

Policy

Title: CAREER BREAKS

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THIS POLICY IS THE LATEST VERSION & SUPERSEDES ANY OTHER POLICY THAT YOU MAY HAVE IN YOUR TERMS & CONDITIONS BOOKLET

A Career Break gives staff on leaving University employment the right to prior consideration for vacancies if they wish to return to the employment of the University after their Career Break.

The University is prepared to consider applications for Career Breaks from established staff regardless of the number of hours they work. The reason for requesting a Career Break should normally fall into one of the following categories but requests for other reasons may be considered in exceptional circumstances:

- To care for (a) pre-school child(ren)
- To care for an elderly relative
- During a serious illness of a child or close relative
- To study for further qualifications
- To travel abroad (including visits to relatives overseas and to accompany a partner working abroad).

Staff who will have completed 5 years' service by the date they wish to commence the Career Break may be granted a Career Break of between one and three years.

Staff who are taking Maternity Leave under the University's provisions may apply for a Career Break provided they meet the criteria outlined above. The Career Break should normally commence at the end of the period of Maternity Leave. It should be noted that staff taking a Career Break immediately after Maternity Leave will only be entitled to SMP payments, not University Maternity pay as they will not meet the return to work requirements of the provisions for University Maternity Pay.

Staff taking a Career Break will have the right to prior consideration for any available suitable vacancy to return to employment with the University. This may be to their previous post or to a similar post on the same grade. The member of staff will be informed when the Career Break is agreed whether it is anticipated that it will be possible for them to return to their previous post.

Applications for Career Breaks should normally be made at least 6 months in advance (using the appropriate form) and should be discussed initially with the Head of Academic Unit or Professional Service.

Issues to be considered before a decision is made will include the staffing situation in the Academic Unit/Service, arrangements for keeping in touch during the Career Break and whether the member of staff can retain the right to return to their current post.

Normally a decision will be made within 2 months of the date of submission of the application and the outcome will be notified by the Human Resources Department.

If the Career Break application is accepted it is expected that the staff member will resign from their post. Once the resignation has been accepted the staff member will receive a letter of intent from the School/Service stating the terms of the Career Break and explaining the intention to re-employ them at the end of the Career Break. Please note that continuity of employment will not normally be preserved.

Staff who are paying Superannuation should discuss their situation with the Superannuation Section prior to the commencement of their Career Break. The University will not maintain Superannuation contributions during a Career Break.

Staff will usually have an annual meeting with their Head of Academic Unit or Professional Service or another designated person, at which arrangements for keeping up to date will be discussed.

The University reserves the right to terminate the Career Break arrangement if the member of staff:

- fails to cooperate in meeting the updating and other provisions of the scheme
- takes up any form of paid employment without obtaining prior permission from the University.

The member of staff should give an anticipated date of return when they apply for a Career Break. They should normally give written confirmation of their return date 6 months before they wish to return, to enable appropriate arrangements to be made. If, at any time during the Career Break staff decide that they do not wish to return to work they should inform the Human Resources Department as soon as possible. The Human Resources Department will be responsible for organising the return to work of staff not returning to their previous post.

Staff able to return to their previous post will return to work on their previous grade and incremental point. For staff not able to return to their previous post, the University will seek to identify a suitable position which will enable staff to return on their previous grade and incremental point.

If no suitable post is available for staff unable to return to their previous post, staff may be offered a lower graded post (at the salary appropriate to the lower graded post). If there is no alternative post available when the member of staff wishes to return to work, the member of staff will be informed.

Staff returning to work after a Career Break will be required to serve a further qualifying period of five years before being considered for another Career Break.

A maximum of 2 Career Breaks may be taken.