



Work-Life Balance Policy Statement

Helping to achieve a work-life balance

Aston University recognises that there are tangible benefits from supporting flexible working practices, implementing family friendly initiatives and assisting employees to achieve a balance in their work commitments and their life outside of work.

This policy statement aims to be the foundation for developing underpinning policies and procedures that will provide workable solutions to help achieve a work-life balance whilst fulfilling the business needs of the University.

The University is committed to becoming an equal opportunities employer. Part of that commitment, outlined within the Equal Opportunities Policy, is the statement that

‘consideration will be given to arrangements for working part-time, the introduction of flexible working hours and/or job sharing schemes where appropriate, in an endeavour to improve efficiency, enlarge the potential labour market or improve job opportunities for those with domestic or caring responsibilities’. Many of the underpinning policies and procedures however will be inclusive and provide support for a work-life balance for all employees not just those who have family or caring responsibilities.

Many of Aston’s underpinning policies and procedures are inclusive and will provide support for a work-life balance for all employees not just those who have family or caring responsibilities. There may be current full time employees who wish to reduce their hours of work as their circumstance outside of work mean they cannot continue to a set pattern of hours. These may include employees returning from maternity leave or adoption leave, employees approaching retirement, employees wishing to undertake part-time study or pursue an outside interest, employees caring for dependants, employees who may, due to a disability, now wish to work on a part time basis. These changes do not have to be permanent features but recognise the different external pressures staff may have at different stages in their working lives. Aston University wishes to be an ‘employer of choice’ and as such we have to respond to social and economic changes and offer

This policy statement draws those arrangements together in a cohesive document and aims to give recognition to the value of work-life balance initiatives and flexible working arrangements:

Recruitment and retention of valued staff

- reduces the costs associated with advertising and recruiting new staff
- reduces the costs of training new staff
- more satisfied, more motivated and less stressed staff
- opportunity for career progression, even if not working full-time
- reduction of absenteeism
- potential for staffing over a wide range of hours
- potential for matching working hours to periods of greatest need
- ability for staff to fit working hours with individual commitments
- takes account of the impact on the working population of demographic changes

The business benefits are real and have been tested in many progressive organisations where a change in organisational culture has been accepted

For the Work-Life Balance to work effectively there has to be give and take from both managers and staff, flexible working is not about never working long hours or undertaking extra duties its about creating a balance, avoiding the ‘long hours culture’ and measuring outputs rather than inputs. Staff need to recognise

that requests to work flexibility have to fit in with the business requirements but equally managers should not dismiss requests without objective and consistent consideration.

Aston has various work-life balance and flexible working arrangements in place:

- Part Time Working
- Term Time Working
- Flexible Working Hours
- Job Share Arrangements
- Child Care Facilities
- Maternity Leave Agreement
- Paternity Leave Agreement
- Parental Leave Agreement
- Compassionate Leave/Emergency Care of Dependants Leave
- Cultural Leave
- Working Time Policy

The policy statement draws these arrangements together. Staff and line managers should now have a route of communication to discuss how working arrangements can benefit the University and the individual. Although the University does have a number of work-life balance policies and flexible working arrangements already in place these are not exclusive and should not preclude discussions surrounding individual circumstances that fall outside the set University arrangements.

Heads of Schools and Support Service Departments will be given guidance on the implementation of work-life balance and flexible working initiatives to ensure fairness and consistency and to ensure that the University promotes work-life balance whilst fulfilling business needs.

Further information on the University's policies and work-life balance issues can be obtained from Personnel Services and Equal Opportunities

Some useful general information can be found on the following websites:

[Dfee Work-life Balance Home Page](#) –

[Employers for Work-Life Balance-](#)

[Work-Life Balance Policies-Management Guidelines](#)

AW/EO/15/01/02