



# Hybrid Workplace Flexibility (HWF) Guide

A step-by-step guide to working where and when you work best

Updated: October 2021



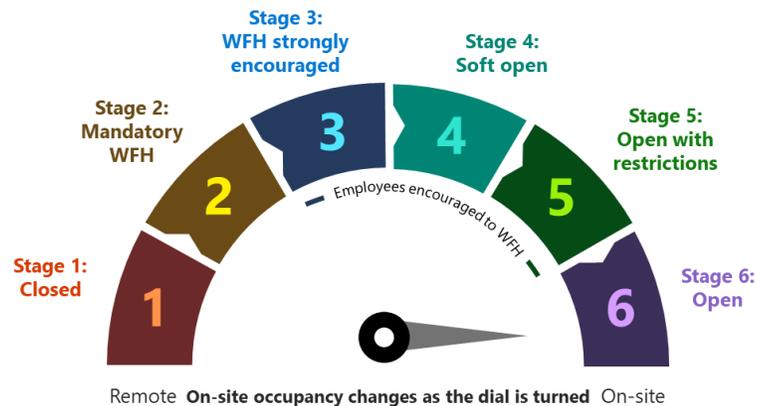
# A note on COVID-19



While we collectively work to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, workplace guidance for countries in **Stages 1-5** continues to come from our [centralized COVID-19 response site](#).

The guidance outlined in the following slides is applicable to employee requests for changes to their **work site, work location, and/or work hours** in **Stage 6** and beyond COVID-19.

## Six stages of the COVID-19 hybrid workplace





# Flexibility at Microsoft

At Microsoft, there are as many ways of working as there are employees. As a company, we value and support flexibility as part of our hybrid workplace where every employee can do their best work by working the way they work best.

Most of our roles allow for some degree of flexibility in when and where work gets done. We encourage all employees and managers to challenge assumptions around what is possible and offer the most flexibility possible.

Our hybrid workplace is built on a commitment to flexibility that:

- ❑ Welcomes and enables **diverse ways of working**
- ❑ Relies on **new learning and mindset shifts**
- ❑ Considers **business needs and individual needs**
- ❑ Is built on **trust and technology**

# A message from Kathleen Hogan



The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged all of us to think, live, and work in new ways. As a company, we have proven that we are agile in the face of adversity, rising to meet business and customer needs while caring for loved ones and ourselves. Through all of this, we have learned that—now more than ever—flexibility, trust, and empowerment are key to delivering success.

We are committed to exploring new ways of working that shift paradigms, embrace flexibility, create enduring connections, promote inclusion, and drive innovation. We will offer as much flexibility as possible to support individual workstyles, while balancing business needs, and ensuring we live our culture.

This guide is a starting point to help both employees and managers understand our policies and guidelines and make informed decisions. It's important to keep in mind that options around where and when employees work may differ based on role or region, but my expectation is that we continue to enable a hybrid workplace where individuals, teams, and our business can be successful.

As always, we will learn, grow, and innovate. We will evolve over time with intention, guided by employee input. We will—together, as One Microsoft—build a hybrid workplace that empowers our people to do their best work so we can empower the planet to achieve more.

**Kathleen Hogan**  
Chief People Officer, Microsoft



# Three dimensions of a hybrid workplace

All employees have a **work site**, a **work location**, and **work hours**. A hybrid workplace assumes a mix of workstyles across all three dimensions for our employees as well as within our organizations.



## work site

physical space where you work



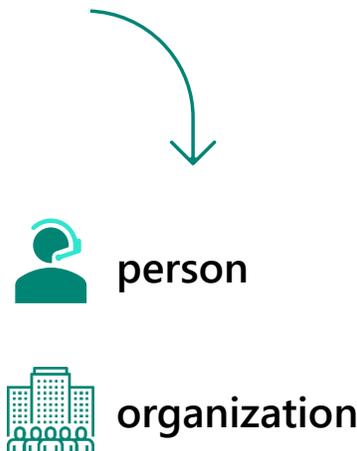
## work location

geographic location where you work



## work hours

hours and days when you work



An employee-initiated change may involve any or all three dimensions so be sure to follow the steps for each scenario, as needed.

The scenarios outlined in this guide assume no change to an employee's current role.

Approved work site, work location, or work hours should not change in the event of a reorganization, new manager, or other circumstance where the nature of the work or role does not change.

