

# GETTING YOUR FLEX MESSAGE RIGHT IN JOB ADVERTS

When offering flexible working in a job advert, it's important to put the message across in a way that is honest, positive and clear. This guide for employers shows you how.



## Developing your 'flexibility message'

It's a good idea to develop a company-wide 'blanket' flexibility message, as this will save time for your hiring managers. However, it's also important to adapt this to fit individual roles. A sentence that simply says your organisation is 'open to flexible working options' is often regarded with scepticism by candidates – especially those seeking a reduced hours contract. So adapt the message for each role, specifying the types of flexibility that will be considered in this instance (eg part-time, home-working, flexible hours, job share etc). Take a look at the example messages below.

### Sample statements you could use as a starting point:

At BUSINESS NAME we will consider requests for flexible working on hiring. For most roles, the following types of flexibility are usually possible: flexible hours, an element of working from home, compressed hours.

Many of our staff work flexibly in many different ways, including part-time. Please talk to us at interview about the flexibility you need. We can't promise to give you exactly what you want, but we do promise not to judge you for asking.

For this role we are open to discussing the possibility of reduced hours, remote working, flexible start and finish times, or compressed hours. Please wait until the job offer stage before asking us about flexibility, and we will explore what's possible for the role.

### Five questions to ask yourselves, to help your wording

1. Does your business have a good record on granting employee requests to work flexibly? What positive message can you give to candidates about your flexible working culture?
2. Do you already offer part-time or flexible working options in some of your job ads? What form of words is used, and is it sufficiently clear and positive?
3. For the winning candidate for a full-time job, would your organisation be willing to offer flexibility from the point of hire?
4. Can candidates ask about flexibility during the interview process, without fear of prejudice?
5. What advice would you give to candidates seeking flexibility, who see a full-time job advertised at your organisation?

# Other considerations

## How to reach candidates who need to work flexibly

Many candidates who need to work flexibly find the jobs market very difficult to navigate. Flexible jobs are few and far between; they're also difficult to find through the search functions of most jobsites.

You should therefore consider carefully where you want to advertise your roles. To attract the widest audience it may be a good idea to include jobsites that specialise in flexible roles, such as Timewise Jobs and Working Mums.

## Communicate flex on your website, and through your recruitment agencies

The career pages of your website are a great opportunity to build your employer brand as a welcoming, inclusive organisation. Make sure the messaging on your website is consistent with what you say in job adverts. You can also use the space to tell the stories of candidates you have hired in flexibly, or provide quotes from them.

And remember to talk to your recruiters – they need to know they can put forward candidates who are seeking flexibility. If they aren't in the loop, then they may turn away great people.

## What about jobs that can't be worked flexibly?

Don't worry - flexible hiring doesn't require an 'all jobs or no jobs' approach. Many organisations have roles where they feel they cannot offer flexible working. Honesty is what matters most, and you should continue to advertise these as full-time roles, with no mention of flexible working options as this would be misleading to candidates.



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