



etbi
Education and Training
Boards Ireland
*Boird Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Éireann*

CAREER BREAK

POLICY

*For all staff in
Education and
Training Boards
Ireland*

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1. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME

The Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) is pleased to support staff members taking unpaid career breaks to provide them with the opportunity to develop their knowledge, broaden their experience or improve their work-life balance.

2. ELIGIBILITY

The policy applies to all staff employed directly by ETBI. It is not applicable to staff on secondment to ETBI.

3. POLICY

A career break shall consist of special leave without pay for a period of not less than one year and not more than five years. A career break may be allowed for most purposes, including further education, domestic responsibilities, travel abroad, employment abroad, and starting a business.

All staff who have completed two years of service and have not reached the minimum retirement age are eligible to apply for a career break. For staff employed by ETBI on a contract basis, the contract dates must exceed the minimum term of a career break.

4. OPERATION OF THE SCHEME

A staff member seeking a career break must submit a written application to their Directorate and the General Secretary three months before the proposed start date of the career break for

approval. The sole discretion to grant an application for a career break lies with the General Secretary.

Following approval to take a career break, sufficient time must be allowed to identify a replacement before the staff member commences their career break.

A staff member who wishes to extend their career break must apply for this extension on an annual basis not later than two months before the expiry date of the career break.

Taking into account the extent of arrangements to be put in place by ETBI to cater for the career break, the applicant shall not be permitted to withdraw their application less than one month before the start date of the career break. In exceptional circumstances, ETBI in its sole discretion, may consider a later withdrawal of a career break application.

5. APPOINTMENT OF A REPLACEMENT

Where a replacement is to be employed, the position must be filled by the appropriate sanction currently required to fill posts and with the current rules for recruitment.

Where a replacement is to be employed, they shall be offered a contract which must state as an objective ground that the contract may be terminated in the event of the staff member on a career break returning to work.

Where a replacement is employed, they will not attain any seniority.

6. RESUMPTION OF DUTY FOLLOWING A CAREER BREAK

The staff member must indicate at least two months before the end of their career break that they wish to resume duty.

A staff member resuming duty from a career break may be required to:

- Work different hours/work patterns than they had before they took their career break.
- Work in a different business area from what they worked in before going on a career break.
- Agree on a return-to-work date that meets the needs of the Organisation and may be later than expected.

The terms and conditions of staff, generally existing at the time of resuming duty, shall apply to those resuming duty after a career break.

A staff member resuming duty from a career break in excess of two years shall be screened by an Independent Occupational Health Service provider (IOHS). It is a prerequisite for the restoration of salary that the staff member is deemed medically fit for duties by the independent OHS before they are permitted to resume their post. If the staff member is deemed unfit to resume duty, they will remain on unpaid leave until the IOHS deems them fit to return.

7. RESIGNATION WHILE ON A CAREER BREAK

A staff member on a career break who wishes to resign from their post must notify the General Secretary in writing in accordance with the staff member's terms of employment.

In the event that a staff member fails to resume duty at the end of an approved period of the career break, incremental salary will not issue. ETBI may initiate the appropriate action as outlined below:

Human Resources will make reasonable efforts to contact the staff member on a career break, in writing and by registered post and/or email, on two occasions outlining that the staff member has not complied with the terms of the resumption of duty provisions of the career break scheme and that this will be considered to be notified of their resignation.

Where, following this, the staff member continues to fail to comply with the resumption of duty provisions of the career break, Human Resources will write to the staff member formally stating that they have now been deemed to have resigned from ETBI.

8. SOCIAL WELFARE ENTITLEMENTS

The employee on a career break remains an employee of the employer for the duration of the absence and the absence does not constitute a break in service for PRSI purposes.

Employees seeking to maintain their Social Welfare entitlements during a career break should, therefore, contact the Department of Social Protection for advice prior to taking a career break.

9. NON-RECKONABLE

A period of career break does not reckon for increment or pension purposes.

10. PUBLIC HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENTS

A staff member on career break retains an entitlement to salary payment for Public Holidays solely in respect of those occurring in the initial 13 weeks of the absence.

11. COMPLIANCE

All staff members must adhere to the regulations as set out above. Failure to abide by the regulations and procedures will be dealt with under the agreed disciplinary procedures.

12. REVIEW OF POLICY

There will be a review of this policy two full years after its introduction or earlier if deemed necessary by ETBI management.