

CAREER BREAKS FOR TEACHERS AND ASSOCIATED PROFESSIONALS

Dundee City Council recognises that flexible employment practices are key to ensuring that the education service in the city continues to attract and retain hard working and skilled professionals who are committed to raising attainment and achievement of pupils. This approach is consistent with the general principles of collegiate working, where the personal autonomy and aspirations of teachers and associated professionals are valued and respected.

As part of its commitment to engendering a diverse workforce and promoting a work-life balance, the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers has agreed a scheme for the delivery of a career break option for teachers and associated professionals, hereafter collectively described as employees. The provision for Career Breaks now comes under Part 2, Section 9, paragraph 9.21 of the SNCT Handbook and the scheme can be found in Part 2: Appendix 2.15. A copy of the Handbook is available in each educational establishment or can be found at www.snct.org.uk.

The following is a summary of the scheme along with an application form for those employees wishing to apply.

Definition of a Career Break

A career break is defined as a period of special leave without pay providing an opportunity to do voluntary work, travel or study etc. Breaks can also be used to extend maternity/paternity or adoption leave. This type of break, which can extend up to 5 years, can also be used to take care of children (or other family members) but should not be confused with existing arrangements for dealing with unexpected or sudden problems with family members.

Eligibility

Employees are required to have at least 2 years' current continuous employment, on a permanent or temporary basis, with any Scottish council. Teachers are required to have at least 2 years' continuous employment following full registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland. (Educational psychologists, QIOs, education support officers and music instructors need not be registered with the GTCS). The needs of the pupils and the exigencies of the service will be taken into account when an application is being considered for approval.

Duration and Frequency

A career break will last for a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 5 years. Within a 20 year service period an employee may be granted a single 5 year break or may be granted a maximum of 3 shorter breaks, the cumulative total of which must not exceed 5 years. The employee must undertake a minimum of 1 year's continuous service with any Scottish council between career breaks.

With the exception of staff undertaking a career break immediately after maternity leave the start of a career break will coincide with the start of a term. For staff wishing to undertake a career break directly after maternity leave, the break will commence immediately after they have taken and been paid for their accrued annual leave.

Extension of or Reduction in the Duration of a Career Break

Once on a career break an employee can request an extension or apply for an earlier return to work, within the guidelines laid down in the scheme.

Contact During Career Breaks

Prior agreement has to be established regarding maintaining contact during the break where the employee can be kept up to date with work related issues. Recommended arrangements are set out in Annex A to the scheme.

Conditions of Service

Although service either side of a career break will be treated as continuous service for statutory and contractual purposes, the period of the career break is not a period of employment and will not count towards reckonable service.

Entitlement to annual leave during the leave years in which the career break commences and ends will be calculated pro rata to the part year period of service. Annual leave entitlement cannot accrue during the break.

For associated professionals entitlement to public holidays will only be for those public holidays which occur during the part year of service.

The period of the career break will not be recognised for incremental progression of pay, qualification for and entitlement to sickness allowance or annual leave entitlement. However, the career break will be taken into account in relation to compulsory transfer arrangements where applicable.

All occupational remuneration such as entitlement to Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP) or Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) will be suspended during the break and will recommence when the teacher returns to work.

Pension Rights and National Insurance

During a break, as employees are not able to contribute towards their pension scheme nor make national insurance payments, they are encouraged to contact the appropriate agencies for advice.

Paid Employment During a Career Break

Employees can undertake alternative employment while on a career break, subject to prior agreement. However, it should be noted that a career break should not normally be used to undertake alternative full-time employment.

Return to Work

Breaks of 2 years or less: An employee will be offered the right to return to the post which s/he held prior to the break and confirmation of their return to work must be given 3 months prior to the agreed return date.

Breaks of more than 2 years: An employee is entitled to be redeployed, although not necessarily to the post vacated prior to the career break, but to an equivalent post of the same status. A teacher on the Main Grade Scale or on the Chartered Teacher Scale will be returned to a post of the same remuneration. A Head Teacher, Depute Head Teacher or Principal Teacher should be offered an equivalent post. As promoted posts are subject to job sizing, conservation of salary as laid down in Part 2, Section 1.6-1.66 of the SNCT Handbook will apply.

It is the responsibility of Teachers and Associated Professionals to maintain appropriate professional registration (e.g. GTC(S)) during a career break. If registration has not been maintained at the time of return to work, the employee will not be in a position to return, on such occasions the employee will either be suspended on an unpaid basis or as an alternate to suspension be deployed to alternate support staff duties if these are available. If the alternate to unpaid suspension is available the member of staff will be paid at the rate for the post and not their own rate.

Non Return to Work

Employees wishing not to return to work must provide contractual notice.

Application, Decision and Appeals

Application should be made on the appropriate form and submitted at least 3 months prior to the proposed date of commencement. The date of commencement being sought should correspond with the beginning of a school term.

A written response, setting out the decision in principle, will normally be given within 4 working weeks. Any decision to refuse the application will be given in writing.

An employee who has been granted a career break and who, prior to the date of commencement, decides not to proceed must give 4 working weeks' notice of this.

Where an application is rejected, the employee can appeal, in the first instance to the Executive Director of Children and Families' Service and thereafter, through the council's appeals procedure.

Dundee City Council Children and Families' Service
Career Breaks for Teachers and Associated Professionals

Procedure:

Applicants should complete part A and give to Head Teacher/Head of Establishment.
Head Teacher/Head of Establishment will provide comments on operational issues associated with this request and pass to the appropriate Head of Service who will authorise and send to Corporate Business Support for processing..
Corporate Business Support will record decision in part C.
Applicants will be notified of decision thereafter.

Part A

Name of Applicant

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Current Post

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School/Establishment

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Reason for break

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Proposed start date of break

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Length of break (in years and months)

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Have you been granted a break before? YES / NO

If yes, please provide details with dates

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Contact details during break

Address:

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Telephone number Email address

All applicants: I confirm that I have at least 2 years' current continuous employment, on a permanent or temporary basis, with any Scottish Council.

For teachers only: I confirm that I have at least 2 years' current continuous employment following full registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

All applicants: I have read and understood the Career Break Scheme as contained in the SNCT Handbook of Conditions of Service for Teachers.

Signature of applicant..... Date.....
(this must be at least 3 months before proposed start of break)

Part B

Comments of Head Teacher/Head of Establishment on any operational issues associated with this request.

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Signature of Head Teacher/Head of Establishment.....

Date.....

Part C

Decision of Head of Service

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Signature of Head of Service.....

Date of Decision.....

Agreed start date of break (this must coincide with the start of a term)

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Agreed finish date of break

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