Career Breaks
For
Academic Staff
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This policy outlines the process for eligible academic staff who wish to apply for a career break.

1.2 For the purpose of this policy, an academic is defined as those serving in academic grades from Assistant Lecturer to Senior Lecturer III.

1.3 Research staff are not comprehended by this policy as the nature of the work is determined by project funding and research requirements. Requests from research staff to avail of a career break should be addressed by the appropriate Head of School/Function, and if approved, the principles of this policy may apply.

2. **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

2.1 A career break shall consist of special leave without pay for a period of 1 year to a maximum of 5 years for the following reasons:

- family reasons
- other domestic reasons
- travel
- educational purposes
- voluntary service overseas
- employment in the private sector or becoming self-employed

2.2 There must be no existing or potential conflict of interest between the activity or employment in which the employee proposes to engage or engages in during his/her career break and his/her position in DIT.

2.3 A career break for an academic runs for the academic year i.e. 1 September to 31 August.

2.4 In exceptional personal circumstances management may allow an academic to commence a career break during an academic year and terminate not earlier than the end of that academic year. This is deemed to be a 1 year career break.

2.5 A career break cannot be granted for the purpose of taking up a job in the public sector; or in an organisation where the pensions transfer network applies; or where a state superannuation scheme applies.

2.6 An academic staff member with a minimum of 2 years continuous service may be granted special leave without pay for a career break. Periods of (a) statutory leave under the Maternity Protection, Adoptive, Carers and Parental Leave Acts, and (b) other special leave without pay for periods of less than six months, do not break continuous service. He/she must also be employed on a whole-time or pro-rata basis with a fixed-term, specified purpose, permanent or CID contract.

2.7 The applicant must be in a position to resume duty following career break before their maximum retirement age (where a maximum retirement age exists).

2.8 If a staff member on a fixed term or specified purpose contract is granted a career break and their contract expires during this period, then both the contract and career break expire together.

2.9 Where a staff member applying for career break is on temporary assignment to a post in a higher grade, this temporary assignment will cease on commencement of the career break. The staff member will revert to their substantive post on resumption of duty following career break.
2.10 The decision to grant or refuse a career break to an applicant will be the decision of management having regards to operational needs.

2.11 Posts vacated by staff taking career breaks may be filled on a specified purpose basis in accordance with the principles of the Resource Planning Framework. A specified purpose appointment for the purpose of covering a career break does not confer any right to appointment to future approved vacancies.

2.12 A staff member who has been granted a career break may not undertake any employment within DIT.

2.13 A staff member on career break remains an employee of DIT and is subject to all relevant legislation and procedures.

2.14 An employee will not accumulate service while on career break – this means that the length of the career break will not be counted as service for example:

- for increment purposes;
- for annual leave purposes;
- for superannuation purposes [see section 6 below for alternative arrangements].

2.15 While on career break an employee shall be eligible to apply for internally and externally advertised competitions by DIT. It is the staff member’s responsibility to make themselves aware of such competitions. All competitions will be advertised on the HR website or in accordance with normal DIT procedures.

2.16 Where a staff member’s application for career break is approved, their annual leave balance will be re-calculated up to the commencement date of the career break. Where it is found that a staff member has overtaken their annual leave entitlement, the overpayment amount will be brought to the attention of the staff member and the full amount owing will be deducted from final salary before commencement of their career break.

2.17 A staff member on a career break who intends to resign from his/her post must do so in writing to his/her Head of School/Function.

3 APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1 A staff member seeking a career break must complete the Career Break Application Form which can be found at the end of this policy.

3.2 An application for a career break should be made to the Head of School/Function by 1 March prior to the commencement of the following academic year. Management may accept a lesser period of notice in exceptional circumstances.

3.3 The Head of School/Function and Director will consider the application having regard to operational needs.

3.4 If an application for a career break is approved by the Head of School and Director, the completed application must be forwarded to Resourcing, Human Resources, 143-149 Lower Rathmines Road, Dublin 6.
3.5 On receipt of a completed application HR will confirm in writing to the staff member and relevant Head of School/Function and Director the precise conditions of the career break and notify payroll to cease pay for the period of the career break.