**Note:** If a request is sought based on your own medical condition, a family member's medical condition, or a religious belief, it must be evaluated under other company guidelines. Each situation is different and must be addressed on its own.

# Core Scenarios

This guide outlines the following core flexibility scenarios in a hybrid workplace.



Employee is requesting a change to their work site

Work from home **less than 50%** of work time per week (on average)

Work from home **50% or more** of work time per week (on average)



Employee is requesting a change to their primary work location

Relocate **within the same country**

Relocate to **a different country**



Employee is requesting a change to their work hours

Change **number of hours worked**

**Schedule flexibility**



**NOTE:** These scenarios reflect a way of working for the foreseeable future. This does not include temporary or short-term changes.

# Decision-making considerations

Before making any decisions, review these general considerations



## Local laws and regulations

Your work location may be subject to specific laws or regulations related to approvals and documentation, equipment, or expenses. Visa-dependent employees may have additional considerations when changing location, reducing work hours, or compensation.

## Organization-specific guidelines

Each organization has **org-specific guidelines and recommendations** to ensure consistency and compliance within the different organizations.

## Degrees of flexibility

With each role, work site, work location, and work hour flexibility may differ. Certain work is better suited to in-person or onsite while many types of work can be done equally well remotely.

## Compensation and benefits

A change to an employee's primary work location and/or work hours **may impact base pay, benefits, stock, bonus, and/or level.**

## Expenses

Expenses related to work travel, including travel to team events, are considered **business expenses** and come from a manager's OPEX budget. Microsoft does not cover personal relocation costs or home office expenses (subject to legal requirements).

## Work site type and safety

Every employee has one primary work site. For more information about work site options, you can access the **Employee Procedure Guide.**

Our expectation is that **all work sites are safe and secure**, and we have provided specific recommendations for [home office health and safety.](#)

## Tax (corporate and personal)

An employee's work location can have **personal tax implications for the individual** as well as **broader corporate tax considerations** in the event of a cross-border move. Employees are responsible for personal tax reporting and any costs incurred.

## Global mobility

When an employee moves to/works from another country, there are several important considerations including **corporate tax, immigration, local law, and restrictions around work conducted in each country/region.**

## Change process

Employees should initiate requests for changes to work site, work location, and work hours directly in our HR system.



# Flexibility Guidelines

## At-a-glance overview of guidelines related to core flexibility scenarios



Dimension	Scenario	Approval required?	HR documentation required?	Compensation & Benefits changes?	Expenses	Space
Work site	I want to work from home less than 50% of work time/week (avg)	No. Considered standard for most roles (see Note below).	<b>No documentation required</b> Alignment with team agreements, as outlined by manager, is expected	No changes	No additional expenses covered	<b>Assigned</b> workspace, as available
	I want to work from home 50% or more of work time/week (avg)	Yes, manager approval	<b>Yes, employee to request change to workspace type in our HR system</b> Employee to confirm home address to ensure accurate reporting	No changes	No additional expenses covered	<b>Home office</b> (100% work from home), or <b>mobile/unassigned</b>
Work location	I want to move to a new location that is within the same country where I work today	Yes, manager approval required in alignment with org-specific guidelines.	<b>Yes, employee to request change to work location in our HR system</b> Additional steps will be required if compensation and/or benefits change	Depends on geo-pay scale in work country	Travel expenses are subject to manager approval  Personal relocation costs not covered by MSFT	Refer to above guidelines for worksite changes
	I want to move to a new location in a different country from where I work today	While it may be possible, there are significant implications that need to be considered. <b>Employee should initiate the request in our HR system, and it will be routed to the appropriate approvers, in alignment with org-specific guidelines.</b>				
Work hours	I want to work different or more flexible hours	No. Considered standard for most roles (see Note below).	<b>No documentation required</b> Alignment with team agreements, as outlined by manager, is expected	No changes	No additional expenses covered	Refer to above guidelines for worksite changes
	I want to work fewer hours (part-time)	Yes, manager approval	<b>Yes, employee to initiate request in our HR system with new weekly work hours</b> Additional steps will be required to process compensation and benefits change	Yes, based on weekly work hours	No additional expenses covered	Refer to above guidelines for worksite changes



# Core scenarios: Step-by-Step guide

This guide walks through the decision-making process for core flexibility scenarios within a hybrid workplace.

