

# Welcome to the Maxiflex Work Schedule!

---



*An Implementation Toolkit for the Institutes, Centers, and Offices of the National Institutes of Health*



## Contents

Introduction to Maxiflex Work Schedule .....	3
Definitions .....	4
Creating a Maxiflex Policy for your IC/O .....	5
Considerations When Implementing Maxiflex.....	6
Best Practices and Lessons Learned: For Supervisors .....	7
Best Practices and Lessons Learned: For Employees .....	8
Templates for Communicating about Maxiflex.....	9



## Introduction to Maxiflex Work Schedule

*Congratulations on your decision to explore offering the Maxiflex Work Schedule to your workforce. We're sure you have questions, and this guide will answer many of them.*

### What is Maxiflex?

Maxiflex is a type of Flexible Work Schedule that contains core hours on fewer than 10 workdays in the biweekly pay period and in which a full-time employee may, within the limits established for the organization,:

- vary their start and end time each workday,
- vary the total number of hours worked each workday,
- split their schedule up to 3x in one workday, and/or
- vary the total number of hours worked each week.

### What are the benefits of Maxiflex?

Maxiflex isn't just about offering flexibility to our employees; it's an effective business strategy too. Maxiflex can help NIH achieve our goals while meeting our employees' need for flexibility and more control over their lives. Some common benefits employers get from flexible work arrangements, including Maxiflex, are:

- Reduce turnover costs
- Make it easier to recruit
- Reduce callouts / absenteeism
- Improve morale, engagement, & satisfaction
- Increase productivity
- Improve customer service
- Improve employee well-being
- Reduce overtime costs by having employees work only when needed
- Reduce congestion during peak hours and support sustainability goals
- Reduce distracting life stressors
- Recruit from a wider geographic area
- Maintain operations during disasters

### NIH research supports flexible work arrangements such as Maxiflex.

Studies have found a direct relationship between flexible work and improved health behaviors around sleep, exercise, and staying home when sick<sup>1</sup>. The Work, Family, & Health Network<sup>2</sup>, a collaborative between NICHD, NIA, and OBSSR, as well as the CDC, seeks to "identify workplace interventions that can improve health and well-being by improving workers' ability to successfully meet demands of both work and family." Much of their research looks at the impact of changing an employee's schedule control, or their perception of schedule control.

---

<sup>1</sup> Moen, P., Kelly, E., Tranby, E., & Huang, Q. (2011). Changing Work, Changing Health: Can Real Work-Time Flexibility Promote Health Behaviors and Well-Being? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 52(4), 404-429. doi:10.1177/0022146511418979

<sup>2</sup> Work, Family, Health, and Well-Being Initiative. (2013, November 27). Retrieved June 1, 2015, from <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/research/supported/Pages/workhealthinit.aspx>



## Definitions

*Before we discuss how to create your IC/O's Maxiflex policy, it is important to understand several key components of Maxiflex that you may not have previously encountered.*

**Core Hours:** The time during the workday, workweek, or pay period within the tour of duty during which an employee covered by a Flexible (not Compressed) Work Schedule must be present for work or on leave.

**Credit Hours:** Those hours within a flexible work schedule that an employee elects to work in excess of his or her basic work requirement so as to vary the length of a workweek or workday. An employee's supervisor must indicate the employee is eligible to use credit hours in advance. Employees on a Compressed Work Schedule are not eligible to earn Credit Hours.

**Maxiflex:** A type of flexible work schedule that contains core hours on fewer than 10 workdays in the biweekly pay period and in which a full-time employee has a basic work requirement of 80 hours for the biweekly pay period, but in which an employee may vary the number of hours worked on a given workday or the number of hours each week within the limits established for the organization.

Employees must be present for work or on approved leave during the designated core hours (excluding meal breaks). Under Maxiflex, employees are allowed, with supervisory approval, to earn credit hours.

**Overtime:** Under FWS programs, refers to all hours in excess of the employee's scheduled hours of work in the day or 80 hours in a biweekly pay period (but does not include credit hours).

**Split Schedule:** A flexibility available under a Maxiflex Work Schedule to start and stop one's workday up to three times within a day. If an employee splits their schedule, it is assumed a meal period is taken during that time. For instance, an employee may work 8 a.m. to noon, then 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., and finally 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Tour of Duty:** Under Maxiflex, this defines the limits set by an IC within which an employee must complete his or her basic work requirement.



