working at home means I can have these without disturbing other people.

Any disadvantages?
Inevitably, you miss the camaraderie and immediate support that you get from your work colleagues. I sometimes schedule calls with colleagues just so we can catch up about work and challenges and offer mutual support.

And there is always the danger of losing the distinction between ‘work’ and ‘home’. My approach is to go for a walk in the morning – almost like walking to work – before returning home and turning on the computer. And then once I have finished for the day I go out for a run or to a yoga class. I think maintaining the separation between work and home is important.