Part-Time Help Guide

SCHEDULE

1. Are there restrictions on when a participant can start work each day?

Yes, at least sixteen hours each week must be completed between 5:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and include 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. on either Tuesday or Thursday of each week. If the participant schedules more than sixteen hours in a week in their schedule of work, these hours may be worked between 4:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

While, within the above restrictions, part-time participants can vary their starting and ending times each day, they are encouraged to communicate their expected schedule to their supervisor.

2. Do participants have to select set hours to work?

No, under the program, participants need to choose how many hours they want to work on a day, but the starting and ending times are not fixed. Participants may also "mid-day flex" during their work day. For example, a participant who is scheduled to work 8 hours on a Monday may work from 4:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Note that only five of these hours would count toward the 16 hour requirement as explained in Question 1.

3. Is the part-time flexible schedule the same as IFP?

No, the part-time flexible schedule only allows the participant to have a flexible arrival and departure time. Part-time participants must indicate their schedule of work when applying for the program. The days worked may vary between the first and second weeks of a pay period, but the days from one pay period to the next may not vary. Participants cannot work on Sunday, work IFP credit hours, or, unless approved by their supervisor, change the number of hours they work on a given day.

4. Are participants eligible for IFP credit hours?

No, the part-time flexible schedule is not the same as IFP. IFP credit hours can not be earned or used under the Part-Time Program.

5. Can a participant work regular hours on Sundays?

No. A participant cannot work regular hours on a Sunday. See Question 1 above.

6. If a participant works more hours than his/her schedule of work with supervisory approval, is the additional work credited as overtime?

Not necessarily. The extra hours must be recorded as regular hours until the participant meets the overtime requirements, after which, any additional hours may be recorded as overtime.

7. Can a participant schedule and work extra regular paid hours?

Subject to prior supervisory approval, employee participant will be eligible to schedule and work additional regular paid hours when necessary to meet the needs of the Office or the participant (as long as work is available for the participant). The additional regular paid hours in excess of the participant's regular work schedule must be worked between the hours of 4:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Note: Part-time employees are prohibited from working a full-time schedule for two (2) pay periods in a row.

8. Are there limits on an employee's ability to modify their regular approved schedule of work?

Upon approval by the participant's supervisor, a participant may modify their regularly scheduled hours per week as long as the change does not result in an amended scheduled workday falling on a holiday or government closure. The change may not be used to habitually change the participant's regular work schedule.

For changes that are to be effective for the duration of the employee's participation in the

program, a revised Part-Time Request Form is to be completed indicating the change in schedule and forwarded to the Program Administrator at least one week prior to the beginning of the pay period in which the change will be effective. In addition, when the permanent schedule change also includes a change to the total number of hours to be worked in a pay period, then a Personnel Action Request (PAR) should be initiated by the employee's supervisor and forwarded to Human Resources.

9. If a participant works more than 64 regular hours in a pay period, is that employee considered to be on a full-time schedule?

No, the status of an employee is determined by the Personnel Action in the employee's official personnel folder. As a reminder, a part-time employee is not permitted to work a full time schedule for two or more consecutive pay periods.

10. What if the participant needs to make a change to the approved part-time schedule for the remainder of their term?

If the participant wishes to make a permanent change to their approved work schedule, a revised Part-Time Request Form must be completed by the participant and be approved by the participant's SPE/Manager and Director (or other Agency official having delegated authority) The Director, SPE/Manager or employee may then submit the form to the Part-Time Program Administrator.

NOTE: When the change results in a change of total hours worked in a bi-week, a new PAR must be submitted to Human Resources indicating the total hours to be worked. In addition, the employee's Web T&A timekeeper must also be notified in order to record the new hours into the PALM system.

COMPENSATORY TIME AND OVERTIME

11. Do the rules controlling comp time and overtime differ for part-time and full-time employees?

No, the regulations are the same for part-time and full-time employees. Please refer to the comp-time and overtime agreement for further information.

12. Can a participant work compensatory time on weekends?

A participant may work compensatory time on any day, but only if the compensatory time requirements are satisfied (i.e. must have advance supervisory approval and work minimum required hours).

HOLIDAY

13. Can a participant work on a holiday? If so, is it regular pay, holiday pay plus regular pay, or overtime pay?

Hours worked on a holiday should be recorded as regular time. If the participant works more than forty hours in the week, the additional hours worked on another day may be recorded as overtime.

14. Can a participant be paid for a holiday that is not part of his/her regular schedule if they work the day before or the day after the holiday?

