

Career Break

INTRODUCTION

1. Staff other than Academic Staff can avail of special unpaid leave for a career break.

ELIGIBILITY

2. All permanent UCC employees who have satisfactorily completed their probation and have not reached the minimum retiring age are eligible to apply for special leave for a career break.

ENTITLEMENT

3. A career break shall consist of special leave without pay for a period of not less than one (1) year and not more than five (5) years. The initial career break may be for a period of one (1) year, or for periods in excess of one (1) year, up to a maximum of five (5) years. A career break may be extended in six (6) monthly periods, or in periods in excess of six (6) months, provided the total period of special leave without pay does not exceed five (5) years in all.

4. One additional career break may be granted provided the period of service between career breaks is equal to the duration of the initial career break, and that the total period of the special leave does not exceed five (5) years in all.

GUIDELINES

5. A career break may be allowed for such purposes as further education, domestic responsibilities, third world assignment, self-employment or a stay abroad.

6. The application should be made at least three (3) months before the required starting date.

7. The granting of any application will depend on the merits of the application and on the requirements of the applicant's School/Department/Unit. A career break must be sanctioned by the Head of School/Department/Unit and the terms agreed in advance. Staff will be facilitated as far as possible but the demands of the service may require that some applications may be declined.

8. If the career break period is of one (1) year duration, the staff member may, with the agreement of the Head of School/Department/Unit, return to the post held at the commencement of the leave period. If however the career break is of more than one (1) year's duration, the staff member will not be entitled to return to the post held at the commencement of the leave period.

9. The onus is on the staff member concerned to inform the Department of Human Resources at least two (2) months prior to the last day of the career break that:

a. In the case of a one (1) year career break, that they are returning to duty on the completion of the career break **or** are seeking an extension

b. In the case of a career break in excess of one (1) year, that they are available to return to duty at the end of the career break or are seeking an extension. In the absence of such notification, it will be assumed that the staff member concerned has resigned.

10. Staff returning to duty after a one (1) year career break will, where possible, be assigned to a post in the same grade if their own post has been filled. In the case of staff on a career

break in excess of one (1) year, they will be obliged to await a suitable and fillable vacancy in the same grade. No guarantee can be given that such a vacancy will be available.

11. Special leave without pay for a career break will not count as service and will not reckon for superannuation, incremental credit, service pay or towards qualifying for annual leave or other service based allowances.

12. Health Insurance Cover (VHI) may be continued during the career break and, if required, should be arranged directly with the local V.H.I. Office. It may be possible to have contributions for this scheme deducted in advance from salary, provided arrangements have been made directly with the Payroll Office at least two (2) months before departure.

13. The Personal Accident Scheme insurers provide cover for a career break of one (1) year's duration. If cover is required, the full premium for the year (i.e. inclusive of College contribution) must be paid in advance. Employees wishing to make such arrangements should contact the Payroll Office.

14. Income Continuance Plan Cover will be provided by the Insurers for a career break of one (1) year's duration, provided that the contribution is paid in advance before leaving or paid directly to the insurers. Employees wishing to make such arrangements should contact the Payroll Office. Group Voluntary Life Insurance must be paid directly to UCC rather than to the insurers.

15. Voluntary Life Assurance cover will be provided by the insurer in the case of a Career Break of one (1) year's duration, provided the contribution is paid before the leave commences.

16. Annual Leave entitlements will be paid after the first year if the career break is to be extended beyond one (1) year. If the employee returns after one year, a maximum of ten (10) days annual leave may be carried forward to the year of return. If there is a negative annual leave balance at the commencement of the career break, the relevant deduction will be made to the last salary payment.

17. The University may, from time to time, make any special leave arrangements outside the Career Break scheme deemed necessary to meet particular requirements in any area of the University's service.

PROCEDURE

18. A written application, stating the purpose of the career break and the period for which it is sought, should be submitted to the Head of School/Department/Unit for approval.

19. Once approved by the Head of School/Department/Unit, a letter of confirmation of career break approval should be forwarded to the Department of Human Resources, along with the staff member's initial letter of application.

20. The approving School/Department/Unit is expected to receive three (3) months' notice of an application. This will ensure that a suitable replacement is recruited, if necessary.

21. Once applications and approval has been received, confirmation and details will be sent to the applicant.

22. The staff member should make arrangements directly with the Payroll Office regarding the various deductions while on career break.

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