4 RESUMPTION OF DUTY / APPLYING TO EXTEND A CAREER BREAK

4.1 All staff on career break are required to give at least 3 months’ notice prior to the expiration date of a career break, of their intention to re-commence duty or to apply for an extension. This notice must be submitted in writing to Resourcing, Human Resources. Failure to comply with this requirement without a reasonable and acceptable explanation, may be regarded by DIT any time thereafter as a formal offer of resignation with effect from the last day of the career break. The effect of such resignation will be given in writing to the staff member by HR.

4.2 Permanent/CID staff have an entitlement to resume duty at their substantive grade on the termination of the approved period of the career break. Fixed term/specified purpose staff may return on a fixed term/specified purpose basis to work out the duration of their fixed term/specified purpose contract.

4.3 All staff resuming duty following career break are obliged to accept the terms and conditions of service pertaining to their grade at that time. DIT reserves the right to issue a new contract of employment to the staff member should it consider this necessary. In such circumstances, the staff member may not be permitted to resume duty until such a time as he/she has signed their contract of employment.

4.4 Requests to resume duty early following a career break will be considered in the first instance by the Head of School/Function in conjunction with HR.

4.5 All staff should note that salary will only recommence upon resumption of duties.

4.6 Where an extension is being sought, the approval of the Head of School/Function and Director is required and Human Resources will engage with management in this regard. The staff member will be notified when a decision has been made.

4.7 A staff who has a fixed term or specified purpose contract who wishes to apply for an extension to a career break must have a contract that will run for at least twelve months from the termination of the extended period of the career break.

5. DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

5.1 It is advisable that all staff taking a career break maintain entitlements to social welfare benefits by payment of voluntary contributions to the Department of Social Protection. For further information, please contact the Department of Social Protection.

6. PENSIONS – RECKONING PERIOD OF CAREER BREAK FOR SUPERANNUATION PURPOSES

6.1 Various options are open to staff who take a career break and who wish to reckon the period of a career break for pension purposes. This can be done by paying additional contributions, which are based on notional service purchase rates, either while on career break or on resumption of duty.

6.2 Queries relating to pension should be directed to Pensions, Human Resources, 143-149 Rathmines Road, Dublin 6 or pensions@dit.ie
QUERIES
Contact: Resourcing, Human Resources
E-Mail: hr@dit.ie
# CAREER BREAK
## APPLICATION FORM

- Before completing this form, please refer to the Career Break policy – HRP009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To be completed by the Staff Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name (in print):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff No:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function/School:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact No:</td>
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### Purpose of Career Break
- Family Reasons
- Other Domestic Reasons
- Education Purposes
- Voluntary Service Overseas
- Employment in the private sector or becoming self-employed

### Proposed Dates for Career Break

<table>
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<td>from_________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>to_________________________</td>
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(Minimum 1 year)

I understand that an approval for this period is no guarantee that any extension sought will be granted.

I confirm that there is no existing or potential conflict of interest between the activity or employment in which I intend to engage while on career break with my position in DIT.

I understand that I am required to give at least 3 months notice prior to the expiration date of my career break, of my intention to re-commence duty or to apply for an extension. This notice must be submitted in writing to Resourcing, Human Resources. Failure to comply with this requirement without a reasonable and acceptable explanation, may be regarded by DIT any time thereafter as a formal offer of resignation with effect from the last day of my career break. The effect of such resignation will be given in writing to the staff member by HR.

I have read, accept and agree to comply with all of the principles of the Career Breaks policy.

**Signature of Staff Member:** ___________________________  **Date:** ____________

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<tr>
<th>To be completed by relevant Head of Function /Head of School</th>
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<tr>
<td>I certify that I have approved the above special leave without pay in accordance with the Career Breaks policy.</td>
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**Signature of Head of Function/School:** ___________________________  **Date:** ____________

**Signature of Director:** ___________________________  **Date:** ____________

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<tr>
<th>To be completed by HR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have verified the completed Application Form received from the Head of Function/School/Director</td>
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</table>

**Signature of Head of HR or nominee:** ___________________________  **Date:** ____________

*Please note that this leave may be terminated if it is not used for this purpose as indicated above. Any staff member found to abusing this leave may be subject to serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.*