No. A participant is only paid for a holiday if it falls on a scheduled workday and may only claim the number of hours stated in the schedule of work, up to a maximum of 8 hours. Participants scheduled to work more than 8 hours on a holiday may work the excess hours on a day during the pay period (including the holiday), take annual leave or take LWOP to make up the difference. The hours should be recorded as holiday leave. Any hours worked in excess of the up to 8 scheduled hours, must be recorded as regular time. See section 6 of the POPA Part-Time Program Agreement. See also section 9 of the agreement regarding amending the choice of workdays.

ELGIBILITY AND APPLICATION

15. What are the performance requirements to participate in the part-time program?

The performance requirements to enter the part-time program differ for the Retention component (at least Fully Successful) and the Child Care/Elder Care components (at least Marginal). For more information, please see section 5 of the POPA Part-Time Program Agreement for specific eligibility requirements.

16. What procedures should a supervisor follow when an employee requests part-time status?

To request participation in the program, the employee must:

a. complete the part time request form which is available online at http://ptoweb.uspto.gov/ptointranet/ohr/forms/form_part_time_request.xls;

b. Forward the completed form to their supervisor for verification of eligibility requirements on the form; and

c. The supervisor will then forward the form to their Director (or other Agency official having delegated authority), who will sign and date the form. The Director, SPE/Manager or employee may then forward the form to the Part-Time Administrator email box: Part-TimeAdministrator@USPTO.Gov

The form may be submitted electronically. E-signatures are permitted.

The Program Administrator will then determine whether a slot is available in the requested component.

If the request for part-time is approved by the Program Administrator, the Program Administrator will notify the employee and their supervisor. After which, the supervisor should initiate a PAR noting that the employee is converting to part-time and indicating the total number of hours that the employee will work each pay period.

In addition, the employee and their supervisor must ensure that the Web T&A timekeeper makes an entry in Web T&A reflecting the employee's part-time status and number of hours worked each pay period.

17. Is the receipt date for a part-time request form the date received by a Director or the date received by the Administrator for the part-time program?

The request form should be submitted to the employee's Director (or other Agency official having delegated authority). The date signed by that Director (or other Agency official having delegated authority) is the request form receipt date. Applicants should allow at least one full pay period for processing and must wait for approval from the Program Administrator prior to beginning to work a part-time schedule.

ADMINISTRATION

18. How are the hours worked by a participant recorded for PALM purposes?

The available hours should be adjusted to reflect the normal work schedule for the participant. For example, if a participant is on a part-time schedule working 20 hours per week, the available hours for the pay period should be adjusted to 40 hours.

The Web T&A timekeeper should adjust the hours in pay status based on the participant's part time schedule. Accordingly, it is important that the participant's time keeper be kept apprised of any permanent changes to a participant's work schedule throughout their participation in the program, including when the participant ends their participation in the program and returns to a full time schedule.

19. Is the difference in the part-time schedule of work and a full-time schedule recorded as LWOP on the employee's Web T&A?

No, definitely not. A participant's Web T&A is adjusted to their approved schedule of work. The difference from the days and hours of a full-time schedule are simply left blank on the participant's Web T&A. If they are mistakenly recorded as

LWOP, this must be corrected because it could create delays when the participant is eligible for his/her next within-grade increase.

20. Who should be contacted to solve T&A problems for participants, e.g. reporting overtime?

The participant, supervisor and the Web T&A timekeeper should work together to solve any T&A issues.

21. At the end of a part-time term (between 3-18 months), a participant must reapply in order to remain in the program. If a participant reapplies and all slots are already taken, what happens with that participant?

A current participant who reapplies at the expiration of their term retains their slot in the applicable part-time program if:

a. they are participating in either the Childcare/Eldercare component with a preschool-aged child or elderly relative or the Retention component and meet the retirement exception; and

b. they meet all other eligibility requirements at time of renewal.

If the current reapplying participant is participating in either 1) the Childcare/Eldercare component with a school-aged child; 2) the Retention component and does not meet the retirement exception; or 3) is moving from one component of the part-time program to a different component, their request form status will be the same as that of any new applicant. That is, if no slots are available, they will be placed on a wait list and shall revert to full-time status until a slot again becomes available.

22. If a participant's current term is about to expire or has already expired and they have inadvertently not reapplied, what happens to their status in the program?

If the current term is about to expire, the participant must reapply to continue on the part-time program or revert to full-time status. If the current term has already expired, the employee must submit a Part-Time Request Form and be placed in the queue of new applicants if a slot is not available.

PROMOTION AND WITHIN-GRADES

23. Is a participant's within-grade increase delayed when the employee converts to part-time?

No, if the time is recorded correctly. If the non-scheduled time was mistakenly recorded as LWOP, and, as a result, the within-grade increase was delayed, contact Human Resources.

