UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

## WORK/LIFE BALANCE POLICIES

## UNPAID CAREER BREAK APPLICATION FORM

To apply for a career break this form must be completed and sent to your Discipline Lead/Dean/Director for consideration. The member of staff should provide reasonable notice of the request for an unpaid career break.

**Section 1 - Applicant**

Name...........................................................................................................................................

School/Directorate………............................................................................................................

Current Post…… …. ………………………………….………………………………………………..

Current Hours of Work/FTE % ……………………………..............................................

Type of Employment Contract: Permananet [ ]

 Fixed Term [ ] until…………………………………..

1. Date requested career break to start from?.................................................................

2. Proposed length of the career break?

 ………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. **Reason for applying for a career break,** please outline the potential benefits of the proposed career break to you, your School/Discipline/Directorate and the University:……

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What practical difficulties or problems might arise from the proposed career break with respect to the School/Discipline/Directorate and/or your colleagues, and how might these be overcome?......................................................................................

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..............................................................(Signature of Applicant)........................................(Date)

**Section 2 - Discipline Lead/Dean/Director**

1. Suitability of applicant for a career break (where it is considered unsuitable please give reasons)

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2a. Suitability of arrangements proposed by the applicant (where arrangements are not suitable please state why)

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2b. Where arrangements proposed by the applicant are not suitable please state any arrangement which would be acceptable.

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3. Any additional comments ………………………………………………………………..

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4. I support the application in full to take place effective from --/--/-- / ending on

 --/--/--

 I support the application in part (please specify including relevant dates)

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 …………….………………………………………………………………………

 I do not support the application (please specify)

 …………………………………………………………………………………….

 …………………………………………………………………………………….

.....................................(Signature of Discipline Lead/Dean/Director)…..........................(Date)

 **Copy to: 1. Applicant**

1. **Human Resources**

**(see over for Guidance Notes and Procedure)**

**GUIDANCE NOTES AND PROCEDURE**

**GUIDANCE NOTES**

The University recognises a range of flexible working practices and provides an option for employees to request an unpaid career break.

The Unpaid Career Break Application Form is intended for use when an employee wishes to request a career break.

Reasons for a career break may include:

* **Domestic or caring responsibilities\***
* **personal study**
* **training or development (relevant to your work at the University)**
* **to fulfill an ambition or to participate more fully in an activity or interest not related to work**

The purpose of a career break is not to allow people to leave to work with another organisation. However, an exception to this may be where, for example, work overseas or charitable work offers the opportunity to broaden experience.

The University of Dundee will consider Employment/Career breaks of up to three months although longer breaks may be considered depending on the circumstances, for example, caring responsibilities. To be eligible to apply, an employee must have at least 26 weeks continuous service with the University. An employee can apply for a break only once every 12 months of service. The application should be made, wher possible, six months in advance.

Applications for Career Breaks are welcome from all staffing groups, and no application will be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, sexual orientation or age.

**PROCEDURE**

## Requests for a Career Break

The applicant completes section 1 giving details of the career break and for how long they are requesting, with an outline of the effect the career break will have on the Discipline/School/Directorate.

The completed form should then be sent to the Discipline Lead/Dean/Director.

The Discipline Lead/Dean/Director must fully consider the applicant’s request and assess the current role of the individual. Account should be taken of the duties, responsibilities, and regular commitments which the individual has. Consideration should be given to the flexibility of the role, the possibilities for redistribution of workload during the requested career break period. There is no need to meet with the member of staff if the request is to be approved, although it is recommended that a meeting does take place to discuss the arrangements.

Where it is felt that the role does not lend itself to the proposals, a meeting should take place so that consideration can be given to any alternative flexiblie working arrangements which could be accomodated. In these circumstances, the Discipline Lead/Dean/Director should meet with the member of staff to discuss their request within **28 days** of receipt of the application and should notify the employee of their decision, in writing, within **14 days** of that meeting

The completed Application Form should be sent to Human Resources. If the application has been accepted, written confirmation including the effective date(s) should be highlighted to Human Resources in order that the appropriate contract amendments can be made.

It should be noted that, whilst the University will seriously consider each application and, where possible, support the member of staff by agreeing to the request, the member of staff does not have a right to work flexibly and the University, therefore, reserves its position to decline a request if it is not operationally possible.  Any request that is declined will be for one of eight business reasons as set out in legislation (ACAS Code of Practice) <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/f/e/Code-of-Practice-on-handling-in-a-reasonable-manner-requests-to-work-flexibly.pdf> and as detailed under the Flexible Working Policy (Section 13).

If a request for a career break is declined, the member of staff is entitled to appeal in accordance with section 14 of the worklife balance policy.

**\*Unpaid Career Breaks for Caring Reasons**

An unpaid career break for caring reasons for up to 12 months is available to all employees who have been continuously employed by the University for 26 weeks.

If the University agrees, employees can take a shorter period of leave. However, the University can refuse (on reasonable grounds) to allow employees to take an unpaid career break for caring reasons of less than 13 weeks and will give the reasons for the refusal in writing.

The adult for whom the member of staff cares for must be 18 or over and a;

* Spouse, civil partner or partner
* Near relative (parent, adult child, sibling, aunt, uncle, grandparent or any other adoptive, step or in-law relation)
* Dependant adults living at the same address

The Unpaid Career break application form should be submitted alongside a letter from the employees GP confirming the details of their caring responsibilities.

An employee cannot have made a similar request for a career break due to caring reasons during the previous 12 months although exceptional circumstances may be considered.

*May, 2016*