



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Secretary General
Vienna, 24 October 2022

Staff Instruction No. 27/Rev. 2

Subject: Flexible Working Arrangements

1. Reference

Staff Regulations 2.01, 2.02, 7.01.
Staff Rules 7.01.1, 7.01.2, 7.01.3.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this Staff Instruction is to define the flexible working arrangements (FWA), which include staggered working hours, teleworking and a compressed work week, as well as part-time work and job-sharing.

2.2 This Staff Instruction provides staff/mission members with the opportunity to adjust the start and end of their daily working hours, their work site, and their work modality in a flexible way, in consultation and agreement with their supervisors, within the limits set out in Staff Rule 7.01.1 and this Staff Instruction.

3. Applicability

3.1 This Staff Instruction applies to all staff/mission members, daily personnel, junior professional officers (JPO), interns and other affiliate personnel. References to staff/mission members in this Staff Instruction extend to the other listed categories of OSCE personnel. Subject to the nature of shift work, staff/mission members shall normally not be allowed to participate in the system of FWA while working shifts.

3.2 The provisions of this Staff Instruction may be adapted for implementation by individual executive structures, in consultation with the Director for Human Resources in the Secretariat. Such adaptations shall not exceed the level of FWA afforded by this Staff Instruction.

4. Effective Date

This Staff Instruction takes effect on 1 November 2022, and it cancels and supersedes Staff Instruction 27/Rev. 1/Corr. 1 on Official Working Hours and Flexible Working Arrangements at the OSCE Secretariat. Instructions issued by individual executive structures shall be adjusted in line with paragraph 3.2 of this Staff Instruction.

5. Guiding Principles

5.1 Organizational effectiveness, adaptability and efficiency. OSCE officials at all levels are encouraged to assess the manner in which they perform their work and whether they can carry out their duties in ways that are innovative and more efficient.

The use of new communication technologies and the remotely accessible enterprise resource planning (ERP) system offer the OSCE an opportunity to improve efficiency, productivity and results orientation, while expanding the options for staff/mission members to achieve a better and more flexible balance in their professional and personal lives. As employees of an organization with a wide geographic reach and an active field network, OSCE officials often find themselves working across time zones, in co-operation with many offsite colleagues, collaborators and stakeholders, and even at multiple duty stations. Being a modern employer with a wide geographic presence means the Organization places strong emphasis on accountability for quality results as well as on innovation and flexibility.

5.2 People-centred approach. FWA are intended to support wellbeing of staff/mission members, including the work life balance, with the aim of creating a more agile and resilient workforce, and fostering a professional working environment which is grounded in the OSCE's core values. Mutual trust and accountability are key to a successful professional relationship between supervisors and their team members and to effective performance. Supervisors must provide clear guidance to personnel on expectations, including deliverables and timelines, as well as ongoing performance conversations, irrespective of working arrangements, in line with the applicable performance management framework.

5.3 Gender parity, diversity and inclusion. FWA are in line with the efforts of the OSCE to be more responsive to the individual needs of staff, be more inclusive, and achieve gender parity. Accordingly, FWA are intended to be a useful tool by OSCE personnel and supervisors alike, where exigencies of service allow. FWA may also facilitate reintegration into working life and resumption of professional responsibilities following maternity and paternity leave.

5.4 Ecological responsibility. In line with the Organization's commitment to reduce its environmental footprint, FWA allow staff/mission members the opportunity to reduce the number of times they travel to the office, avoid peak commuting times which contribute to pollution, and lessen the usage of building utilities.

5.5 Resources. The OSCE should incur no extra costs as a result of FWA. Any additional costs incurred by staff/mission members from FWA are their sole responsibility.

5.6 Management by results. The work of all OSCE personnel, including those who utilize FWA, must be planned and evaluated through results-based approaches, with clear feedback and effective communication, including as part of the OSCE performance management framework. The first-level supervisor should proactively discuss the availability of FWA with their team members and clearly outline the responsibilities and outputs/results to ensure that productivity and quality of work in the team are not compromised. The use of FWA should not result in an increased workload for any staff/mission members.