24. Does converting to part-time increase the minimum waiting period for a promotion?

Part-time employees receive a full year service credit for every calendar year worked (regardless of tour of duty) for the purpose of computing service for completion of a probationary period and time-in-grade restrictions for career ladder promotions.

For promotions, employees must meet a time-in-grade requirement and a qualifying experience requirement for the next higher grade. For part-time employees, the time-in-grade requirement does not change. However, for the experience requirement, the employee's work would be prorated to determine when the employee will meet the qualifying experience requirement. For example, to meet the one year experience requirement for a promotion, a part-time employee would need to accumulate hours in pay status equivalent to that of a full-time employee, or 2080 hours.

Lastly, for examiners on the Signatory Authority Program, the program permits part-time employees to be on a 20 pay period trial period instead of the 13 pay period trial required for full-time employees. Please check with your SPE for further details.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

25. What are a participant's responsibilities when going part-time?

Participants should indicate in their voice mail greeting their schedule of work and the name and phone number of someone to contact (presumably your supervisor) if immediate assistance is needed on one of your unscheduled workdays. A similar notification should also be included in all Office actions sent by part-time employees.

26. How does part-time status affect assigning office space?

The Office will take into account each employee's seniority and work schedule when assigning office space. Part-time employees at the GS-13 and above level may be required to share an office when space needs dictate. Two participants may request to share an office and the request will be honored, if reasonable.

HEALTH/LIFE INSURANCE AND LEAVE

27. How does part-time status affect health/life insurance coverage and premiums?

The employer share (paid by the government) of these programs will be prorated based on the number of hours scheduled. Thus, the employee's share of these costs will increase. Please check with Human Resources for specific information.

28. How does part-time status affect annual and sick leave?

A part-time employee with less than 3 years of service earns 1 hour of annual leave for each 20 hours in a regular pay status. A part-time employee with 3 years but less than 15 years of service earns 1 hour of annual leave for each 13 hours in a regular pay status. A part-time employee with 15 or more years of service earns 1 hour of annual leave for each 10 hours in a regular pay status.

A part-time employee earns 1 hour of sick leave for each 20 hours in a regular pay status.

RETIREMENT

29. How does part-time status affect retirement?

A part-time employee is credited with a full year of service for each calendar year of employment.

NON-DUTY TIME TRAINING

30. Can a participant qualify for the non-duty hours technical training (i.e., tuition reimbursement)?

No, the Non-Duty Hours Technical Training agreement states that the employee must be a full-time employee.

31. Can a participant qualify for non-duty hours legal studies program (i.e., law school tuition reimbursement)?

No, the Non-Duty Hours Legal Studies Program agreement states that the employee must be a full-time employee.

TELEWORK

32. Eligibility for the Patents Hoteling Program (PHP) and Patents Telework Program (PTP) programs differ from the eligibility for the part-time program with respect to ratings. Are these different eligibility standards considered inconsistent?

No. Program participants must meet the eligibility requirements for each program in which they participate. These are not inconsistent requirements but are rather additional requirements for the particular program. For example, to participate in the PHP program while participating in the childcare component of the part-time program, an employee must have at least a Fully Successful rating of record required for entry into the PHP program (even though the childcare component of the part-time program only requires a rating of record of at least Marginal).

33. If a participant wants to participate in the Patents Hoteling Program (PHP), what

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additional requirements must the participant **satisfy?**

A participant must also meet all of the requirements for the PHP to participate in the PHP with the exception that, instead of working a full-time schedule, the employee must agree to work a part-time schedule of 32-64 hours per pay period.

34. If a part-time employee wants to participate in the Patents Telework Program (PTP), what additional requirements must the employee satisfy?

To be eligible to telework, a participant must meet all of the eligibility requirements for the PTP except for the requirement of being a full-time employee. The number of telework hours worked cannot exceed 40% of the participant's approved part-time schedule of work. In addition, participants on the PTP must work at least 16 hours per week at the USPTO headquarters/satellite office.

Below is a chart of the number of hours the participant can telework on the PTP based on the number of part-time hours worked.

Part-time Hours	Telework Hours	Part-time Hours	Telework Hours	Part-time Hours	Telework Hours
32	0	43	11	54	22
33	1	44	12	55	22
34	2	45	13	56	23
35	3	46	14	57	23
36	4	47	15	58	24
37	5	48	16	59	24
38	6	49	17	60	24
39	7	50	18	61	25
40	8	51	19	62	25
41	9	52	20	63	26
42	10	53	21	64	26

HELPFUL LINKS

Part-Time Request Form

POPA Part-Time Program Agreement