



Banc Ceannais na hÉireann  
Central Bank of Ireland  
Eurosystem



Human  
Resources

# Flexible Working Hours Regulations

*HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION*

June 2015

## 1. **GENERAL OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

### **The Electronic System**

The Central Bank of Ireland (the Bank) uses an electronic time management system (TMS) to record staff attendance and working hours. All staff members are issued with a unique key card (fob) which they use to record their working hours by swiping their fob at a terminal. The terminals are located on individual floors or at the entrance to buildings. The card must be swiped at a terminal on arrival at work and on departure from work, including departure and arrival at lunchtime and other breaks. On desk PCs, staff can access their personal attendance and working hours records on the TMS facility via Plaza. This is essentially a web-based, employee, self-service system.

The TMS facility enables staff to be personally responsible for maintaining their own time and attendance records and, in addition, to request leave from their line manager electronically. Staff can (1) check and monitor their current balance of working hours; (2) check and monitor leave entitlements; (3) make adjustments in the event they have missed clocking; (4) apply for annual leave (and flex and study leave where relevant). When adjustments or leave are applied for, line managers receive automatic emails informing them and the authorisation can also be done electronically, through TMS. All staff, supervisors and management in the Bank have immediate real-time access to all staff leave/attendance information.

Guidelines for the use of TMS, and all HRD policies and forms, can be found on Plaza under *Services/ Attendance, Leave and other HR*.

## 2. FLEXI-LEAVE SUMMARY

### *General note on the operation of Flexible Working Hours*

While the organisation offers flexible working hours as a work-life balance tool, staff must be available to meet the business needs of the Bank's operations. It is therefore at the discretion of local management as to how flexitime is administered within a division so that they can complete their operations efficiently and effectively. The onus is on both staff and divisional management to ensure proper cover during office hours.

Total Bandwidth	08.00 hours – 19.00 hours
	Normal Working Hours
	<u>35.5 Hour Contract</u>
	09:00 hours - 17:30 hours (Monday)
	09:15 hours - 17:00 hours (Tuesday-Friday)
	<u>36 Hour Contract</u>
	09.00 hours – 17.15 hours (Monday-Thursday)
	09.00 hours – 17.00 hours (Friday)
	<u>37 Hour Contract</u>
	09.00 hours – 17.30 hours (Monday-Thursday)
	09.00 hours – 17.00 hours (Friday)
Core-time	10.00 hours – 12.00 hours
	14.30 hours – 16.00 hours
Lunch Bandwidth	12.00 hours – 14.30 hours
Minimum Lunch Break	30 minutes
Maximum Lunch Break	2 ½ hours subject to local approval
Unregistered Lunch Break	60 minutes – automatically recorded

Unregistered Evening Departure	Recorded automatically as 16.00 hours
Settlement Period	Every four weeks
Flexi-hours Carryover	Credit: 10 hours maximum Debit: 8 hours maximum
Flexi leave	One day flexi leave may be taken per settlement period, subject to the accumulation of the required hours in the previous settlement period (also subject to annual contractual allowance). For the November and December settlement periods one and a half days may be taken subject to annual contractual allowance.

### **3. DEFINITIONS AND REGULATIONS**

#### **3.1 TIME TARGETS**

Bandwidth:	08.00 – 19.00 hours
Core-time:	10.00 – 12.00 hours and 14.30 – 16.00 hours
Flexible Bands:	08.00 – 10.00 hours and 16.00 – 19.00 hours

Attendance during core-time is obligatory and staff may vary start/finish times within flexible bands, subject to the work requirements and with the agreement of local management. Missed clocking should be adjusted through TMS.

#### **3.2 LUNCHTIME**

The flexible lunchtime is from 12.00 – 14.30 hours and a minimum break of 30 minutes will be registered. By arrangement with local management up to 2 ½ hours may be taken. Staff who do not clock out/in at lunchtime will automatically be deducted 1 hour. If more than 1 hour is taken, then the excess time over 1 hour should be adjusted via TMS.

