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**How to manage a career break**

Staff may wish to take a career break during their working life for many reasons such as travel, to spend time with children, to undertake a period of study or to carry out voluntary work. Staff at the University who have more than two years’ service may apply for a career break. During a break the member of staff is not paid but will continue to be an employee of the University and will normally return at the end of the agreed break.

On request for a career break, managers should consider:

* What are the potential benefits of the career break (eg creating development opportunities for other team members, introduction of new skills on the return of the member of staff)?
* What are the potential detrimental impacts of the career break (difficulties in covering the work, impact on students or other colleagues)?
* How long is the proposed career break and how does this impact on the benefits or impacts?

If a career break is agreed, managers should:

* Notify HR and arrange for a letter to be sent to the member of staff clearly outlining the terms of the career break and any mutual expectations, as well as the impact on benefits and pay.
* Agree how the member of staff will keep in touch with the workplace and relevant developments. This could include being kept up to date on projects or pieces of work, attending conferences, events or social occasions, the provision of newsletters or being copied minutes of team meetings.
* Agree how a return to work will be managed in due course.
* Discuss how work is to be covered and engage the member of staff in handover plans and arrangements.
* Agree a communication plan for colleagues and students.

The granting of a career break is at the discretion of the manager. See the Career Breaks Policy for more information.