For all other scenarios not covered in this guide, employee and manager should work together to determine next steps.

You can navigate this guide **using the menu on the right.**



## Step-by-step guide

Select the buttons below to navigate.

Main menu

Key steps

Work site

Work site flow map

Degrees of flexibility

<50% work from home

≥50% work from home

Work location

Work location flow map

Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility

# For all scenarios, managers and employees should take the following key steps:

<p>1 Understand Microsoft's approach to flexibility, get answers to frequently asked questions, clarify any local laws or regulations, and review org specific guidelines</p>	<p><b>Clarify any local laws or regulations by checking with AskHR.</b> Examples could include restrictions on time spent working from home, home office safety standards, documentation, immigration related restrictions, or certain work that cannot be done outside of the country.</p> <p><b>Review your org-specific flexibility guidelines.</b></p>
<p>2 Have a 1:1 conversation with your manager around work preferences.</p> <p>Work as a team to establish team agreements that support the diverse workstyles on the team.</p>	<p><b>Consider how you work best.</b> Have a <b>1:1 conversation</b> with your manager about how you would like to work, in alignment with <b>team agreements</b>.</p> <p>If you want to request changes to your work site, work location or work hours, <b>follow the steps in this guide and initiate requests in our HR system</b> or contact <b>AskHR</b> with questions.</p> <p>We encourage all employees and managers to challenge assumptions around what is possible and <b>offer as much flexibility as possible.</b></p>
<p>3 Be a learn-it-all and build your capability in a hybrid workplace</p>	<p><b>Leading in a flexible work environment is a skill and a capability</b> and we can all benefit from ongoing investment in learning and development.</p> <p>Access additional <b>flexible work learning resources</b> to build skills and behaviors to thrive in a hybrid workplace.</p>

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<50% work from home

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Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility



## Request a change to work site

A request to work from home assumes no change to an employee's address and that their home office is within **commuting distance** of a designated Microsoft site if there are weekly onsite expectations.

All work sites need to be safe and secure, and we have provided specific recommendations for **home office health and safety**.

If an employee is requesting to work from home in a new location, please refer to the scenario around changing work location.



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<50% work from home

≥50% work from home

 Work location

Work location flow map

Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

 Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility

# Request a change to work site: flow map



## Step-by-step guide

Select the buttons below to navigate.

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Work site

Work site flow map

Degrees of flexibility

<50% work from home

≥50% work from home

Work location

Work location flow map

Degrees of flexibility

Same country

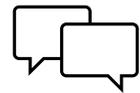
Different country

Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility



Employee and manager have a **1:1 conversation** about worksite preferences

<50%  
work from  
home

Employee does not need to initiate any requests for approval. Align with manager and team agreements.

≥50% work  
from home

Employee initiates change process, including securing manager approval, by requesting a worksite change through our HR system.



**NOTE:** Visa-dependent employees may have additional considerations when changing location, reducing work hours, or compensation.

# Request a change to work site: Degrees of flexibility



Employees at Microsoft have the option to work from home less than 50% of their work time (on average) and are expected to align with their manager on team agreements, particularly as it relates to in-person expectations. Working from home  $\geq 50\%$  of the work week is also an option with manager approval.

In determining degrees of flexibility, managers should consider the onsite requirements of a role, type of work or interactions (like project kick offs) that might be better suited to in-person or onsite and create team agreements that help align on expectations across the team.

Work with onsite requirements might include:

- Work done in hardware labs, specialty spaces, or data centers
- Use of technology or equipment only available on Microsoft sites
- In-person engagement with customers at a Microsoft site
- In-person product demos
- Certain types of training and learning requiring in-person interaction

We encourage all employees and managers to challenge assumptions around what is possible and offer as much flexibility as possible.

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Degrees of flexibility

<50% work from home

$\geq 50\%$  work from home

Work location

Work location flow map

Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility

# Work from home less than 50% of work time per week



Working from home <50% of the work week (on average) is considered standard for most roles. Certain types of work may require more consistent or regularly scheduled time onsite or in-person.

Alignment with team agreements, as outlined by the manager, is expected. When working from home, it is important to set up a safe home office. Learn more with our [home office health and safety recommendations](#).

