



OWLS Academy Trust

Guide to Job Sharing

Adopted by The OWLS Academy Trust on	
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This document sets out a framework for effective job-sharing. It sets out key considerations for managing requests for flexible working where a job-share is the proposed or likely outcome, and also provides clear guidance for effective operation of a job-share partnership for managers and employees.

In this document all references to Head Teacher shall include the all the Head Teachers at each academy and the CEO unless otherwise specified.



Introduction

All employees have the right to request flexible working, which may manifest in a request to change:

- The number of hours they work;
- The times that they work; and/or
- Their place of work (e.g. to work from home, where the duties of the post permit this)

In schools, particularly for staff who are pupil-facing, the majority of requests tend to be from full-time staff looking to reduce their working hours, since the nature of the work is likely to inhibit regular home-working or re-distribution of full time hours. This will usually mean dividing the responsibilities of the post between two part-time employees, either by job splitting or job-sharing.

Job Splitting is where a role is divided by identifying the different elements of the job and allocating separate duties to each individual (e.g. by capability, activity and/or projects) to create two distinct part-time posts.

Job-sharing is where two employees share all of the responsibilities and duties of one full-time job, with each partner doing the same type of work for their share of the working hours of the full-time post. Sometimes there may be some overlap in the working hours of each partner, to allow for handover, but it is recognised that this may not always be possible.

The right to request flexible working does not convey a requirement for managers to agree the terms, but employers need to have objective reasons if a request is to be declined (see Flexible Working Policy for details).



Management Considerations

It should normally be considered possible to share any job, subject to the ability to recruit an appropriate job-share partner. However, consideration may be given to any negative impact that agreeing to the request may have on the overall performance/operation of the school (including financial impact), with a view to ensuring a balanced decision

Performance

It should not be assumed that a job-share will be detrimental to children's progress and performance: indeed, a good job-share arrangement could have a positive effect on pupil outcomes, through complementary teaching styles and a wider range of expertise.

Operational Impact

For successful job-sharing there must be a genuine commitment from both management and job-sharing partners to make the arrangements work for all stakeholders. Agreeing clear job share arrangements from the outset is essential, as is ensuring good communication and trust between the job-share partners and their line manager.

Choice of job-share partner is important: research indicates that the most effective partnerships are built on shared similar values, attitudes and work ethics combined with complementary capabilities and respect and trust for each other. Not only will overall job performance (and therefore potentially pupil outcomes) benefit from the combined experience and strengths of both teachers, but the partners will also be working closely together and sharing their own expertise, thus providing development opportunities for each other.

It should be recognised that job-sharing is not suited to everyone, with research suggesting that it is less likely to work if an individual:

- Has a style more suited to independent working;
- Is not naturally collaborative, a good communicator and well-organised;
- Is competitive, or places more importance on shining in their own right than on good teamwork;
- Is quick to blame;
- Finds it difficult to trust or relinquish personal control.

However well-matched a job-share partnership, there are still likely to be moments of friction. Good communication and good handover arrangements are essential to minimise this, but in addition the partners are advised to agree some basic ground rules or working principles between themselves both to minimise the potential for issues to arise between them and to enable them to identify and address any issue that does then arise before it can have time to fester.

Performance Management

While it is reasonable to expect that the whole job role should be fulfilled effectively with each partner putting in their fair share of the effort, it is also important that individual performance is recognised, particularly where performance-related pay arrangements apply. Therefore each partner must have performance objectives that reflect a balance between shared tasks and individual contributions, so that each partner knows what is expected of them. Where joint objectives are agreed each partner should be able to provide evidence of what they did and how they contributed to the outcomes. Performance reports for each partner should be separate and confidential, and their development plans should be different to reflect personal levels of experience, competence, skill and/or motivation. It is good practice for performance management reviews to also include a review of the job share arrangements.

Financial Impact

The time and costs involved in employing an individual are not directly proportional to the hours that they work. For example, all employees are entitled to performance management typically takes the same amount of time for full and part-time employees, training costs will be per person, payroll and HR administration involves the same work/fee regardless of the working hours).

While this does not give justification for refusing all requests for job-share, it is possible that there will come a point where the burden of additional costs becomes such that it is not possible to sustain any further job-shares. Employees do have the right to appeal if their request for flexible working is declined, so the school is advised to keep a record of all additional costs incurred as a result of a job share, and to remember that staffing structure and school size will also have a bearing.



Recruitment Considerations

The majority of job-share arrangements in schools arise as a result of a full time member of staff wishing to reduce their working hours within the same role. In most cases the ability to agree to such a request will be dependent on the school being able to recruit and appoint a suitable job-share partner. Occasionally, however, an existing partnership may wish to apply together for an advertised full-time position. Both scenarios will therefore be addressed here.

Recruiting a Job Share Partner

The post should be advertised in line with the school's usual recruitment practice, but the advert should specify that the vacancy is for a job-share arrangement and information should be provided about the days to be worked and normal practice for job-shares in respect of training, teacher days, parents evenings etc. (see below).

