

KPMG: Flexi Hours and Part-Time Work

KPMG is a global network of professional firms providing Audit, Tax and Advisory services. We have more than 162,000 outstanding professionals working together to deliver value in 155 countries worldwide.

“Gender equality is not only a strategic business imperative for KPMG, it’s also the right way to do business. At KPMG we embrace gender equality and inclusion at our work place. This will improve our ability to attract, retain, and advance a more innovative and diverse workforce and leadership team. Diversity also affords us an opportunity to engage our clients and our people, and create the shared value that benefits our communities.”

- Datuk Johan Idris, Managing Partner

“Diversity & Inclusion is no longer a “nice to have” but a “must have” in today’s organization. The workplace has evolved and in order to remain relevant to today’s workforce, we must be in tune with what is important to them and have the right policies in place to attract and retain our talents in the long run.”

- Adrian Lee, Partner in charge of People, Performance and Culture

Overview

KPMG in Malaysia provides audit, tax and advisory services. Established in 1928, not only is our firm one of the oldest in Malaysia, but also the oldest KPMG firm in the Asia Pacific region. With approximately over 1,900 staff positioned in 8 offices nationwide, our goal is turn knowledge into value for the benefit of our clients, our people, and the capital markets.

KPMG is committed to helping businesses respond to changes in the global economy. We are also committed to fostering an environment where our people can flourish and contribute to a sustainable world. The KPMG culture is rooted in our values. We build trust and collaboration through open and honest communication.

Our flexibility and diversity create a culture where people share knowledge freely and bring out the very best in each other. When asked why they choose to work with KPMG member firms, many clients cite our high level of professional ethics, loyalty and approachability.

Objectives

In the early 1900s, it was a common view that accounting was an eccentric choice of profession for women. Sir William Peat, one of KPMG’s founding fathers, as President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), championed changing the Institute’s rules to permit the admission of women. The first woman to qualify as an accountant was employed by his son, Sir Harry Peat. From the start, it was clear that championing diversity is in our DNA and that value still holds true today.

At KPMG in Malaysia, we know that there is work to do, and we are taking action now to close the gap. KPMG in Malaysia now boast a total of 30% female population amongst the Partners and over 33% females in Senior Management role. Besides that, KPMG in Malaysia has most recently elected Chan Siew Mei to become the first female Head of Advisory in the Firm, a great achievement at a time when KPMG embraces Diversity and Inclusion at the workplace.

Various forms of flexible work arrangement has always been in practice in KPMG but the KPMG Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA) was officially formalized in February 2015 with the objective of encouraging a flexible approach and arrangement for staff to have a more varied schedule as opposed to complying with the standard working arrangement.

In an effort to identify and understand the needs of our staff, a bi-annual Global People Survey (GPS) is conducted. Through analyzing the results of the GPS and the feedback of our staff, KPMG's Talent Management team, with the support of the People, Performance & Culture (PPC) Management committee, formalized the FWA to acknowledge and recognize the changing needs and commitments of our staff.

Ultimately, the FWA is part of the Firm's Talent Management strategy and an initiative driven to improve the general well-being of KPMG staff, improve the working environment in the office, increase staff engagement, as well as improve staff recognition and staff retention.

Initiatives

Aimed at encouraging a flexible approach or arrangement that allows KPMG's employees to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life, the KPMG FWA offers two options as follows:

Flexi Time

- **Flexi Hours**
Flexibility to choose and adjust daily working hours. Staff will be given the option to commence work between 7.30am and 9.30am; with at least 8 working hours a day.
- **Reduced/Part-Time Working**
Flexibility to work less than KPMG's standard full-time hours (i.e. work shorter days or work fewer days weekly).

Flexi Arrangement

- **Unpaid Leave**
A temporary non-pay status and absence from work for up to a maximum of six (6) months.
- **Career Break**
A leave of more than six (6) months and up to a maximum of one (1) year time out from employment with no pay for staff with clear intent of returning to work.

All confirmed and full time employment employees are eligible to apply for any of the FWA options, subject to terms and conditions highlighted in the FWA policy. In general, the Firm will look into business requirements, allocation of resources and workload within the department to ensure that there will be no detriment to the Firm's businesses prior to confirming the FWA arrangement with the staff.

Outcome

While only 2 months old, the result of the FWA is already evident and very promising. It has assisted in retention as discussion with staff with intention to resign has resulted in staff

deciding to opt for the FWA as an alternative means of taking a career break without compromising on job security.

We are also looking at an increasing demand from staff seeking a Flexi Time arrangement in order to meet their varied personal schedules, especially those involving family matters and health issues. The initiative ensures that staff has sufficient flexibility to cater to their personal needs while remaining in the workforce and continuing to contribute to the firm.

Another positive outlook is an improvement on staff engagement as they are receiving recognition for their work while having a flexible work arrangement. We expect an increase in employee engagement in the next survey results.

Interviews

Interview with Shirley Chong, Assistant Manager – Audit Assurance.

Short description of your current responsibilities in the firm:

I have been with KPMG for 4 years and 3 months and am currently holding the position of Assistant Manager – Audit Assurance. I have various responsibilities in my role, including the reviews of audit files and financial statements, coaching junior staff and providing them with adequate guidance, assisting Managers and Partners in various functions, and many others.

Which FWA arrangement are you engaged in?

I have decided to take up the flexi arrangement – Career Break option and will be away for up to 7 months.

Why did you opt for the FWA?

I have earlier contemplated putting in my resignation as I have the intention of taking a break from my career. I have plans to go on an extended holiday before rejoining the workforce thereafter. However, the possibility of not being able to get a job after the holiday is definitely a concern in the decision making process of taking a career break. The FWA provides me with job security after returning from my break so I can have peace of mind during the holiday. I am happy that the top management of the firm welcomes my return after the break and it also shows that the firm values my contribution all these years by offering this option.

Do you have any additional thoughts to share about FWA?

I feel that this program provides an option for staff to achieve work-life balance. It is an option for those who would like to have a few months' break so that we can come back refreshed. I am pleased that KPMG has granted me this program and acknowledge my contribution to the firm for the past 4 years.