



**Isle of Man  
Government**

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# Public Services Commission

## Career Break Policy and Procedure

### Office of Human Resources

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## **1. Policy statement**

The Public Services Commission (PSC) is committed to equality of opportunity in employment for all its staff and to developing work practices that support work life balance. The Public Services Commission has developed a career break policy and procedure to enable employees to take extended periods of unpaid time away from work to help and support employees strike a balance between paid work and personal life.

The Career Break Policy will apply equally to all employees of the Public Services Commission.

There is no contractual entitlement to a career break. Any approval of a career break will be subject to service delivery needs being met.

## **2. Aim**

The aims of the Career Break Policy are to attract and retain staff by demonstrating a commitment to their long term career and personal development in order to reduce the numbers of leavers thereby saving on recruitment and training costs.

## **3. Career Break Conditions**

- 3.1 Employees must have three years or more continuous service before any request for a career break can be made.
- 3.2 Employees may apply for a career break of between three months and one year in a five year period, only one career break will be granted in any 5 year period.
- 3.3 A career break may be taken in addition to maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave or parental leave but may not normally within three months of return from any such period of leave.
- 3.4 A career break could be taken for any of the reasons listed below, or simply to have a break from paid employment. Possible reasons for a career break could include:
  - To undergo a university or college course
  - Childcare or other family responsibilities
  - To pursue a personal interest
  - Overseas travel
  - Any other purpose agreed with the employer
- 3.5 Requests for a career break may not be granted where:

- An employee is subject to internal procedures such as disciplinary, capability, grievance or fairness at work procedures.
- It is not possible to secure temporary cover for the employee or not possible to secure such cover at similar cost.
- There is an operational need for the employees involvement in key areas of service delivery which require their specific skills or continuity of service

The above list is not exhaustive.

## **4. Conditions of service during a career break**

- 4.1 Career breaks are unpaid
- 4.2 The period of the career break will count as continuous service for statutory purposes however contractual terms based on length of service will not accrue.
- 4.3 During a career break an employee will not accrue contractual annual leave.
- 4.4 A career break is not counted as reckonable service for pensions purposes.
- 4.5 Supplemental pension benefits, such as Death in Service benefits will be affected during an employee's career break as the employee will be treated as a deferred member of GUS<sup>1</sup> It is recommended that an employee contact the Public Sector Pension Authority for more information when considering a career break.
- 4.6 Salary and allowances will not be paid during the career break. Incremental scale point and salary point will be frozen during the career break. An employee returning from a career break will be placed on the same salary scale and point as when commencing the break. Any incremental date will be adjusted to account for the break.
- 4.7 There will be no entitlement to sick pay during a career break and employees will not be required to report period of sickness unless this is likely to prevent return to work on the agreed date.
- 4.8 If applicable the employee may be required to be available for work for an agreed number of days during a career

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<sup>1</sup> Unpaid breaks of more than 12 months will result in membership to the GUS scheme being terminated from the date on which the unpaid leave commenced.

break, for example to ensure they remain up-to-date with training requirements. Employees will be given appropriate notice of a requirement to attend work, the notice period will be agreed with management prior to a career break being granted. The employee will be paid at their normal rate of pay for any hours they are required to attend.

- 4.9 An employee will not take up any employment with another employer during a career break without prior agreement with Accounting Officer. Work for another employer will not be approved where this presents a conflict of interest with remaining in the employment of the Public Services Commission.
- 4.10 Whilst undertaking a career break, employees must recognise that they are still in active employment with the Isle of Man Public Service and must continue to adhere to the Isle of Man Government Code of Conduct for Public Servants and other relevant corporate policies and procedures.
- 4.11 Failure of an employee to adhere to the Isle of Man Government Code of Conduct for Public Servants and other appropriate policies/procedures whilst on a career break, may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

## **5. Keeping in contact**

- 5.1 Employees taking a career break will ensure that contact is made with their Line Manager during the break. The frequency and nature of contact will be agreed with management prior to the career break.
- 5.2 The Line Manager should endeavour to keep the employee informed of developments in the work area during the career break. This may include, for example, provision of information through e-mail or if appropriate inviting them to training sessions.
- 5.3 If organisational changes occur, the Line Manager will ensure employees taking a career break are involved in any consultations or other appropriate procedures as far as possible on the same basis as all other affected employees.
- 5.4 Should the employee become subject to criminal proceedings during a career break he/she must notify their Line Manager immediately.
- 5.5 The employee should keep management notified of any changes to their circumstances which may affect their return to work.

