

## **NORTHERN IRELAND COLLEGE EMPLOYERS' FORUM**

**CIRCULAR NO: CEF 2010/14**

30 November 2010

To: Joint Secretaries, Lecturers' Negotiating Committee  
Directors/Principals and Chairpersons of Governing Bodies of Colleges of  
Further Education  
HR Managers of Colleges of Further Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
UCU  
NASUWT

### **FURTHER EDUCATION LECTURERS' NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE**

#### **Career Break Scheme**

In accordance with the provisions of Article 11, Schedule 3, paragraph 10.3 of the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, the Constitution for Negotiating the Terms, Conditions of Service and Remuneration of Lecturers' Employed in Colleges of Further Education, it has been determined that the Career Break Scheme has been agreed at the Lecturers' Negotiating Committee on 30 November 2010 and will be effective from 1 December 2010.

Mr. H Faulkner  
**Chairperson**  
**College Employers' Forum**

# JOINT AGREEMENT FOR STAFF EMPLOYED IN INSTITUTIONS OF FURTHER EDUCATION

## CAREER BREAK SCHEME

### 1. DEFINITION

- 1.1 A Career Break is a period of special leave of absence without salary for a period of not less than one year.

### 2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The primary objectives of the scheme are:-

- i. to enhance the skills and widen the experience of employees.
- ii. to provide employees with an opportunity to confirm their commitment to working in the Further Education Sector;
- iii. to provide employees with the opportunity to continue their career after the Career Break.

- 2.2 A Career Break may also be granted to an employee for:-

- i. domestic responsibilities;
- ii. a stay abroad;
- iii. starting his/her own business;
- iv. maintaining a family business; or
- v. commercial/industrial experience.

- 2.3 A Career Break will not be allowed for the purpose of taking up alternative salaried or wage-earning employment in Northern Ireland within the meaning of Schedule E for income tax assessment unless the prior written approval of the employing institution has been obtained. Such approval will only be given in exceptional circumstances.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY

- 3.1 The scheme shall be available only to permanent employees.

- 3.2 An employee must have satisfactorily completed his/her period of probation.
- 3.3 Normally employees must have completed an aggregate of not less than 3 years' service in institutions of further education prior to the proposed commencement of the Career Break.
- 3.4 An employee shall not be granted more than 2 Career Breaks, of any duration, during his/her service as an employee in institutions of further education.
- 3.5 An employee shall not normally be granted a second Career Break until at least 5 years after the completion of a previous Career Break.

#### **4. DURATION**

- 4.1 A Career Break shall be granted for a period of not less than one year and for not more than 2 years. This may be extended for a period of one year to meet urgent domestic circumstances or for the purpose of study.

#### **5. PROCEDURE**

- 5.1 An employee wishing to apply for a Career Break shall make application by submitting the agreed form (part A of copy attached) to the Director of his/her College through his/her Head of Department or Line Manager.
- 5.2 An application for a Career Break shall normally be made at least 3 months prior to the proposed date of commencement. An application to extend the Career Break shall be made at least 3 months prior to commencement.
- 5.3 It shall be for the Governing Body of the College to consider all applications along with details of the arrangements, which the Director proposes to put in place (part B of the copy application form attached) to ensure the continuation and quality of work for the duration of the Career Break. The College, if it approves the Career Break, shall then notify the relevant payroll provider, and in all cases advise the employee of the outcome of his/her application.

#### **6. SUPERANNUATION AND INCREMENTAL CREDIT**

- 6.1 A Career Break shall not count for incremental credit purposes.
- 6.2 Depending upon the superannuation scheme to which you belong it may be possible for you to make arrangement to have pension credit for the period of the Career Break. Each employee who is seeking to avail of a career break should contact his/her relevant pension provider to ascertain his/her pension arrangements throughout his/her Career Break. Contact details of service

providers are available from the Human Resources department.

## **7. RETURNING TO DUTY**

- 7.1 An employee on a Career Break must contact the College (in writing) not less than 3 months before the end of the Career Break to confirm the intended date of return to College duties. However should an individual not wish to return they should give the College normal contractual notice of his/her intention to resign.
- 7.2 An employee shall normally retain an entitlement to resume duty in the post which he/she has vacated at the commencement of the approved Career Break. Where, in exceptional circumstances, this is not possible because of re-organisation, or changes in College provision or curriculum, the employee shall be assigned to another post equivalent to the duties and responsibilities of his/her original post. This offer will be discussed in detail with the employee with a view to reaching agreement on the availability of a suitable alternative post.
- 7.3 Sympathetic consideration will be given to an employee wishing to return early from a Career Break when specific reasons warrant such early resumption.

## **8. GENERAL**

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the employee to determine from the Department of Health and Social Services and the Inland Revenue his/her entitlements, if any, for the duration of the Career Break.
- 8.2 An employee, while on a Career Break:
- a. shall not be exempt from consideration from the consequences of redundancy/reorganisation in the College.
  - b. shall be eligible to apply for promotions that may arise.
- 8.3 A post which has been vacated as a consequence of a Career Break shall normally be filled by temporary appointment for the duration of the Career Break as agreed by the Governing Body.
- 8.4 Nothing in this scheme shall prejudice existing arrangements for the granting of other categories of special leave.
- 8.5 The operation of this scheme shall be reviewed after 3 years from 1 December 2010.

