

## Career Break Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Manchester Conferences (UMC) Limited (“The Company”) recognises that there may be a number of (personal or professional) reasons as to why an employee may wish to take a break from their employment
- 1.2 Under such certain circumstances The Company may agree to an employee’s application for a career break.
- 1.3 Career breaks can help to retain the experience, knowledge and skills of employees that may otherwise be lost to the company.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1 The opportunity to apply for an extended (unpaid) career break is open to any employee who has two years continuous service or more with the company.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 A manager will consider a request for a career break from the employee and arrange to meet with them in order to discuss and duly obtain the full details concerning the request.
- 3.2 Following the meeting with the employee, the manager will consult (even if briefly) with the UMC-designated HR Partner and, then, duly respond in writing to confirm their decision to the employee.
- 3.3 Where a career break is agreed, the manager must ensure that there appropriate arrangements are made during the career break to:
  - i. Cover the employee’s work;
  - ii. Keep in touch with the employee;
  - iii. Facilitate the employee’s eventual return to work.
- 3.4 Any employee wishing to apply for a career break must do so in accordance with this policy

- 3.5 If the requested career break is agreed, the employee must agree arrangements with their manager for keeping in touch during the period of the career break.

#### **4. General Principles**

- 4.1 Career breaks can be granted for a maximum period of 2 years at the discretion of the Head of Hospitality & Events.
- 4.2 All career break requests will be reasonably considered provided that the necessary information in support of the request is clearly stated preferably at the time of the submission of the request; no decision will be made until this information is received.
- 4.3 Employees will continue to receive information from the company during their absence that is relevant to their employment and which is also circulated to their colleagues, as far as is reasonably practical,
- 4.4 Employees will be encouraged to remain in contact with their organisational unit during their career break.
- 4.5 Employees who take a career break will be required to attend work to update their skills and familiarise themselves with changes in the work environment for one week per year of absence by arrangement with their manager; pay will be provided at the rate of pay equivalent to their salary prior to the period of the career break.
- 4.6 Continuity of employment will be preserved during the career break, but entitlement to and accrual of annual increments, annual leave and long service leave will be suspended until the employee returns to work.
- 4.7 On their return to work members of an employee will receive the same salary that was applicable when the leave of absence started, increased by any appropriate cost of living awards that have been made during the period of leave.
- 4.8 An employee who is returning from a career break will be re-employed in their original post wherever possible; should the post no longer be available the employee will be employed in similar work on terms and conditions that are no less favourable than if they had not been absent; suitable training will be provided as necessary.
- 4.9 Should a change in circumstances occur for the employee who is on a career break, whereby they need the period of leave to end sooner than originally agreed, one month's notice of intention to return to work will normally be required.

- 4.10 The return to work interview checklist available on the University Intranet (“StaffNet”) provides a useful tool for line managers to assist employees in making a successful transition back into work following a long-term absence.
- 4.11 Career breaks may affect pension contributions and associated benefits (e.g. death in service benefit), in which case employees will be advised to refer to the rules of the relevant scheme, and to take advice where necessary; further information can be sought from the University Pensions Team or from the scheme provider.
- 4.12 Where an employee has salary sacrifice benefits (e.g. cycle to work scheme) they will be responsible for continuing to make the payments during the career break.
- 4.13 Where an employee decides not to return to work following a career break, they should resign from their position giving the appropriate notice detailed in the contract of employment.
- 4.14 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, an employee will only be permitted one career break in a five year period.

## **5. How to apply**

- 5.1 Applications for career breaks should be made by the employee writing to their manager in the first instance.
- 5.2 A career break should normally be applied for at least three months prior to the proposed start date.
- 5.3 The written application should detail the amount of leave requested, the proposed start date and may specify the reasons for the request if the employee wishes to do so.
- 5.4 The manager will normally meet with the employee to discuss their request, and this should be followed by consultation with the UMC-designated HR Partner before a decision is made and duly confirmed to the employee by the manager.
- 5.5 Where a career break is agreed, HR should be informed and they will write to the employee, setting out the agreed terms of the break.

## **6. Appeals**

- 6.1 An employee has the right to appeal the decision regarding a career break application within 10 working days of it being notified to them.
- 6.2 The intention to appeal should be put in writing by the employee to their manager and copied to the UMC-designated employee.

- 6.3 A representative from the Human Resources team (not previously involved with the application) will review the application and arrange to meet with the parties involved within 10 working days of receipt of the application to appeal; whereby the employee may be accompanied by either their Trade Union representative or an appropriate work place colleague.

| Document control box                               |                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Policy / Procedure title:                          | Career Break Policy                      |
| Date approved:                                     |                                          |
| Approving body:                                    | UMC Ltd Board of Directors               |
| Version:                                           | 1                                        |
| Supersedes:                                        | N/A                                      |
| Previous review dates:                             | N/A                                      |
| Next review date:                                  |                                          |
| Equality impact outcome:                           |                                          |
| Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations: |                                          |
| Related policies:                                  |                                          |
| Related procedures:                                |                                          |
| Related guidance and or codes of practice:         |                                          |
| Related information:                               |                                          |
| Policy owner:                                      | UMC-designated HR Partner                |
| Lead contact:                                      | Andrew Stephens, Human Resources Partner |