



## **Career Break Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The University recognises that there are a number of personal or professional reasons why a member of staff may wish to take a break from employment and under certain circumstances offer career breaks for these individuals. Career breaks can help to retain the experience and skills of staff that would otherwise have been lost to the University.

### **2. Scope**

- 2.1 The University makes this opportunity available to all staff who wish to take extended (unpaid) career break who have more than two years continuous service at the University.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of managers to consider any requests for a career break from their members of staff, and respond accordingly. Where a career break is agreed, the manager must ensure that there appropriate arrangements are made to cover the individual's work during the break, keep in touch with the member of staff and then facilitate their return to work.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of members of staff to apply for a career break in accordance with this policy and, in the event that a career break is agreed, take steps to keep in touch with their manager and workplace during the break.

### **4. General Principles**

- Career breaks can be granted for a maximum period of 2 years at the discretion of the Head of the organisational unit\*.

- All requests will be reasonably considered provided that the necessary information in support of the request is made available.
- Staff on a career break will continue to receive copies of any information circulated to staff, where practicable, during their absence and will be encouraged to remain in contact with their organisational unit.
- Staff on 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 the organisational unit. Pay will be provided in accordance with the rate of pay equivalent to the salary payable prior to the period of the career break.
- 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 during the period of leave.
- On their return to work members of staff 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.
- The member of staff will be re-employed in their original post wherever possible. If this post is no longer available the member of staff will be employed in similar work on terms and conditions no less favourable than if they had not been absent. Suitable training will be provided as necessary.
- It is recognised that a change in the employee's circumstance could result in the need for absence ceasing earlier than the period initially granted; in such circumstances the employee must provide at least one month's notice of intention to return to work to their head of school / department for approval. Requests to return early will be accommodated where operationally possible.
- The return to work interview checklist available on StaffNet provides a useful tool for line managers to assist staff in making a successful transition back into work following a long absence.

- Career breaks may affect pension contributions and associated benefits (e.g. death in service benefit). Staff are advised to refer to the rules of the relevant scheme, and take advice where necessary. Further information can be sought from the Pensions Team or from the scheme provider.
- Where a member of staff has salary sacrifice benefits (e.g. cycle to work scheme) they will be responsible for continuing to make the payments during the career break.
- Where a member of staff 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.
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, staff 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 in writing to the manager in the first instance. The written application should detail the amount of leave requested, the proposed start date and may specify the reasons for the request if the member of staff wishes to do so. The manager will normally meet with the employee to discuss their request. A career break should normally be applied for at least three months prior to the proposed start date.
- 5.2 After due consideration that manager should confirm the decision to the member of staff. Where a career break is agreed, HR should be informed who will write to the individual setting out the agreed terms of the break.

## **6 Appeals**

- 6.1 This policy provides a member of staff with the right to appeal the decision within 10 working days of it being notified to them. The intention to appeal should be put in writing to the line manager.
- 6.2 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. The member of staff may be accompanied by either their Trade Union representative or an appropriate work place colleague.

- 6.3 The Human Resources representative will notify the member of staff of the outcome of the appeal in writing within 10 working days of the meeting at which point the decision made will be final.

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Career Break Policy
Date updated:	March 2018
Approving body:	HR Sub Committee
Version:	5
Supersedes:	Career Break Policy 2014
Previous review dates:	2008
Next review date:	March 2020
Equality impact outcome:	Low
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	
Related policies:	Maternity Leave Policy & Procedures Adoption Leave Policy & Procedures Paternity Leave Policy & Procedures Flexible Working Policy & Procedures Parental Leave Policy & Procedures
Related procedures:	
Related guidance and or codes of practice:	
Related information:	
Policy owner:	Director of Human Resources
Lead contact:	Gemma Dale