



EXECUTIVE EDUCATION MANAGING FLEXIBLE WORK NEGOTIATIONS: MAXIMISING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

OVERVIEW

Flexible work consistently ranks among employees' most valued job benefits. A manager who can negotiate customised work arrangements for their employees can increase their reportee's job satisfaction and commitment levels. Such frequent employee-manager negotiations to accommodate employees' flexibility requests helps to attract broader segments of the labour pool, progress more women into leadership roles, and retain mature-age workers beyond the traditional retirement age.

This course is designed for first-line supervisors and middle managers who find themselves in positions where they need to negotiate flexible and differentiated policy use and implementation for their own subordinates. This course will help participants to develop skills to "receive the ask" from both those above and those below you in the organisational rank – such that you can negotiate flexible work arrangements without compromising fairness and the bottom line.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

Individual

This program will provide participants with practical steps to implement evidence-based strategies derived from the field of psychology, particularly diversity and negotiation studies. You will learn from course facilitators and a diverse group of peer leaders. Participation in the program develops leaders and supervisors to:

- Become better at receiving or responding to flexible work arrangements requests;
- Identify strategies to encourage, engage and retain a diverse profile of employees while balancing employee well-being and organisational productivity criteria;
- Better handle upward, sideways and downward negotiations that are required in stakeholder management and essential to improving policy design and use.

Organisational

Participation of your leaders/supervisors in this program will equip the organisation to:

- Improve stakeholder management, create stronger workplace relationships and help to resolve conflicts;
- Retain a diverse profile of employees who are likely to become disengaged and unproductive if the managers are not skilled in negotiating flexible work arrangements;
- Develop a framework to understand how work policies need to be applied within effective manager-employee negotiations to balance employee well-being and organisational productivity criteria.

ASSESSMENT

This program includes practical class exercises during the class structure with no formal assessment. Upon successful completion of the program, participants will be awarded a Certificate of Completion.

ENROLMENT

Enrolments for the Managing Flexible Work Negotiations program can be submitted via the online enrolment platform. To learn more or enrol in the program, please visit unisa.edu.au/Managing-Flexible-Work-Negotiations

SNAPSHOT

Program Length.....2 days

Who is this program suited to?

Emerging and experienced leaders and managers.

Also available as a tailored program for organisations.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Day 1: **Strategies for managing flexible workplace arrangements**

- Framework for the key issues and challenges that emerge during manager-employee everyday negotiations;
- Evidence-based solutions for handling diverse requests for work arrangements;
- Traps to avoid during negotiations – especially in multi-party multi-issue negotiations;
- Building trust during critical conversations and the role of emotion, power, policies, practices and relationships;
- Strategies for managing emotions during sensitive conversations.

Day 2: **Strategies for upward, sideways and downward influence and persuasion**

- How to influence policy development and use;
- How to deal with multiple stakeholders and build strong coalitions with peers to develop creative applications of policies;
- How to balance fairness and equity while dealing with workplace arrangement requests;
- How to move beyond narrow implementation of policy to bending and shaping policy to improve employee well-being and productivity.

Most organisations invest considerable amounts of energy in crafting flexible work policies and promoting these policies among employees. Yet, employees frequently are unsuccessful in negotiating flexible work arrangements for themselves! One reason for this is that organisations usually invest less time in training managers to “receive the ask.” In the absence of skills and support, managers find it easier to say no and so organisational policies fail to have their intended benefits.

The solution lies in improving the quality of manager-employee negotiations, and one way in which this can be done is through targeted skill-building to help better prepare managers to “receive the ask” from employees.

UniSA research has found that managers perceive a series of challenges when faced with such “Asks”:

1. Managers’ performance metrics (or the performance metrics of their unit) are often not aligned with supporting flexibility requests (and even less frequently aligned with encouraging requests).
2. Managers feel uncomfortable with the personal (and even emotional) nature of flexibility requests.
3. Managers struggle to creatively customise work arrangements for different employee needs while maintaining fairness and equity across employees.
4. Managers perceive employees who request flexibility as potentially less committed to the job, especially in occupations where long hours of face-time is normative.