### 3.3 **SHORT ABSENCES DURING THE WORKING DAY**

When staff leave the office on personal business e.g. on lunch, to go to the staff restaurant or outside to smoke, they should clock out as they are not available for work. Absences of less than 0:15 minutes, although deducted by the system in calculating worked hours, will not appear on TMS as an absence. Absences of between 0:16 to 0:30 minutes may be deleted using TMS and following the approval of your leave authoriser. No time will be credited for these absences.

### 3.4 **INFRINGEMENTS**

An Infringement is recorded in the Flexible Working Hours System when a keying action is made during core-time, i.e., 10.01 hours to 11:59 hours and 14.31 hours to 15.59 hours. If a staff member keys in after 11:00 hours on arrival or out before 15:15 hours on departure, a half day's absence will be generated that should be covered by a half day's leave. In exceptional circumstances, staff can apply to have these infringements deleted by local management. It is also at the discretion of local management as to whether time may be credited back.

Infringements are not monitored by HRD and are the responsibility of local management. If managers have ongoing issues with staff non-compliance with these Regulations, they should contact HRD for guidance. The removal of a staff member from the use of flexible working hours can sometimes be the solution (see below).

#### **Removal of Flexibility – Definition**

Removal of flexibility on the Flexible Working Hours System will mean that the staff concerned will return to normal contracted working hours and must continue to key in/out. No infringement of core-time will be allowed and only one hour may be taken for lunch. Any credit accrued at the end of each period will be forfeited.

Flex leave and credit accruing prior to the withdrawal of flexibility will be frozen until the person returns to flexible working hours. Overtime, subject to the usual rules, may be worked. HRD will review the duration of stay on this status on a monthly basis, in liaison with the local management.

### 3.5 **FLEX ENTITLEMENTS**

The following charts display flex leave allowances for each grade and how these may change on promotion. Staff are broken into staff employed pre-December 2008 and those employed post December 2008. To work out your Flexi leave allowance in Chart A, start from your current position (as of July 2011) on the left and move horizontally. In the case of BP1 and BP2, your allowance will depend on when you reach the grades.

#### **Bank Professional 1/2**

BP1/2 staff employed pre-December 2008 will retain 14 days flexi-leave, unless they opt voluntarily for 'own time management' working arrangements (see 3.20 - Own Time Management).

BP2 staff employed pre-December 2008 and promoted to BP1 effective on or before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 will phase down to a 7 days flexi-leave allocation in accordance with the *transition arrangements* (as agreed between UNITE Staff Committee and the Bank). *Transition arrangements* mean phasing down from 14 days flexi-leave to 7 days flexi leave over a 2-year period as follows: move to 12 days on promotion – one year later move to 10 days – one year later move to 7 days.

**Chart A – Pre-December 2008 Staff (Existing Staff):**

	BO	BE	BP3	BP2		BP1	
				≤ 2020	≥ 2021	≤ 2020	≥ 2021
BP1						14	14
BP2				14	14	7	0
BP3			14	7	7	0	0
BE		14	14	7	0	0	0
BO	14	14	14	7	0	0	0

**Chart B: Post-December 2008 Staff (New Staff):**

	BO	BE	BP3	BP2	BP1
BP1					0
BP2				0	0
BP3			14	0	0
BE		14	14	0	0
BO	14	14	14	0	0

### 3.6 SETTLEMENT PERIOD

The settlement period for contracted hours will be four weeks and will be based on a working requirement depending on contracted hours. See TMS for specific dates each year.

### 3.7 **CARRYOVER**

At the end of each settlement period an individual may be in credit up to a maximum of 10 hours which will be carried forward to the next settlement period. Any credit in excess of 10 hours will be forfeited.

A debit in excess of 8 hours at the end of a settlement period must be brought back to the maximum 8 hours allowable (or below) by deduction from annual leave or salary, as appropriate. In liaison with HR, staff may take a couple of months to retreat to within the maximum debit allowance.

