

# Ask the Career Coach: Flexible Work Schedules

I am interested in obtaining a flexible work schedule. Can you please help me understand what to consider?

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

I am interested in obtaining a flexible work schedule. Can you please help me understand what to consider?

A.B.  
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Some flex work schedules include reduced or compressed work week, working remotely or alternative shifts. Some employers recognize that many workers prefer schedules that allow greater flexibility in choosing the times they begin and end their workday. For some workers, however, the nature of their jobs requires a set schedule, such as in the medical profession or plant manufacturing.

A reduced work week is the option to work fewer hours than the standard work week. A compressed work week is working the full workweek schedule in less days (i.e. four 10-hour days or three 12-hour shifts), which is classic in hospitals for nurses. Many corporations offer professionals in certain positions the option to work remotely with the proper equipment and set up.

Most flexible work schedules are created or designed based on a need typically due to the company's budget, start-up demand and/or project based with a known or referred individual.

Many flexible schedules are offered to employees who have worked for a company and due to budget restraints may need to reduce their expenses while still needing the individual's knowledge and skills. This is a classic example of a flex schedule created based on the relationship between the boss and the individual.

To enter a company on a flex schedule is becoming more common as many start-up companies are in need of your skills but cannot afford a full time person yet. Another common example of a flex hire is for a merger and acquisition or divesture phase of a business deal. This is more often for a contracted time period and may be as a temporary employee or as a consultant.

As the relationship status changes from employee to consultant it is important to outline expectations and determine how you will be compensated. You may be offered compensation on an hourly rate or on project completion. If you are working for a temporary agency, many agencies now offer benefits after working for them for a designated time period. As an independent consultant you may need to buy your own benefits. As a consultant, you may be asked to sign certain agreements, such as a non-compete, confidentiality and inventions. Review these carefully and consider reviewing them with an attorney to understand the legal jargon.

As an employee or as a consultant, you may want to consider what certifications will enable you to stand out from the crowd. Determine the benefits of these certifications and who requires them. Speak with hiring managers, recruiters (corporate, contingency, temporary or retainer) who will understand what skills are in demand currently. Plan your approach to obtaining your certifications if you determine you want to pursue certifications. To pitch the certification, place it on your resume under "Professional Development & Education" listing the certification title followed by either "in progress" or "anticipated in (date)"—this will show your commitment to your profession.

*"Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to [CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com](mailto:CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com).*

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