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## Special Unpaid Leave for Career Breaks

### 1. Purpose

To set out the University policy with regard to career breaks.

### 2. Scope

#### 2.1 Eligibility

Full time or part-time members of staff employed on a permanent or contract of indefinite duration basis or staff on a fixed term contract who have satisfactorily completed their probation are eligible to apply for a career break.

#### 2.2 Objective

The objective of the scheme is to facilitate staff who wish to take career breaks in so far as practicable having regard to the operational needs of the University.

A career break may be allowed for most purposes including further education, domestic responsibilities, starting a business or a stay abroad. Career breaks will not normally be granted for the purpose of taking up alternative employment unless the employment is specifically related to University needs or is an integral but subsidiary arrangement essential to the individual's capacity to discharge the primary purpose of the career break.

Career breaks may also be allowed for appropriate research activity but academic staff are reminded that Special Leave of Absence arrangements exist for clearly defined research or other academic related purposes.

#### 2.3 Duration

A career break shall consist of special leave without pay for a period of not less than one year and not more than three years.



#### **2.4 Concessionary Scheme**

The career break scheme is concessionary and may be terminated or altered at the will of the Board of the University. The granting of any application will depend on the merits of the application and on the demands and requirements of the University at the time of application. Within the foregoing limitations the University will endeavour to facilitate staff as far as possible but refusal of some applications must be expected.

#### **2.5 Return to Work**

Staff returning to the University after a career break will be re-assigned to their home department to a fillable vacancy at the appropriate grade within that department. Delay in returning to duty is likely to arise only in exceptional cases.

**2.6** A staff member who is absent on career break ( or any other form of long term leave) in excess of two full years will be required, prior to return, to undergo a medical assessment by the University's Occupational Health Physician and deemed medically fit to return to work.

#### **2.7 Pensions and Other Matters**

Special leave without pay for a career break will not be reckonable as service for superannuation, incremental or other purposes. Cover for death-in-service benefits will be suspended for the duration of the career break. Private provision should be made to continue Death in Service Benefit and/or income continuance (disability pension cover) for the duration of the special leave period. It is recommended that staff seek a full health assessment from their GP before taking a career break. Remission of tuition fees will be suspended for the duration of the career break unless there is specific agreement by the University to do otherwise.

### **3. Applications**

Application for special leave without pay for career breaks should be made to the Head of the School/Head of Administrative & Services Area in the first instance, and should state the purpose of the career break and the period of time for which it is sought by completing the attached career break application form. The granting of a



career break is subject to recommendation by the relevant Head of School/Head of Administrative & Services Area and formal approval by the Faculty Executive/ Chief Operating Officer.

### 3.1 Processing of Applications

- (a) **All Staff.** In every case, proposed career breaks and any consequent replacements (whether full or partial replacements), will be subject to approval by the Faculty Dean/Divisional Chief Officer.
- (b) **Technical/Administrative/Services Staff.** The Head of School / Head of Administrative & Services Area will assess, in consultation, as appropriate with Human Resources, the general feasibility of each request taking into account the work needs of the School/ Administrative & Services Area, the possibilities with regard to replacement arrangements and any other relevant matter. Applications for approval shall be submitted to the Divisional Chief Officer/ Faculty Executive Committee.
- (c) **Academic Staff.** The Head of School will assess the feasibility of applications from academic staff, in consultation as appropriate with Human Resources. The Head of School concerned shall submit their recommendations and requests for approval to the Faculty Executive Committee.
- (d) **All staff.** When a Career Break is approved a confirmation letter is issued to the staff member by Human Resources. If a Career Break is declined the staff member will be updated by their Line Manager.
- (e) **All Staff.** In every case **the staff member is required** to notify their Head of School/Unit/Area in writing at least 12 weeks before expiry of the career break, to indicate whether or not they wish to apply for an extension, resume duty on expiry of the career break, or resign from the University. Please note that if the staff member fails to contact their Head of School/Unit/Area before the expiry of their career break, they will be deemed to have resigned from the University.



### Special Unpaid Leave for a Career Break Application Form

#### Section 1:

To be completed by the Applicant in full

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Staff Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date of Career Break: \_\_\_\_\_ Return to Work date: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of Career Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Any previous Career Breaks: \_\_\_\_\_ If Yes, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of the Career Break: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to the terms & conditions as laid out in the University's Career Break Policy:

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section 2:

To be completed by Head of School or Head of Administrative & Services Area

I recommend that \_\_\_\_\_ be granted a Career Break as outlined above

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Is a replacement required for this post? Yes/No

If Yes, please specify details \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Section 3:

To be completed by the Faculty Dean/Divisional Chief Officer

I note and approve the above Career Break as specified above and approve the consequential filing of the vacancy as outline above (if applicable)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return to: The HR Service Centre, Human Resources, House 4.**