## **6. Returning to work**

- 6.1 A preferred date of return should be given when requesting the career break. The actual date will be subject to mutual agreement between the employee and the Line Manager.
- 6.2 Consideration will be given to those who wish to return earlier than the agreed date. Acceptance of any change to the agreed date of return will be at the discretion of management taking into account operational needs and any arrangements put in place during the break.
- 6.3 The Line Manager should ensure that, prior to returning to work, employees are advised of any required training on any new systems, procedures or courses that have been introduced and arrange an appropriate induction schedule. They should also ensure employees are brought up to date on changes that will affect them such as re-organisation.
- 6.4 In order to ensure the effectiveness of the Career Break Policy, the Public Services Commission will seek as far as possible to place an employee returning from a career break in their former job or in a PSC post at an equivalent level which may be in another location within the organisation. Management will ensure that an employee can return to the same post or a similar post, in the same work area, on their existing terms and conditions. An employee taking a career break does so accepting that it may not be possible to return to their previous post.

## **7. Resignation during a career break**

- 7.1 If an employee decides to resign during a career break he/she is required to give notice in writing in accordance with his/her Terms and Conditions of service if any part of the required contractual notice period falls outside the career break period it will be at management discretion to accept a shorter notice period. If the whole of the notice period falls within the career break period the manager may elect to waive the contractual notice period and statutory minimum periods will apply. The employee will not be expected to return to work during their notice period if it falls entirely within the period of their agreed career break.

## **8. Application Procedure**

- 8.1 In the first instance the employee should discuss the request with their Line Manager.

- 8.2 Applications should be made in writing to the Line Manager a minimum of three months in advance of the proposed start date of the career break. Following provisional agreement of their line manager, the employee should request the career break using PiP for Me requesting unpaid leave. The link to PiP is here:  
[https://pipforme.gov.im/tlive\\_ess/ess/index.html#/login.](https://pipforme.gov.im/tlive_ess/ess/index.html#/login)  
The application will then require the approval of both the employee's line manager and the next senior manager (who will have delegated authority from the Accounting Officer) in order to progress.
- 8.3 If the application is approved, the line manager must ensure that the budget holder for the Department is advised of the employee's career break, the commencement date and the duration of the break immediately.
- 8.4 Following approval/non-approval of the special leave request, the employee's employment record on PiP will be updated.
- 8.5 Career Breaks may be refused for operational reasons. If the request is refused the manager making the decision will provide reasons for the refusal in writing.
- 8.6 If the employee is dissatisfied with the decision they should following the appeal procedure in Section 9.
- 8.7 The date of the commencement and termination of the career break will be by mutual agreement between the employee and their Line Manager and will need to take into account outstanding work activities and replacement staff arrangements.
- 8.8 Before the career break commences the Line Manager should carry out a meeting to discuss the following:
- Mechanisms for keeping in touch
  - Name of contact person
  - Arrangements for any periods of work/training or continuous professional development to be undertaken during the break and on potentially on return to work
  - Arrangements for returning to work
- 8.9 A written record of this meeting should be kept by the line manager with a copy provided to OHR to place on the employee's personal file.
- 8.10 On returning to work, after completion of the career break, the employee should be welcomed back by the Line Manager, with a return to work meeting. The meeting



should cover areas of mutual interest such as:

- Changes within the Department.
- Developments specific to the work area e.g. legislation, standing orders, local procedures

## **9. Appeal Procedure**

- 9.1 Appeals against any decisions made under this policy should be raised under the PSC Grievance Procedure.