**Employee does not need to initiate any requests for approval unless required by local law or regulation.**

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<50% work from home

≥50% work from home

 Work location

Work location flow map

Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

 Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility

# Work from home 50% or more of work time per week



1



2



3

**Employee initiates change process, including securing manager approval, by requesting a worksite change through our HR system**

**Employee to confirm % of time working from home and home address to ensure accurate reporting**

**Align on team agreements & set up a safe home office**

Employees working from home 50% or more per week are not eligible for assigned office space but can use 'touch-down' space in any Microsoft site, subject to availability.

Align as a team on in-person and onsite expectations and refer to Microsoft's [Home Office health and safety recommendations](#).

It is important to report where you work from as this will have an impact on your taxes based on local tax laws.

Employee is not eligible to expense home office equipment.

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Work location flow map

Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

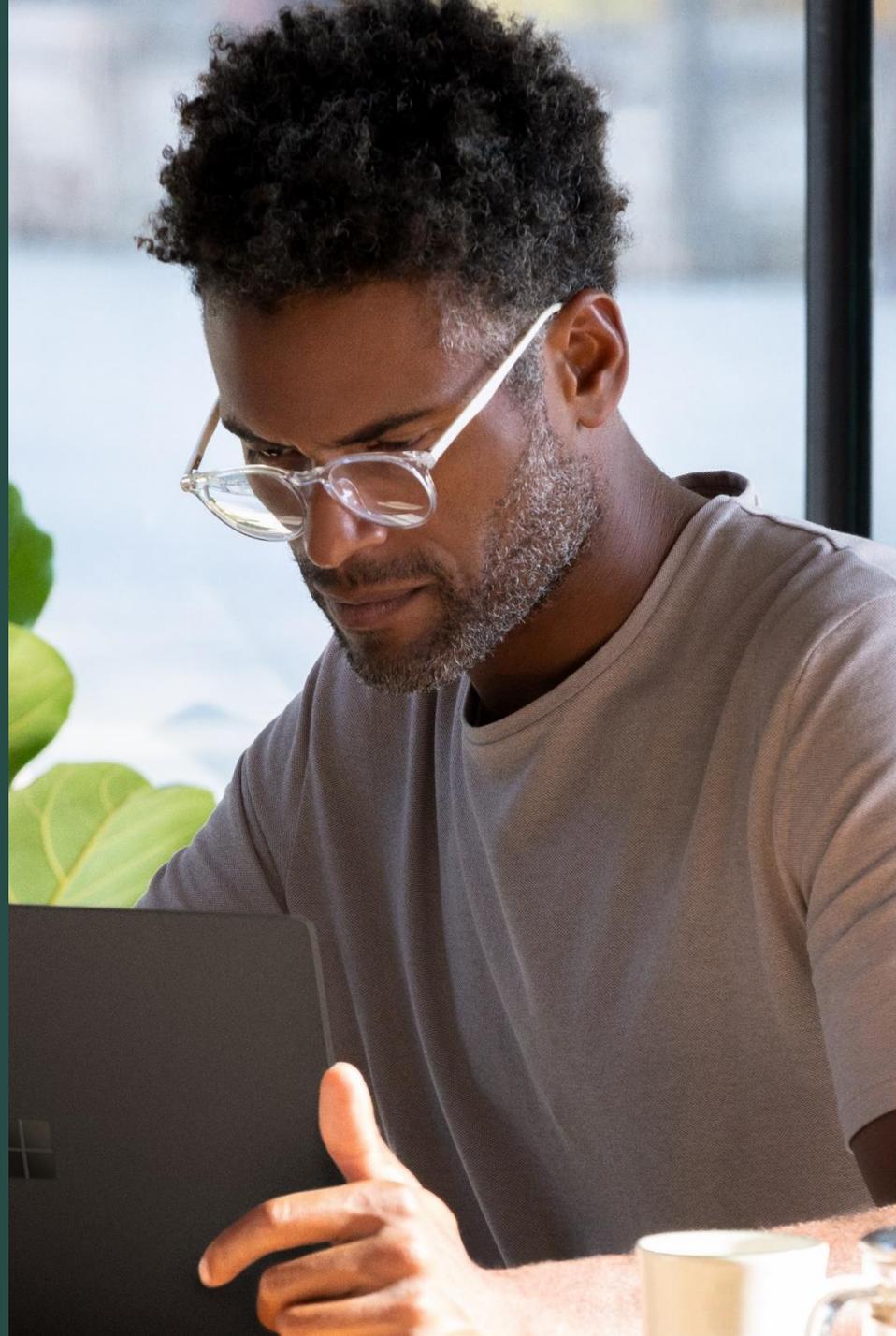
Schedule flexibility



## Request a change to work location

The geographic distribution of employees is an important element of organizational design. Each organization at Microsoft has unique guidelines related to location flexibility and should be considered prior to making any decisions.