5.7 Ability to disconnect. The Organization recognizes that disconnecting from work is vital for the wellbeing of its personnel to help achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life harmony. Therefore, all supervisors must respect the need for staff/mission members to rest and disengage from work and work-related communications, outside

of their working hours, as defined by the Organization's rules and the specific operational context and requirements of the job.

6. General Conditions

6.1 FWA under this Staff Instruction entail adjustments to the normal working hours and/or locations, agreed in writing between OSCE officials and their supervisors. FWA shall not be considered an entitlement or right, even once agreed to and even if in place for lengthy or successive periods of time.

6.2 Supervisors may deny, suspend or revoke the requests for FWA when/if:

- (a) They are incompatible with particular functions, including but not limited to those that require significant physical presence at the office;
- (b) Exigencies of service preclude the approval, including but not limited to due to the operational functioning of the team, undue increase in workload for other staff/mission members or when presence at a specific location at a specific time is required;
- (c) The supervisor deems it to be the most effective way to support and encourage the staff/mission member to overcome performance issues, including but not limited to when the staff/mission member is on a performance improvement plan;
- (d) The staff/mission member did not abide by the conditions of the FWA that had been agreed.

6.3 FWA are different from leave or compensatory time off, which is considered an authorized absence from work. Terms and conditions of service, such as salaries, allowances and leave entitlements under the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules shall not be affected by the FWA under this Staff Instruction. The obligations under the OSCE Code of Conduct also continue to apply.

6.4 Overtime for staff/mission members in the General Service category pursuant to Staff Rule 7.01.3 may be approved in line with Staff Instruction No. 1 (Overtime Compensation) only if the total number of agreed working hours under the FWA is exceeded.

7. Responsibility

7.1 Responsibilities concerning the application of this Staff Instruction are elaborated in Annex 1. In particular, staff/mission members shall be responsible for ensuring that they are available and fully responsive during their agreed working hours, and for ensuring a successful personal performance in terms of both productivity and workflow. Supervisors shall be responsible for ensuring that the essential services are provided during the OSCE's hours of operation, and for confirming that the FWA are not precluded for any of the reasons set out in paragraph 6.2 of this Staff Instruction.

7.2 Any practical issues related to the interpretation and implementation of this Staff Instruction shall be reported to the respective HR Office by the supervisors or by the staff/mission members concerned.

8. Approval Procedure

8.1 Staff/mission members who wish to avail themselves of staggered working hours and/or compressed work week shall submit the request in writing to their first-level supervisor for approval. Requests for teleworking shall be submitted for each specific instance of teleworking.

8.2 Decisions to approve or deny the request must be discussed with the staff/mission member and recorded by the first-level supervisor. The decision must be indicated on the request form and, in case of denial, the reasons for the decision must be provided in writing to the staff/mission member, elaborating on the applicable reason(s) set out in paragraph 6.2 of this Staff Instruction.

8.3 All requests, approvals and notices related to FWA shall be submitted to the respective HR Office and kept in the staff/mission member's personnel file, unless they are processed through an online application, in which case they shall be retained and archived electronically.

9. Staggered Working Hours

9.1 Staggered working hours allow staff/mission members to adjust the start and end times of their working days, provided that they work the required numbers of hours in any given day or week.

9.2 Depending on the exigencies of service, staff/mission members utilizing this FWA may stagger their working hours during the day in accordance with a pre-set schedule, provided they work within the core working hours in place in their executive structure.

9.3 This form of FWA shall remain valid for the approved period unless it is revoked or suspended earlier by the staff/mission member, the supervisor or both.

10. Teleworking

10.1 Where the nature of the work allows, staff/mission members may be allowed the possibility to telework, i.e. to work at an alternative work site, for a maximum of 48 working days per calendar year, of which not more than five working days can be taken consecutively. For appointments or assignments not covering the calendar year period, four days of teleworking may be allowed for every full calendar month of service.

10.2 In cases where there are exceptional and compelling personal circumstances, staff/mission members may be authorized by the head of the executive structure or delegated authority to telework beyond the limits set out in paragraph 10.1 of this Staff Instruction.