The credit balance carried forward may be taken as either a half day or one full day flexi leave depending on business requirements and subject to sufficient credit balance. Prior approval for flexi leave should be sought from the individual's local management through TMS.

### 3.8 **LEAVE PROCEDURES**

#### *Flex Leave*

On authorising flex-leave the balance at the end of the previous period should be used to verify that the individual is entitled to take the flex-leave requested, before approval is granted.

#### *Official Business Leave*

OBL can be used by (1) clocking out on Business Absence or (2) applying for OBL on TMS.

- Staff using the clock out on Business Absence facility should have prior permission to do this from their Divisional Management. The facility is normally only provided to senior staff members who are out of the office on a regular basis.
- OBL can be used to cover absences for staff attending funerals of close relatives of colleagues. This should be cleared by Management before staff members take leave.



### 3.9 **ILLNESS**

(Sick Leave Regulations should be read in conjunction with this section.)

HRD will credit absence due to illness as full contracted hours worked, subject to the existing regulations regarding *Certified and Uncertified Sick Leave*.

#### ***Certified Sick Leave***

The appropriate credit will be given on receipt of medical certificate.

#### ***Uncertified Sick Leave***

The appropriate credit will be given on receipt of a completed *Uncertified Sick Leave* form (available on Plaza).

#### ***Illness at work***

For a staff member who becomes ill during working hours and leaves work as a result, the following applies:-

- i. A staff member who leaves work during the morning core-time and remains out for the rest of the day is given a credit up to 12.30pm and is required to take a half day's *Uncertified Sick Leave* for which a credit will be given on receipt of a completed *Uncertified Sick Leave* form.
- ii. A staff member who leaves work during afternoon core-time is required to take a half day's *Uncertified Sick Leave* for the afternoon for which a credit will be given on receipt of a completed *Uncertified Sick Leave* form.

#### ***Attendance at Specialist Medical Services (including Antenatal Clinics/Classes)***

Credit for time will be given and any associated infringement deleted. A note certifying attendance must be provided. In the case of attendance for a series of sessions (e.g. antenatal clinic) an attendance schedule stamped and/or signed on each visit by the clinic is sufficient. A policy on Maternity Leave, Adoptive Leave and related absences is available on Plaza.

Attendance at Medical Specialists (with the exception of antenatal clinics/classes) for all of morning or afternoon core-time is treated as *Certified Sick Leave*. Attendance at antenatal clinics/classes will always be treated as clinic appointments.

#### ***Attendance at Other Medical Services***

No credit will be given unless the illness occurs at work – see Illness at Work above. Local management can agree to remove infringements for attendance at Other Medical Services. However such attendance should normally be outside of core-time and should be for emergency treatment only.

#### ***Attendance at the Blood Bank***

Staff are expected to attend the Blood Bank outside of core-times. Special facilities are granted to staff members who are members of special blood groups and on the Blood Plasma panel. Notes requesting attendance at specific times together with letters confirming attendance should be forwarded to HRD.

#### ***Attendance at Alternative Medical Services***

Credit for time will not be given nor any infringement deleted for attendance at alternative medical services. This includes Chiropractors, Osteopaths, Acupuncturists, Reflexologists, and Aromatherapists.

### **3.10 FUNERALS**

#### ***Funerals of Staff/Retired Staff/Close Relatives of Colleagues***

Credit for absence will be given for funerals subject to reasonable numbers attending. In all cases, permission of divisional management to attend during normal working time must be obtained in advance.

Infringements will be deleted and time credit given, where prior approval has been obtained and the appropriate authorisation provided.

All of these adjustments should be made using TMS as OBL.

### ***Other Funerals***

Bereavement Leave is granted in line with the Paid Special Leave in Domestic Circumstances Policy (available on Plaza). Attendance at other funerals of more distant family relatives and friends may be allowed subject to prior approval from management. No time credit will apply in these cases, however infringements may be deleted with approval from local management.