## Creating a Maxiflex Policy for your IC/O

In order to implement a Maxiflex Work Schedule, each IC/O must develop an internal Maxiflex policy that provides employees with IC/O-specific parameters for using Maxiflex. This policy must be approved by the Office of Human Resources' Workforce Relations Division. Please note that while each IC/O may further narrow Maxiflex parameters, they may not be broader than those identified in NIH Manual Chapter 2300-610-4 Alternative Work Schedules, which are also listed below.

The following parameters must be addressed in your IC/O policy:

- Address eligibility to utilize a Maxiflex Work Schedule
  - o Could be similar to eligibility for telework
  - o This schedule may not be appropriate for all positions
- Minimum number of hours worked in a day, to be no less than 2
- Maximum number of hours worked in a day, to be no more than 13
- Minimum number of hours worked in a week, to be no less than 20
- Maximum number of hours worked in a week, to be no more than 60
- Earliest start time available, to be no earlier than 5 a.m.
- Latest end time available, to be no later than 11:59 p.m.
- Core Hours, on at least one day but no more than nine days in a pay period
  - o Employee must be working or on leave during core hours
- Allowance for work on Saturdays
  - o Employee discretion or does it need pre-approval?
- Eligibility to earn and use credit hours
  - o One time supervisory approval, but not all employees have to be eligible
  - o Minimum time to earn – i.e. at least one hour?
- Guidelines for use of split schedules
  - o i.e. entering into ITAS, notifying supervisor, etc.
- Procedures for informing supervisor of schedule and scheduling changes
  - o Recommend employees establish a typical arrival time & any deviation more than one hour (or whatever time you establish) earlier or later should be communicated to supervisor; identify by when/how
  - o Recommend requiring employees enter anticipated schedule into ITAS at the beginning of each pay period (this can be changed throughout the pay period)

For your reference, the Office of Human Resources' Maxiflex Policy is available upon request or [online](#).



## Considerations When Implementing Maxiflex

### General

1. How many Maxiflex schedules can be accommodated at one time? Could all employees in the office/work site utilize this schedule?
2. Does a supervisor have to be present during the alternate work hours? Is a supervisor currently present for all regular work hours?
3. Can the employee's set of job duties be accomplished during alternative work hours?
4. Can safety and security needs be met during alternative work hours?
5. Will technology needs be met during alternative work hours?
6. What evidence is needed to determine if this is working or not?

### Communication about Employee Schedule

1. What kind of Maxiflex schedule do they anticipate typically engaging in?
2. How will they communicate their planned working hours to you, co-workers and others?
3. How far in advance do you want to know their schedule?
4. What are expectations for meetings? Will the employee be available in person when necessary?
5. Are there specific hours when he/she must be available?
6. Have they informed others about how and when they can be reached?

### Customer Need

1. Will this impact customer services?
2. Will customer safety needs be compromised?
3. Will customer security and protection systems be compromised?

### Specific Business Analysis and Review

1. Will this create workload peaks, backlogs, or lulls?
2. Will this affect work flow on specific days of the week?
3. Is the staffing level and/or staff coverage a concern?
4. Will staff with same/similar skills and abilities be available for coverage?
5. Are there financial impacts, such as overtime costs?



## Best Practices and Lessons Learned: For Supervisors

*It is important that each IC/O establishes a policy and communication expectations that work for their mission and workforce. Do what works for you! The following are suggestions from the pilot of Maxiflex in ITAS.*

### General

- Start employees on Maxiflex at the beginning of the pay period, versus in the middle of a pay period.
- Ensure employees understand the pay period begins with a blank timecard ... there are no pre-populated tour hours, unless they have previously submitted leave or ad hoc TW.
- Have employees enter their tentative schedule in ITAS at the beginning of every pay period (they can edit as many times as desired).
- Have employees put any days where they have no regular hours planned onto a public calendar, shared team calendar, etc. (e.g. when the employee plans to have a day off in the pay period).
- Establish rules that guide expectations for communication about delayed arrivals or early departures.
- Encourage staff to update their location and status in Outlook Communicator/Lync.

### Telework

- Maxiflex doesn't impact an employee's telework eligibility.
- Maintaining employees' Maxiflex schedule(s) and telework day(s) in one place, i.e. a shared Outlook calendar, can assist managers in ensuring office coverage.

### Leave

- If an employee is planning to be out an entire week, they should spread the leave hours over each M-F week day so their supervisor doesn't think they are taking 10 hours of leave for four days in a row, and then coming in on Friday.