10.3 Teleworking may be granted provided staff/mission members have access to the necessary equipment, including internet access. As in the case of office work, staff/mission members shall be reasonably reachable and responsive by telephone, email and/or teleconferencing means during their working hours. In case of multiple instances in which that was not the case, these should be discussed and documented,

and this may constitute a basis for suspension or revocation of the teleworking arrangement. Staff/mission members must adhere to the conduct and confidentiality obligations outlined in Staff Regulations 2.01 and 2.02 while working in an alternative work site, and remain mindful of their ethical obligations under the OSCE Code of Conduct.

10.4 In all cases of teleworking outside of the host country or mission area, staff/mission members must provide proof of a full health insurance coverage at the alternative work site for the duration of such an arrangement, unless their OSCE health insurance coverage is valid at the alternative work site.

10.5 Staff/mission members should be aware that teleworking outside of the duty station and/or mission area may impact their eligibility for medical evacuation, as well as their privileges and immunities.

10.6 It is the staff/mission member's responsibility to ensure that a proper, safe and secure working environment for teleworking is maintained. The OSCE will not be liable for damages to the staff/mission member's personal property while they are performing official duties or while using OSCE equipment, nor shall the OSCE be liable for any claims made by third parties.

10.7 Staff/mission members who have been issued OSCE equipment, including a laptop, must use it while teleworking and are responsible for any further costs required or incurred to set up and to maintain the proper, safe and secure work environment. No additional costs will be incurred by the OSCE following approval of the FWA.

10.8 Responsibility for loss or damage to and misuse of any equipment provided by the OSCE shall be assessed according to the same procedures and criteria as applied in the respective executive structure. The Organization shall bear the cost for standard maintenance, repair and upgrading of equipment provided by the OSCE. For instances of maintenance or repair, the staff/mission member shall be requested to bring the equipment to the office.

10.9 As set out in the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, compensation may arise in the event of a staff/mission member's death, injury or illness attributable to the performance of official duties on behalf of the OSCE. Any claim for service-incurred death, injury or illness while teleworking must be supported by appropriate evidence that it was in fact service-incurred, i.e. attributable to service on behalf of OSCE.

11. Remote Assignments

Where the nature of the work allows and subject to the exigencies of service, a seconded staff member may telework outside of the host country for the full duration of his/her assignment in the Secretariat or Institution. Such remote assignments shall require the approval of the Secretary General or the Head of Institution.

12. Compressed Work Week

12.1 A compressed work week entails all the hours required to be worked during a period of 10 consecutive working days to be compressed into 9 working days ('10 in

9') or 5 consecutive working days to be compressed into 4 or 4.5 working days ('5 in 4/4.5'). This redistribution of normal working hours allows staff/mission members on a 10 in 9 schedule to take one day off during the normal 10-day work period or those working on a 5 in 4/4.5 schedule to take one day off or one half day off during that week ('designated day off').

12.2 Considering the need to ensure appropriate coverage for exigencies of service, the staff/mission member and the first-level supervisor shall agree which day, or half-day, during the 10-day period or 5-day period, as appropriate, may be taken off. In the case of unforeseen events or other exigencies of service, the first-level supervisor may require the staff/mission member to work on what would otherwise be the designated day off. In such cases, the staff/mission member shall be allowed to exercise the day off on the next working day after the scheduled designated day off, unless otherwise agreed with the first-level supervisor.

12.3 If a staff/mission member is on sick leave on the scheduled designated day off, the staff/mission member shall be allowed to exercise the day off on the next working day after the scheduled designated day off, unless otherwise agreed with the first-level supervisor, and sick leave shall be recorded accordingly.

12.4 When an OSCE official holiday falls within a compressed work week or if the staff/mission member is on leave for a maximum of one day during the relevant period, this shall have no impact on the agreed arrangement. When an OSCE official holiday falls on the staff/mission member's designated day off, an alternative day off may be granted on the working day immediately before or after, depending on which option best serves the needs of the staff/mission member and the office.

