

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

Career Break Scheme

1. Purpose of the Career Break Scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to assist in the development and retention of staff, and where such leave provides advantage to both the College and the staff member. Staff will have the opportunity, within the scheme, to leave their employment without a break in service to fulfil personal commitments whilst maintaining and developing their career in the intervening period.

Benefits to the individual member of staff will vary, however some examples may be as follows:

- To undertake career development through individual projects, research or secondments
- To undertake a period of formal training or broader development
- To undertake voluntary work or a period of travel

2. The Duration of a Career Break

A Career Break is a period of unpaid leave. Where this is agreed staff may normally take a break of up to one year. The actual period of the break and the timing will be subject to agreement between the College and the individual.

3. Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for the scheme an employee must have a minimum of five years continuous service, and the period of the Career Break may not exceed the duration of any existing contract of employment.

4. General Conditions

- A period of time on a Career Break shall not be regarded as a break in service.
- The duration of a Career Break will be clearly specified and agreed before commencement of the break, and an employee will not return to work before the end of the Career Break, unless agreed by the College.
- A vacancy created as a result of a Career Break will normally be filled on a VL or fixed term basis.
- Normal incremental progression will not operate during a Career Break, but will recommence upon return to work.

- During the period of the Career Break, pension contributions will not be payable. Also, there will be no entitlement to sick pay or to annual leave during the period of the Career Break. Any annual leave for the current year should be taken before the commencement of the Career Break.
- When on a Career Break, the normal accrued Maternity Leave entitlements will apply. Where appropriate, the Career Break will be superseded by Maternity Leave, but the Maternity Leave will not extend the period of the Career Break.
- The member of staff will confirm his/her intention to return to work, in writing, a month in advance of the agreed date of return.
- On return the employee is required to provide the Director of Human Resources with a report outlining the nourishment that the Career Break has provided.

5. Application Process

Applications under the scheme will be considered jointly by the Dean of School / head of department and Director of Human Resources. Acceptance of a Career Break is at the discretion of the Rector on behalf of the College.

In certain circumstances, the Career Break Scheme may not be the most appropriate arrangement for individual staff members in terms of maintaining their careers. In such circumstances, alternative arrangements more appropriate to the individual case may be agreed between the manager, HR and the individual.

Application to the scheme should normally take place at least three months prior to the commencement of the Career Break. The staff member must fulfil the eligibility criteria for the scheme, and agree to all terms and conditions governing the scheme. The duration and commencement date of the break must be agreed between the Dean of School / head of department and the staff member.

A Career break proposal form should be completed and sent to the Dean of School / head of department. Staff members should provide appropriate documentation to accompany their Career Break Proposal.