



Formal Flexible Work Requests: A Two-Month Workflow

Description

Singapore’s Tripartite Guidelines do not require every request to be approved. They require a process: an employee submits a formal request with the arrangement and timing, the employer considers it properly, and the employer responds in writing within two months. A rejection should rest on business grounds.

formal flexible work arrangement request Singapore: the decision table

Situation	What to do
Request lacks schedule or duration	Return for completion promptly
Operational impact can be tested	Offer a time-limited trial
Request cannot be supported	Give the business reason in writing
Circumstances change	Review the arrangement against agreed checkpoints

Define the arrangement precisely

State location, days, hours, start date, duration and review point. “More flexibility” is not operational enough to assess.

Connect need with work design

Employees can explain how handovers, coverage, meetings, data access and performance will work. This turns a personal preference into an assessable plan.

Assess role requirements consistently

Managers should test customer coverage, team load, security, equipment, cost and supervision using the same framework across comparable roles.

Use a trial when uncertainty is measurable

A four- or eight-week trial can track output, service levels and team impact. The trial should not silently become permanent.

Keep the written record respectful

The response should state the decision, business grounds, alternatives discussed and review date. Avoid medical or family speculation beyond what is necessary.

Worked example

An employee proposes working from home on Tuesday and Thursday for eight weeks, with core availability from 10am to 4pm and named coverage for physical tasks. The manager tests missed service requests, response time and team redistribution weekly. The decision at week eight is based on the agreed measures, not impressions.

Turn the example into a decision record

The worked example is useful only if its inputs are replaced with the reader's actual dates, amounts, documents or observations. For this task—make a complete request and reach a documented, fair outcome within the guideline timeline—keep the decision and its supporting record on the same line. That exposes a missing input before the action becomes difficult to reverse.

Trigger or question	Current action	Evidence to retain
1. Request lacks schedule or duration	Return for completion promptly	Save the dated input, confirmation or advice that supports this choice.
2. Operational impact can be tested	Offer a time-limited trial	Save the dated input, confirmation or advice that supports this choice.
3. Request cannot be supported	Give the business reason in writing	Save the dated input, confirmation or advice that supports this choice.
4. Circumstances change	Review the arrangement against agreed checkpoints	Save the dated input, confirmation or advice that supports this choice.

Record where each answer came from and when it was checked. If a live service, signed document or professional opinion conflicts with a general webpage, preserve both and resolve the difference with the body responsible for the decision. Do not silently substitute a convenient number or date.

Action checklist

1. Use the organisation's formal channel
2. Specify type, schedule and start date
3. Explain work coverage
4. Acknowledge receipt
5. Assess consistent business factors
6. Respond in writing within two months
7. Set trial and review measures

Two practical tools to keep

A complete-request template. Put the controlling dates, amounts or observations in one place and attach the evidence beside each input. This makes the decision reproducible if a family member, colleague or adviser needs to check it later.

An eight-week trial scorecard. Test the ordinary case and the failure case before money, a filing or a booking becomes irreversible. Mark calculations as calculations and leave uncertain fields unresolved until an authority or qualified professional confirms them.

What the primary sources establish

Primary source	Claim used here
MOM flexible work arrangements	Formal request process, employer response and implementation date.
MOM FWA FAQ	No blanket approval duty and need for business-related grounds.

The links sit beside the claims they support. Live services, formal notices and individual facts can change the outcome, so re-open the controlling page immediately before acting.

Continue with the next useful step

For the adjacent task, read [the employer checklist for itemised payslips](#). If the decision moves into a different stage, continue with [the upcoming Employment Pass changes](#).

Errors that change the outcome

- Submitting a vague request
- Treating preference as entitlement
- Rejecting without business grounds
- Leaving the request unanswered
- Running a trial without measures

Keep dated records, confirmations and advice used for the decision. This article explains public information for a general fact pattern; it does not determine an individual legal, tax, medical, investment, employment or contractual outcome.

A final challenge before acting

The intended reader is an employee or manager handling a formal flexible work arrangement request. Before closing the task, challenge the file against the common failure points below. A “not applicable” answer should still have a reason, especially where a deadline, eligibility rule, payment, booking or safety decision is involved.

- **Have you ruled this out?** Submitting a vague request. Write down the fact or document that answers it; an assumption is not a completed check.
- **Have you ruled this out?** Treating preference as entitlement. Write down the fact or document that answers it; an assumption is not a completed check.
- **Have you ruled this out?** Rejecting without business grounds. Write down the fact or document that answers it; an assumption is not a completed check.
- **Have you ruled this out?** Leaving the request unanswered. Write down the fact or document that answers it; an assumption is not a completed check.
- **Have you ruled this out?** Running a trial without measures. Write down the fact or document that answers it; an assumption is not a completed check.

Escalate any unresolved consequential point to the named authority or an appropriately qualified professional. The aim is not to collect more material; it is to identify the one missing fact that could change the result.

Questions readers ask

Must every request be approved?

No. MOM says employers may reject on business grounds after proper consideration.

How quickly must the employer respond?

Within two months for a formal request.

Can employer and employee discuss alternatives?

Yes; a workable variation may address the same need.

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Author

rachelng