

Work Life Balance Reflection Guide

Purpose: To provide a blueprint for how you can advocate for your work-life balance in conversations with colleagues and supervisors. Use the questions and sample responses below to think about your work-life balance needs before a conversation with your supervisor.

What other roles, responsibilities, and priorities outside of work are important to me?

Examples include: spouse/partner, caregiver, self-care, student, volunteer, dual employment

When thinking about my work-life balance in the past year:

- What has worked well for me?
- What support has my department/supervisor given me?
- What challenges have I faced?

When thinking about my work-life balance for the coming year:

- What changes am I anticipating and how will they affect me?
- What practices can I or my supervisor put in place now to positively impact my work-life balance?
- What else can my supervisor do to support my work-life balance?

When thinking about my work-life balance for the past year:

What has worked well for me?

[caregiver] In the past year, my hybrid work schedule has allowed me to align my on-campus work with days when I would naturally be dropping the kids off at school. I've also been able to stack my project time with the days I work remote, where I have fewer distractions and I can get a lot more done. When life complications come up (doctor appointments, HVAC repairs, etc.) I am able to coordinate a work from home day with my supervisor so that I can address family and work needs.

[self-care] Flexible scheduling creates benefits that are as simple as healthier habits - more intentional and planned out meals are available to me when I am taking them at home.

What support has my department/supervisor given me?

[all roles] My supervisor gives me grace when factors external to work come up and trusts me to manage my workload to complete urgent priorities. I don't need to justify how I spend my time and I am given the freedom to adjust my work hours to manage both my workload and personal priorities.

What challenges have I faced?

[caregiver] Even though I've been able to align my on-campus days with my child's school schedule, those days are difficult because all the commute time compresses my work day. I try to get as much as I can these days but I experience a lot of stress/guilt because I can't work a contiguous eight-hour shift.

When thinking about my work-life balance for the coming year:

What changes am I anticipating and how will they affect me?

[student] My graduate courses for the coming semester are not offered in the evenings and the course I need to take is only offered from 9 - 10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the spring semester.

What practices can I or my supervisor put in place now to positively impact my work life balance?

[self-care, all roles] Set and articulate work communication boundaries with my supervisor. Establish ground rules for how I can be reached after hours. If something truly urgent needs my immediate attention you can reach me by phone, but I will stop checking and responding to email off hours.

[all roles] As someone whose role does include more on campus or in-person responsibilities, my supervisor can work with me on allowing for other flexibilities to maintain a positive work-life balance. We can establish other boundaries that fit my schedule and allow me to be productive when I am at work.

What else can my supervisor do to support my work-life balance?

[self-care] I get my exercise outdoors but during the winter it is hard for me to do that because I don't feel safe when it is dark out. I'd like to request a flexible schedule where I can shift some of my work hours to the morning or evening to make room for my exercise during the business day. I'd prefer to exercise in the morning and start my day later or to take an extended lunch and work later in the afternoon.