The ability of each candidate to perform the job should be the first priority from the selection process. However, the need for suitably matched partners is important, so it can be helpful to involve the existing member of staff in the selection process so that their view can be taken into consideration. For example, the selection process could include an informal chat with the existing partner who can then share with the panel if they have any concerns about compatibility before a final decision is made.

Application from an Established Job-Share Partnership

Job-sharing applicants should complete separate applications for the post but should make it clear that they are applying on a job-share basis and give the name of their partner.

All applications should be shortlisted individually first. If both partners are shortlisted then they should be invited to progress further (see below). If only one partner is short-listed then that partner may decide to either continue to the interview stage alone or withdraw their application.

The process for interviewing candidates applying as a job-share should reflect the basis on which they have applied, so that the recruiting manager can get a sense of the team working skills within the partnership and can judge the strengths and weaknesses they bring as a pair (as this is the basis on which they have applied).

If the interview process includes a presentation then the job-share partners should be invited to give a joint presentation, with extra time allowed so that they can both participate (i.e. for a 5-minute presentation they should be given 10 minutes).

For the interview itself some of the questions could be presented as joint questions and some questions put to each partner separately and alone (e.g. in a 9-question interview, 2 or 3 questions might be asked as joint questions but the remaining 6 or 7 would be put separately to both candidates in individual interviews).

- If both job sharing partners perform well at interview and they are ranked 1st and 2nd following the interview process then they should be offered the role on a job-sharing basis;
- If one partner is ranked 1st but the other is deemed "appointable" but ranked lower then the panel should average their scores from the individual questions to establish a combined score. The ranking should then be assessed using the combined score (i.e. treating the job-share as a single candidate) and the position offered accordingly.
- If one of the partners is individually ranked 1st, but the other performs badly during the interview (i.e. is deemed not suitable to be appointed), then the job cannot be offered to them as an existing job-share

partnership. The top performing partner should be offered the job on a full-time basis, but if they decline and it cannot be offered as part-time for business reasons then it should be offered to the next best candidate.



Other Considerations

Absence of a Job-Share Partner

It should not be assumed that job-share partners will automatically be able to cover for each other in the event of absence from work. However:

- Managers may ask a job-share partner to work more hours to help cover absence, and if they agree they should either receive overtime payment for the additional hours worked (at the appropriate rate) or receive time off in lieu;
- If one partner needs to be out of school for a planned reason (e.g. to attend a funeral, etc) then they may ask their job share partner if they would be willing to swap a day to avoid disruption to the school. It must be understood that the partner is under no obligation to agree to such a request and such arrangements are subject to approval from the Head Teacher.

Staff Meetings and Teacher Days

The School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) which specifies that a teacher cannot be required to attend work at any time on a day on which they are not contracted to work at some point. Since the academic year (including teacher days) is not made up of 39 x 5-day weeks, the number of instances of a particular weekday is not equal, with typically more Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays than there are Mondays and Tuesdays. It is therefore important to ensure that both partners work their fair proportion of each academic year and that both have proportionate opportunity to attend staff meetings training, parents evenings, etc. Arrangements for this should be discussed and agreed as part of the process for setting up a job-share arrangement and subsequently reviewed on an annual basis. Attendance for certain events could then become part of the job-share agreement and therefore become contractual even if the event falls on a day of the week when a teacher is not normally in school.

The rules for support staff are less prescriptive, but again it is advisable to agree expectations regarding attendance at meetings, training, etc at the outset.

Handover

Staff in a job-share there will need to be arrangements in place to ensure effective handover. This should be agreed with the job-share partners, and does not necessarily mean that their working hours need to overlap. Possible solutions where job-share partners have non-overlapping contracts may include:

- A handover book (or electronic document) that both partners can access and update daily to record progress and important information to be shared;
- Allocation within each teachers 1265 hours;
- Agreement that they will speak to each other outside of work in their own time;

PPA

Teachers will each have their own entitlement to PPA, reflecting 10% of their own timetabled teaching time.

It is not automatically necessary for both teachers in a job-share partnership to have their PPA at the same time, but where it is the custom of the school for PPA to be scheduled to facilitate team planning (e.g. by year group) then both partners should have proportionate opportunity to benefit from this. This must not be to the detriment of teachers not in the job-share, who should not be expected to go over the same thing twice (i.e. separately with each job-share partner).

One approach may be for both partners in a job-share to work during the PPA session. One will teach the class while the other has PPA, then in alternate weeks (or as appropriate to the division of their contracted hours) these roles would be reversed.

Resignation of a Job Share Partner

In the event that one partner in a job share resigns from the position then the following approach should be taken:

- The remaining partner should be offered the opportunity to increase their working hours and take on the whole job;
- If they do not wish to do this, then the vacant hours should be advertised as described above;
- If, after all reasonable efforts have been made, it is not possible to appoint a replacement job share partner then the job share role may be terminated. HR Advice should be sought if this looks a likely outcome.