### **3.11 OVERTIME**

Overtime is separate from Flexible Working Hours and will not be recorded on the TMS system. It will, as at present, have to be authorised in advance to meet a genuine business need and recorded separately on an overtime form. Overtime may only be claimed outside normal working hours. Tea allowance will only be paid where a 30-minute break is taken (see Overtime Regulations on Plaza).

### **3.12 UNION COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Attendance at such meetings during normal working hours should have the advance permission of divisional management. Union committee members attending meetings with the Bank, the Labour Court, Rights Commissioner, Conciliation etc. will be classed as being on Official Bank Leave and as such may regain full credit for time involved; including time spent in excess of normal working hours but only up to 19:00 hours. Staff should key out on OBL when leaving to go to these meetings and key back in when they return. If the staff member is not returning after the meeting they should make any necessary adjustments to TMS when they return to work.

### **3.13 KEY CARDS**

The fob for the Flexible Working Hours System will incorporate the identity card (ID card). The card must be used for all entries/exits to/from the Bank, except in the case of an emergency e.g., fire alarm. Under no circumstances may a card be used by any one other than the person to whom it is assigned. Staff should make every effort to ensure against improper use of their card.

Staff members are responsible for the safe custody of their cards. If a staff member forgets or loses his/her card, credit will be given for actual time worked by providing the times of attendance through TMS.

### **3.14 ABUSES**

Any abuse of the system will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Misuse of cards (e.g., making a keying action for another staff member) will be deemed to be grave misconduct under the Disciplinary Code and will be subject to summary dismissal.

### **3.15 TRANSFER TO NON-FLEX AREAS**

HRD will always endeavour to give staff advance notice of impending transfer to a non-flex area (eg TARGET). Such notice should enable staff to bring their time balance to nil. Where it is not possible to give adequate notice, HRD will arrange an appropriate alternative method for elimination of the balance.

### **3.16 ATYPICAL WORKERS**

Staff members with atypical contracts have the facility to accrue flex leave on a pro-rata basis as determined by their atypical contract hours. The number of flex days, which can be accrued, will be calculated by reference to the maximum number of days available to full-time staff on the same grade and depending on their contract. The conditions governing the accrual of flex days for full-time staff together with those relating to carry-over, leave procedures, settlement periods etc will also apply to staff on atypical contracts.

### **3.17 TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

Staff terminating their employment with the Bank should bring their credit or debit hours to nil by the date of leaving. Should there be a debit balance

outstanding a deduction will be made from salary or annual leave. The card should be returned to HRD on termination.

### **3.18 OTHER**

Where a request for an adjustment does not satisfy any of the criteria in these regulations, divisional management will consult with HRD before making a decision. In this way, consistency and fairness between divisions can be achieved.

Any core time absences, which are not covered by these regulations, will be reported through local management to HRD for investigation.

*All adjustments must be authorised by a Bank Professional 3, Bank Professional 2, Deputy Manager or Manager.*

### **3.19 OWN TIME MANAGEMENT**

BP1/2 staff may, within the parameters of their existing contractual arrangements, opt to move to a zero flexi-leave arrangement in return for the flexibility of 'own time management' at any stage. The principles of own time management, which also apply to Heads and Deputy Heads of Division, are as follows:

- BP1/2 are considered as management grades;
- Work objectives are primary accountability;
- No TMS infringements apply;
- Clocking-in/clocking-out is required only for the purposes of compliance with Working Time legislation (record keeping) and health and safety guidelines. Therefore, it is only necessary to clock twice a day – on arrival and on departure.

- Arrival clocking should be before 12 noon, while departure clocking should be after 3pm.
- An arrival clocking after 12 noon or a departure clocking before 3pm, will generate an absence on the system requiring the taking of leave (or the making of an adjustment if the clocking was forgotten).
- The OBL facility on the clocks can be used for absences on OBL (short Guide to this facility is available from HR).
- Leave should be requested from relevant Management via the TMS system so that accurate records of leave taken and carryover are available.
- Sick leave will continue to be entered centrally by HR staff. In this regard, all medical certificates should be submitted directly to HR Services.
- There is no accrual of flexi leave.