

Unpaid Career Break Guidance (For Staff with Caring Responsibilities)

1. Introduction

This document provides guidance on the operation of the Unpaid Career Break Policy for staff with caring responsibilities.

2. Process

A request is completed by the employee and approved by the line manager. If the career break has been granted, the People Hub are notified to provide additional approval, in turn the Staff Payments Office are notified to ensure the correct salary deductions can be made.

3. Guidance/considerations

Operational considerations will be taken into account by line managers where an application for unpaid leave under the Career Break Policy is made.

Line managers should be supportive of such requests where this is feasible, whilst having the discretion to determine whether institutional needs might mean a particular request cannot be endorsed, particularly in a small sub-unit.

A fixed-term appointment will normally be made to the post in which the career break is occurring.

Unpaid leave granted under the career break provision would be separate from any maternity/adoption/shared parental leave provision, but could be continuous from the end of the leave period.

Any request to return prior to the end of the agreed career break would be subject to the written agreement of the University.

4. During the career break

It is important that contact is maintained during the career break so that individuals are kept up-to-date with University matters. This may include provision of relevant University and/or unit documentation (e.g. updates, newsletters).

Members of staff on a career break are:

- Expected to contact their line manager at the end of each year to confirm that it is still their intention to return;

- Normally expected to attend the University either in person or virtually on four days (which will be paid) a year for training and updating or other development needs as identified by their line manager. Reasonable notice will be given.
- Free to apply for advertised posts. They would, however, if successful, have to accept the position at the time of offer and take up duties when required.
- Responsible for checking the position regarding benefits and/or National Insurance contributions during the career break.

5. Pension arrangements

As membership of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) is suspended during a period of unpaid leave, pensionable service and life assurance cover will stop unless the individual makes separate provision for the maintenance of pension or life cover. These can be maintained provided that the member of staff is willing to fund both the employer and employee contributions. Alternatively, life cover and incapacity cover could be maintained by payment of life assurance premium. A member of staff who wishes to make separate payments or requires further information regarding pension arrangements should contact fbs-pensions@open.ac.uk.

6. Useful references

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