### Misc.

- Supervisors should establish clear expectations for communication about employees' schedules.
- If an employee was previously on a FWS and able to earn credit hours but once on Maxiflex becomes ineligible to earn credit hours, then those credit hours stay on the record but become unavailable for use (earning/using credit hours is linked in ITAS).



## Best Practices and Lessons Learned: For Employees

### General

- Understand the pay period begins with a blank timecard... there are no pre-populated tour hours, unless you have previously submitted leave or ad hoc TW.
- Enter your tentative schedule in ITAS at the beginning of every pay period (you can edit as many times as desired).
- Don't 'Certify Timecard' until the end of the pay period – after certification, the timekeeper is the only person who can make additional changes.
- Ask your supervisor what their expectations are for communication about delayed arrivals or early departures, days without regular hours, etc.
- Update your location and status in Outlook Communicator/Lync.

### Meal periods

- ITAS will deduct a 30 minute unpaid meal period if you enter start/stop times for 8 or more hours.
- If you are only required to enter total hours worked, you must account for your meal period on their own (i.e. 8 – 4:30 = 8 hours of work with a 30 minute unpaid meal period).
- If you work fewer than 8 hours and take an optional meal period, you must account for it using the split schedules feature.
- If you take a long meal period (i.e. one hour), you need to enter a split schedule to account for it.

### Telework

- Indicating 'Regular' for Telework means that is a recurring TW day each pay period that is in the employee's approved TW agreement. Everything else is 'Ad hoc.'
- If you have already entered regular work hours on the timecard, but then decide to submit an ad hoc TW request, ensure the start/stop times match exactly to avoid error messages.

### Leave

- If you are planning to be out an entire week, spread the leave hours over each M-F week day so your supervisor doesn't think you are taking 10 hours of leave for four days in a row, and then coming in on Friday.
- When submitting future leave requests, remember that the system no longer stores a set tour of duty. In order to enter a multi-day leave request, you must enter start/end times and/or total hours that will be applied to each day in the selected time frame.

### Misc.

- Employees must be aware of Federal holidays and enter 8 hours of Holiday Leave (not Holiday Pay) on their timecards.





## Templates for Communicating about Maxiflex

When implementing Maxiflex, there are some instances where it can be extremely beneficial for a key leadership figure to email all of the IC/O's employees on the Maxiflex Work Schedule. Below, OHR has provided you with basic email templates to use in these instances.

### *First Pay Period – beginning*

Hello [IC] Maxiflex Pilot Participants,

Welcome to the Maxiflex Work Schedule! When you log into ITAS today, you should now see the “Certify Timecard” page where you can manage your Maxiflex Work Schedule within the guidelines of the [IC] Maxiflex Policy. If you would like to review the Quick Reference Guides for Maxiflex, you can visit the [OHR ITAS Support Page](#).

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact your timekeeper.

Thank you,

[IC Leadership]



*First Pay Period – end*

Hello [IC] Maxiflex Participants,

As we approach the end of the first pay period using Maxiflex in ITAS, we want to remind all employees to ensure that your timecards have been accurately updated to reflect your work schedule this pay period. Please certify your timecards no later than **COB Thursday**.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

[IC Leadership/AO/TK]



## *Pay Period with a Holiday*

Hello Maxiflex Participants!

As you know, the **Fourth of July** federal holiday **will be observed on Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>**. This is a reminder that employees are responsible for entering their own holiday leave when on the Maxiflex Work Schedule. A Quick Reference Guide on how to enter holiday leave is available [online here](#). Full-time employees on the Maxiflex Work Schedule receive a maximum of 8 hours of holiday leave – you will not be allowed to enter any more than 8 hours of holiday leave. Part-time employees on the Maxiflex Work Schedule receive a pro-rated amount of holiday leave based on their total tour hours. For instance, an employee who works 40 hours a pay period receives 4 hours of holiday leave.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

**[IC leadership/ AO/ TK]**



## *Pay Period with a Change in Operating Status*

Hello [IC] Maxiflex Participants,

As we approach the end of the pay period, we want to remind all employees to ensure that your timecards have been accurately updated to reflect your work schedule this pay period. Specifically, please ensure your timecard reflects your status during our inclement weather earlier this week – what hours you worked on campus, any telework, and any leave you had approved. Your timecards must be certified by no later than **COB Thursday**.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

[IC Leadership/AO/TK]



For more information, please contact:

**Workforce Relations Division**

**Office of Human Resources**

**National Institutes of Health**

**Ph – (301) 827-1555**

**Email – [WorkFlex@nih.gov](mailto:WorkFlex@nih.gov)**