**CAREER BREAK FAQs**

The following information summarises the key points in relation to career breaks at Queen’s University. These should be read in conjunction with the Career Break Scheme which can be accessed [here](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/DiversityandInclusionUnit/FileStoreMisc/FileStore-Work-LifeBalancePol/Filetoupload%2C759009%2Cen.pdf).

**WHAT IS A CAREER BREAK USED FOR?**

* A career break enables members of staff to take an unpaid break from their career. It is allowed for purposes such as caring or domestic responsibilities, further education or any other reason the University considers appropriate under the remit of the scheme.
* A career break is not permitted to undertake other alternative salaried or wage-earning employment unless prior written approval has been obtained from the Director of Human Resources.
* The Director of Human Resources will consult with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for Academic Planning, Staffing and External Relations[[1]](#footnote-1) in respect of permission sought by members of academic staff.

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**All members of full-time and part-time staff who have satisfactorily completed their probationary period may apply for a career break.It is unlikely that staff on a fixed term contract will be granted a career break, given the nature of the work.All requests will be reviewed on an individual basis taking into account the business needs.

**CAN SOMEONE APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL?**Where a request for a career break is refused, the member of staff has a right to appeal against the decision.The appeal should be made in writing to: The Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for Academic Planning, Staffing and External Relations[[2]](#footnote-2) if the appeal is from a member of Academic staff: or the Registrar if the appeal is from a member of staff other than a member of Academic staff.

**IS THERE A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF CAREER BREAKS?**There is no limit set out in the policy on the number of times a member of staff can take a career break.

**CAN SOMEONE EXTEND THEIR CAREER BREAK?**A career break may be extended twice for a period of not less than one year on each occasion provided the total period does not exceed three years in total.Only in the most exceptional circumstances will consideration be given to an extension of a career break beyond a total of three years.

**CAN SOMEONE ON A CAREER BREAK APPLY FOR A POST OR PROMOTION?**A member of staff on a career break may apply for any advertised post in Queen’s that may arise during the break. If he/she is appointed to such a post, the career break will be cancelled.A member of academic staff on a career break will not normally be considered for the annual academic promotion exercise or regrading during the career break. However, for staff research and scholarly activity carried out while on a career break may be taken into account for promotional proposes on return to work.

**CAN A PERSON RETURN TO THEIR OWN JOB AFTER A CAREER BREAK?**

* All efforts will be made to assign a member of staff returning from a career break to his/her former post, but no guarantee can be given about this. Where it is not possible to do so, he/she will be assigned to a suitable post and may be offered a post at a lower grade, until a post of an equivalent grade to the original post becomes available.
* Where the member of staff is assigned to a post at a lower grade than his/her former post, the member of staff will receive a salary commensurate to the salary of his/her original post protected for 2 years.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF A MEMBER OF STAFF ON A CAREER BREAK DECIDES TO RESIGN?**If a member of staff on a career break decides to resign from his/her employment with the University, he/she must inform in writing, where possible, at least three months before he/she would have been due to return to work of his/her intention to resign from the post. The policy contains guidance on the process.

**WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR APPLYING FOR A CAREER BREAK?**

* An application for a career break should be made to the Head of School/Director giving at least 3 months’ notice, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so;
* Applications from a member of staff in a school will be considered by the relevant Head of School. Applications from a member of staff in a Directorate will be considered by the relevant director.
* Application forms for a career break or a career break extension are available on the Diversity and Inclusion Unit’s website [here](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/DiversityandInclusionUnit/PoliciesandProcedures/WorkLifeBalancePoliciesApplicationForms/%22%20%5Cl%20%22d.en.759334). The forms should signed by the Heads of School/Director and returned to HR.
1. At the time of writing, this accurately reflects the Career break policy but may change when policy is reviewed. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As before. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)