# **A Flexible Work Framework**

## Context

At Unito, we offer employees a few mechanisms for increasing the flexibility of their work schedules. This includes availability versus standard hours, optional four-day work weeks, and weekend swap days. Below you’ll find the framework we use for this flexible system. Hopefully it provides inspiration for how you might approach similar programs.

All of these are guidelines. They may vary from team to team, and managers have the final call for their team members. These will sound like common sense in many cases, but there’s no harm in being explicit!

## Daily Schedule

**We value the benefits of working on our own schedule, but also value the velocity gained and bonds built from spontaneous conversations.**

* Make yourself available between **10am and 4pm Montreal time** (ET) as much as possible to maximize overlap with the team.
* “Make yourself available” doesn’t necessarily mean you’re at your computer working, but it means coworkers can book you during those times.
* Set your available schedule in Google calendar, so colleagues can schedule without consulting.
* You’re expected to **attend your weekly team and all-hands meetings**. Recordings and minutes are not a replacement for presence; those are meant to cover for occasional absences and inform people outside your team.
* **We trust** that you’re working the optimal number of hours in your week.

## Work Days

**We’re a startup: We have to create a lot of value, fast, because growth is our oxygen. That means we expect hard work from each other, but we also acknowledge that for some people the usual Monday to Friday isn’t actually optimal.**

The standard week is Monday to Friday. That being said, a couple of variants are available depending on the specific needs of each individual, starting with the following.

### Optional 4-Day Week Program: reducing your workdays, workload, and compensation by 20%

**Program Eligibility:** Take these criteria as guidelines/benchmarks, more than hard limits. They are meant to frame the mutual discussion with your manager, who ultimately has the final call.

* **Tenure**: 1+ year in your current role at Unito  
  *Reasoning: you need to have mastered your role and given yourself the time to do so, before you reduce your exposure to that role.*
* **Role & team**: The impact of a role moving to 4 days will vary greatly based on that role’s type of work (planned, reactive, customer-facing, etc), its team size (is there redundancy) and team stage (how defined are processes). It’s the **manager’s responsibility to take all those in consideration** when considering someone for the program.

**Program Duration**: This program is a commitment between manager and employee, it can’t change on a whim.

* Program should be adopted for six, nine or 12 months. At the end of that period there’s a joint evaluation on how it went and whether to do another period. Renewal is not automatic.
* Stick to the same day off every week (with flexibility for exceptions).
* Be mindful of the team. These changes have impacts on project planning, resource management, hiring, budgeting, administration (e.g. payroll).

**Program Impact** on compensation:

* Salary, vacation, and wellness budget will be adjusted proportionally to the work days (80%), while insurance benefits stay the same. *This is not about cramming 5 days of work into 4 days. Otherwise we’re just putting more pressure on you. The workload follows, and therefore the salary does too.*

### Weekend Swap Program: swapping a week day with a weekend day

This program is similar to the 4-day week except you work either Saturday or Sunday instead of one work day.

* Refer to the 4-day week program eligibility & duration to guide you through this discussion with your manager, the same concepts apply. Again, guidelines, not rules. Use your judgement.
* There is no impact on compensation, vacation, or wellness funds.
* Note that this program is separate from occasionally swapping days for exceptional reasons, such as covering a holiday, handling an emergency, etc.

## Time Off

**Pushing hard is part of our startup DNA, but growth and creativity is impossible without rest. We must develop our ability to disconnect.**

* **When you are on vacation, be on vacation**. Turn off your notifications, and don’t log in. In this era of async, everything is at the tip of your fingers. To actually be off, your notifications need to be off too.
* **Give clarity on when you’re not working**: With this new framework of flexible schedules, you can’t assume anyone can tell whether you’re working or not.
  1. Over-communicate your availability. That also means over-communicate times when NOT available.
  2. When not available, make sure not to be in the critical path of work. Instead, delegate or pass on what you need to a colleague to ensure that everything runs smoothly when you are gone.
  3. State how to contact you in case of emergency, and Slack cannot be that mechanism. It could be a phone call or an SMS for example. It has to be reliable and rarely used by colleagues, so it’s clear it’s for emergencies only. Suggest: add an “urgent matters” field in Slack profile and provide an expected response time to set expectations.
  4. Respect other people’s time off. Whether it's someone on your team, your coworker, your manager, or anyone else, only contact for really urgent matters that 1) cannot wait for their return and 2) cannot be handled by someone else.