Personal relocation costs are not covered by MSFT.



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Work location flow map

Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility

# Request to change work location: flow map



## Step-by-step guide

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<50% work from home

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Work location

Work location flow map

Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility



Employee and manager have a **1:1 conversation** about work location preferences, in alignment with **org-specific guidelines**

Relocate within the same country

Employee initiates change process, including securing manager approval, by requesting a work location change through our HR system

Manager approval required

Relocate to a different country

Employee initiates change process, including securing manager approval, by requesting a work location change through our HR system

Manager approval required

Once approved, Global Mobility will work with the manager to assess the viability of the move



**NOTE:** Visa-dependent employees may have additional considerations when changing location, reducing work hours, or compensation.

# Request to change work location: Degrees of flexibility



Employee and manager should have a **1:1 conversation** about work location preferences, in alignment with org-specific guidelines.

If relocation is not an option, employee and manager should discuss the criteria applied to the decision and any alternative options. Location options may also vary for visa-dependent employees looking to change location.

## Step-by-step guide

Select the buttons below to navigate.

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Work site flow map

Degrees of flexibility

<50% work from home

≥50% work from home

Work location

Work location flow map

Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility

# Change to work location: relocate within same country



1

## Clarify impact to pay or benefits

For relocation within the same country, there can be compensation and benefits changes to consider. Managers or employees can submit a request to [AskHR](#) to find out the estimated change associated with the new location and all employees can learn more about how compensation works at Microsoft with [these helpful videos](#).

In cases where the pay would increase, it is important for managers to confirm budget availability before approving any relocation. All employees should consult with a tax advisor to ensure they understand any personal tax implications of a possible move.

2

## Align on travel expectations and expenses

Managers should communicate clear expectations (on a fiscal year basis) for travel onsite to a Microsoft location and determine what portion of that travel will be covered by Microsoft.

Expenses related to work location, like travel to team events, are considered business expenses and come from a manager's OPEX budget.

Employee personal relocation costs are not covered by Microsoft.

3

## Employee initiates change process, including securing manager approval, by requesting a work location change through our HR system

### Manager approval required

Additional approvals may be required as per org-specific guidelines, and any requests in our HR system will be routed accordingly.

Refer to 'work site' scenario to process any related changes to work site (i.e. shift to 'home office').

## Step-by-step guide

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Work location flow map

Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility

# Change to work location: relocate to different country



Moving to work in another country is complex and creates risks, challenges, and expenses for both individual employees and the business.

While it may be possible, there are significant implications that need to be considered. Employee should initiate the request in our HR system. The request will be routed to the appropriate approvers in alignment with org-specific guidelines.

Once approved, the request routes to Global Mobility to complete the review process required for a cross-country move.

## Step-by-step guide

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Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

Work hours

Work hours flow map

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Schedule flexibility



## Request a change to work hours



### Step-by-step guide

Select the buttons below to navigate.