12.5 If the staff/mission member is on leave for more than one day, the compressed work schedule is suspended. The compressed work schedule will resume the following week.

12.6 Subject to the provisions in this Staff Instruction, the designated day or half day off cannot be carried forward, accumulated, or credited to annual leave or compensatory time off.

12.7 This form of FWA shall remain valid for the approved period unless it is revoked or suspended earlier by the staff/mission member, the supervisor or both.

13. Part-Time Work and Job Sharing

13.1 Staff/mission members may avail themselves of the opportunity to work on a part-time basis, pursuant to Staff Rule 7.01.2.

13.2 Two staff/mission members may each work on a part-time basis to "share" a full-time job, in which case the provisions of Staff Rule 7.01.2 shall apply.

13.3 The Director for Human Resources shall issue guidance on administrative modalities concerning the job-sharing arrangements.

14. Revocation or Suspension

14.1 Upon providing reasonable notice, FWA may be suspended or revoked at any time by the staff/mission member or by the supervisor, in the latter case for one or more of the reasons set out in paragraph 6.2 of this Staff Instruction.

14.2 When revocation or suspension is initiated by the supervisor, the supervisor must, using the prescribed format: (a) provide reasonable notice, and (b) provide a reasonably specific justification for the revocation or suspension of the FWA. When the staff/mission member decides to suspend or withdraw from an approved FWA, s/he shall inform the supervisor using the prescribed format.

15. Disagreements

15.1 Disagreements arising out of requests for flexible working arrangements or regarding the implementation of approved flexible working arrangements should be resolved through discussion between all the parties involved.

15.2 Where discussions do not lead to a mutually acceptable solution, the staff/mission member may raise the disagreement with the second-level supervisor, providing a detailed explanation of why the FWA should be approved or maintained and/or how the FWA could be implemented, taking into account the limitations set out in paragraph 6.2 of this Staff Instruction. The second-level supervisor shall decide on the matter.

16. Alternate Working Arrangements

Alternate working arrangements (AWA) are adjustments to the regular working hours and/or locations mandated by the Organization and are therefore different from FWA. AWA may be introduced at one or more duty stations and/or mission areas in order to ensure business continuity, such as in the wake of serious threats to the safety, security or health of OSCE officials. The authority to implement AWA rests with the Secretary General and/or the Head of Institution/Mission in consultation with the Secretary General. Such AWA may supersede the FWA provided for in this Staff Instruction.

Annex I

SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Staff/mission members	➤ Assess the impact of their requests on their duties and responsibilities, as well as those of their team and the OSCE ➤ Submit request using the prescribed format. Where required, provide appropriate justification ➤ Meet the obligations connected with the selected FWA ➤ Ensure timely delivery of assigned tasks and responsibilities ➤ Request a reassessment of a decision only if there are reasons to believe that the decision was arbitrary
First-level supervisors	➤ Review each request for FWA in a timely, fair and objective manner, based on business needs and with due regard to the personal circumstances of the requester ➤ Discuss with the staff/mission member specific duties and tasks to be delivered, including timelines and modalities ➤ Assess the performance of staff on FWA on the basis of the assigned deliverables as well as on value-based behaviours and competencies ➤ Provide reasons if requests are denied, suspended or revoked
Second-level supervisors	➤ Review disagreements in a timely, fair and objective manner ➤ Weigh the desires of the requester, advice from the first-level supervisor and the objectives of the office ➤ Decide on disagreements concerning requests for FWA
Local HR / Staff Committee / Gender Section / Ethics/Informal Resolution function	➤ Advocate usage and implementation of FWA and provide guidance and clarifications ➤ Provide training, such as on managing hybrid workforce, communication, wellbeing, performance management, team and relationship building and collaboration in hybrid teams ➤ Provide informal resolution advice and assistance, if and when requested, in a timely, fair and objective manner
DHR	➤ Monitor, report and provide overall support and guidance on the implementation of this Staff Instruction, as well as definitive interpretation of its provisions ➤ Ensure this Staff Instruction remains relevant and propose adjustments from time to time based on best practice and lessons learned