





Institiúid Teicneolaíochta
Bhaile Átha Luain
Athlone Institute
of Technology

Career Break Policy & Procedures All Staff

DOCUMENT CONTROL VERSION & REVISION HISTORY

Version Number	Revision Date	Approved by EMT	Revision Date
Version I	September 2018 (created)	30/10/2018	01 November 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the Procedures for eligible staff who wish to apply for a career break without pay, from their post.

2. PURPOSE OF CAREER BREAK

A career break shall consist of leave without pay for one of the following reasons:

- family reasons
- other domestic reasons
- travel
- educational purposes
- voluntary service overseas
- employment in the private sector or becoming self-employed

A career break cannot be granted for the purpose of taking up a job in the public sector; or in an organisation where the pensions transfer network applies; or where a state superannuation scheme is in operation.

There must be no existing or potential conflict of interest between the activity or employment in which the employee proposes to engage or engages in during his/her career break and his/her position in AIT.

A career break for an academic runs for the academic year i.e. 1 September to 31 August.

3. ELIGIBILITY

All permanent/CID AIT staff who have completed two years' service in their existing (or a previous) grade, may apply for a career break.

Research staff are not comprehended by this policy as the nature of the work is determined by project funding and research requirements. Requests from research staff to avail of a career break should be addressed by the appropriate Line Manager, and if approved, the principles of this policy may apply.

Career breaks will be granted having regard to the operational needs of the Institute. The duration of the career break may not extend beyond five years.

4. CAREER BREAK DURATION

A career break shall consist of leave without pay for a period of not less than one year and not more than five years. A staff member may apply to have a career break extended, provided the period of leave without pay does not exceed five years in total.

5. APPLICATION PROCESS

- Staff members seeking a career break must complete the Career Break Application Form which can be found at the end of this policy and also on the AIT Intranet.
- An application must be made three months in advance of the date the career break is required.
- An application for a career break must state the purpose for which the career break is being sought, as outlined in section 2.
- The Head of Function/Department will consider an application having regard to operational requirements.
- The completed application must be signed by the applicant and the relevant Head of Function/Department and forwarded to the Human Resources Department for processing and completion at the next Governing Body meeting.
- If the application is/is not approved the Human Resources Department will confirm in writing to the staff member.

6. APPLYING TO EXTEND A CAREER BREAK

An individual is required to give at least three months' notice prior to the expiration date of a career break, of their intention to apply for an extension of career break. If an extension of the career break is sought, notification of this must be forwarded in writing to the Human Resources Department and the Head of Function/Department for approval. If approved, it is then noted at the next Governing Body meeting.

It is the explicit responsibility of the employee to ensure the timely notification to the employer of their intention to either seek an extension.

7. RESUMPTION OF DUTY FOLLOWING A CAREER BREAK

At least three months prior to the end of your career break, an employee must notify the Human Resources Department and the Head of Function/Department, in writing that it is your intention to resume duty, following your career break.

Your notice of intention to resume duty following a career break should be submitted to Human Resources at least 3 months prior to the end of your career break. Should AIT not hear from you by your intended return date, the normal process for the termination of your contract will be initiated.

Permanent/CID staff have an entitlement to resume duty at their substantive grade on the completion/termination of the approved period of the career break.

All staff resuming duty following career break are obliged to accept the terms and conditions of service pertaining to their grade at the time of their return.

8. Acting Up Arrangements

Where a staff member is acting-up, the acting-up arrangement will cease on commencement of the career break. Such staff will normally revert to their substantive post on resumption of duty. The acting-up arrangement will not be held open for the career break returnee.

9. EARLY RESUMPTION OF DUTY

Requests to resume duty early following a career break will be considered in the first instance by the Head of Function/Department in conjunction with Human Resources in order to determine the effect on the status of staff who replaced the person on career break. Only in exceptional circumstances will approval be granted for an early return.

10. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL STAFF

An employee will not accumulate service while on career break – this means that the length of the career break will not be counted as service for example:

- for increment purposes;
- for annual leave purposes;
- for superannuation purposes [see section 12 below.

All staff members should clearly understand that salary will only recommence upon resumption of duties. A staff member on a career break who intends to resign from his/her post shall give the Institute notice in writing in accordance with the terms of his/her conditions of service.

Once a **non-academic staff** member's application for career break is approved, their annual leave balance will be recalculated up to the commencement date of the career break.

Where it is found that a **non-academic staff** member has overtaken their annual leave entitlement, the overpayment amount will be brought to the attention of the staff member and the full amount owing will be deducted from final salary before commencement of their career break.

While on career break an employee shall be eligible to apply for internally and externally advertised competitions by AIT. It is the staff member's responsibility to make themselves aware of such competitions. All competitions will be advertised on the AIT website or in accordance with normal AIT procedures.

11. DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

It is advisable that employees going on career breaks maintain entitlements to social welfare Benefits. Employees can contact the Department of Social Protection for more information.

12. PENSIONS – RECKONING PERIOD OF CAREER BREAK FOR SUPERANNUATION PURPOSES

For staff availing of a career break and who are a member of either the Education Section Superannuation Scheme [ESSS] or the Single Pension Scheme [SPS], they should contact Helen Kerins in the Pension Section of Human Resources at hkerins@ait.ie regarding same.

13. Garda Vetting

Athlone IT shall re-vet staff and relevant persons after a period of five years from the date of the previous vetting disclosure in respect of that person.

However, a person may be re-vetted, following returning from a leave of absence, or if information concerning their suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults/to undertake their duties in a manner compatible with the role comes to the attention of the Institute.

14. Medical

Employees on a Career Break in excess of two years, will be required, prior to return, to undergo a medical assessment and be deemed medically fit by the Institutes OHP

15. QUERIES

All queries in relation to any of the above should be emailed to hr@ait.ie



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CAREER BREAK APPLICATION FORM

To be completed by the Staff Member

Name (in print):

Staff No:

Function/School:

Contact No:

Purpose of Career Break

Family Reasons Other Domestic Reasons Education Purposes

Voluntary Service Overseas Employment in the private sector or becoming self-employed

Other _____

Proposed Dates for Career Break from _____ to _____
(Minimum 1 year)

I understand that an approval for this period is no guarantee that any extension sought will be granted.

I confirm that there is no existing or potential conflict of interest between the activity or employment in which I intend to engage while on career break with my position in AIT.

I understand that I am required to give at least 3 months' notice prior to the expiration date of my career break, of my intention to re-commence duty or to apply for an extension. This notice must be submitted in writing to Human Resources Department. Failure to comply with this requirement without a reasonable and acceptable explanation, may be regarded by AIT any time thereafter as a formal offer of resignation with effect from the last day of my career break. The effect of such resignation will be given in writing to the staff member by Human Resources.

I have read, accept and agree to comply with all of the principles of the Career Breaks policy.

Signature of Staff Member: _____ **Date:** _____

To be completed by relevant Head of Function /Department

I certify that I have approved the above special leave without pay in accordance with the Career Breaks policy.

Signature of Head of Function/Department: _____ **Date:** _____

Before completing this form, please refer to the Career Break policy

To be completed by HR

I have verified the completed Application Form received from the Head of Function/Faculty.

Signature of Head of HR or nominee: _____ **Date:** _____

Please note that this leave may be terminated if it is not used for this purpose as indicated above. Any staff member found to be abusing this leave may be subject to serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.