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Key steps

🏠 Work site

Work site flow map

Degrees of flexibility

<50% work from home

≥50% work from home

📍 Work location

Work location flow map

Degrees of flexibility

Same country

Different country

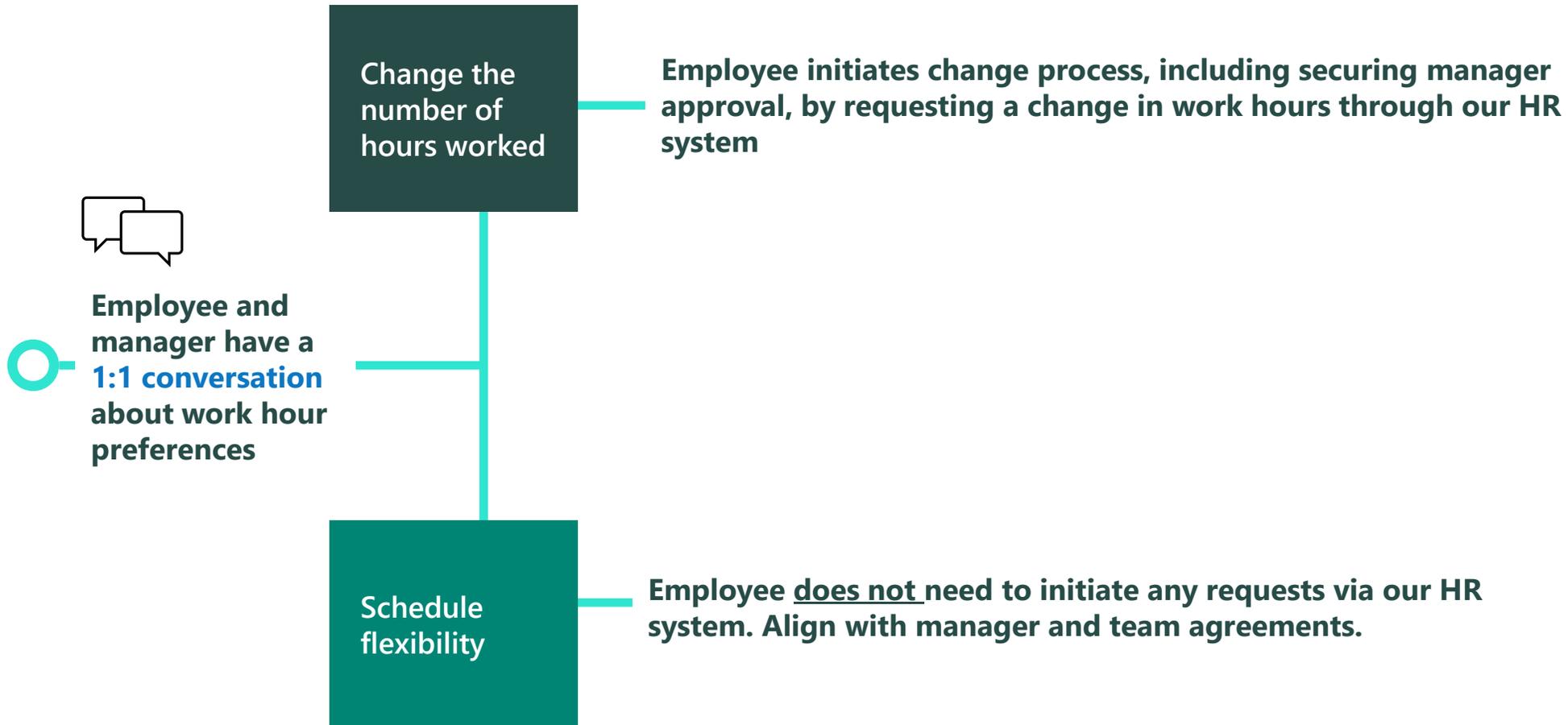
📅 Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility

# Request to change work hours: flow map



**NOTE:** Visa-dependent employees may have additional considerations when changing location, reducing work hours, or compensation.

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Same country

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Work hours

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Hours worked

Schedule flexibility

# Change to work hours: the number of hours worked



1



## Understand pay and benefits changes

Learn more about changes to pay and [benefits eligibility](#)\* associated with a change in work hours or check with [AskHR](#).

Manager should work with their HR partners to ensure full understanding of position management related to a change in work hours.

\*US only

2



## Align on workload and core priority changes

Ensure shared understanding around what impact looks like with the new work hours.

3

## Employee initiates change process, including securing manager approval, through our HR system by requesting a change in work hours.

A new offer letter with the new salary and work hours will be generated, as needed.

### Step-by-step guide

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Same country

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Work hours

Work hours flow map

Hours worked

Schedule flexibility

# Change to work hours: schedule flexibility



We support employees in working the hours that work for them and that allow them to deliver on expectations. Schedule flexibility is an important part of the employee experience at Microsoft.

Alignment with team agreements, as outlined by the manager, is expected. Determine any periods of time, meetings, or days during the week when availability (in-person or virtual) is a critical part of the workstream or workflows.

Employee does not need to initiate any requests for approval unless required by local law or regulation.

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# Resources



## Flexibility @ Microsoft

One-stop shop for updated FAQs and links to important resources.



## Flexible Work Learning Resources

A collection of learning resources to help you thrive in a hybrid workplace.



Questions?  
Contact [AskHR](#)



Thank you!

For any questions, please [AskHR](#).