

Statement on Professional Scheduling
UT Extension
October, 2015

The purpose of this statement is to clarify expectations of the work hours of Extension Agents and other exempt professional employees (including Specialists and Administrators). The issue is whether exempt staff are expected to work during the normal office hours in addition to evenings and weekends in conducting meetings and activities.

UT Extension supports an appropriate balance of work and personal life for all employees. Extension employees' work schedules are often dictated by the availability of clientele and the nature of educational programs. It is not unusual for exempt personnel to work during lunch hours, evenings and week-ends. While working these hours supports achieving work objectives, it is also important to maintain balance between work and personal time. For example, if exempt employees are working evenings or weekends to conduct meetings, it is acceptable for them to flex their time during the normal work day. However, clientele regularly visit the office or call during normal office hours, and employees should make every effort to be available during those hours.

The application of professional scheduling is a matter of judgment on the part of professional employees and should be reviewed with the respective supervisor. Professional scheduling is not designed to equitably compensate (hour for hour) for work outside normal office hours (i.e. compensatory time). As exempt employees, agents and other professional staff do not qualify for compensatory time. Although the 40-hour work week is the minimum expectation, agents, specialists, and administrators, have responsibilities that typically require more than 40 hours per week, some of which are scheduled at times other than the normal work day. Administrative support staff members are non-exempt employees and are eligible for compensatory time and are expected to work 40 hours per week during normal office hours.

Agents and other exempt employees should always keep supervisors, co-workers, and administrative support staff apprised of their work schedules. Professional courtesy requires that everyone communicate with their office team in advance when they will be on leave or away from the office during normal office hours. Controlling schedules to best meet the needs of clients, while achieving balance in work and personal time, is not only healthy for the individual, it is healthy for Extension as an organization.

County Directors and other supervisors should support professional scheduling by discussing expectations regarding office hours, work hours, communication plans, and leave requests to support work and family balance while also ensuring accountability for all employees. Professional scheduling absences are typically 1 to 3 hours and occur on an infrequent basis. Extended or lengthy absences should be requested and scheduled as leave.