

Policy name: Career Break Policy
Approved by RIAM Governance Committee: 13/03/2023

Approved by Trinity Academic Council: 15/11/2023
Approved by RIAM Governing Body: 13/04/2023

1. Context

The Royal Irish Academy of Music, hereinafter referred to as RIAM or the Academy, recognises that from time to time staff may require the ability to request an unpaid leave of absence or career break from work for a defined period of time for purposes such as, but not limited to, professional development, family responsibilities, travel or further education. The RIAM acknowledges the value that developing skills, experience and learning outside of RIAM can bring to their role.

This policy is designed to outline the policy and procedures for eligible staff of RIAM who wish to apply for a career break.

2. Purpose

The RIAM is committed to the wellbeing and work life balance of employees to engage with opportunities external to RIAM which may be available to them, while having regard to the operational needs of RIAM.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all permanent staff who have successfully completed their probation period and been issued a contract of indefinite duration

4. Duration

Career breaks may be for a minimum of 1 year up to a maximum of 3 years. Subject to approval this can be taken consecutively or intermittently throughout a staff members employment subject to a maximum limit of 3 years in total which cannot be exceeded.

5. General Principals

- i. A career break may be allowed for reasons such as further education, domestic responsibilities, starting a business, other employment or a stay abroad. 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. There must be no existing or potential conflict of interest between the activity or employment in which the staff member proposes to engage or engages during their career break and their employment with RIAM.
- ii. The duration of the career break may not be extended beyond minimum retirement age.
- iii. For Academic staff a career break should be the academic year i.e. 1st September to 31st August.
- iv. For administrative staff the date on which the career break commences will be determined by the applicants line manager who will insofar as possible accommodate the staff members preferred start date.

- v. Where an application for a career break for administrative staff is approved, the staff member's annual leave balance will be recalculated up to the commencement date of the career break. Where it is found that a 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.
- vi. A staff member on career break remains an employee of RIAM and is subject to all relevant legislation and RIAM policies and procedures.
- vii. While on career break, staff are welcome to apply for RIAM vacancies advertised both internally and externally. If a staff member on career break is recommended for appointment to a new post, they are expected to return to work and their career break ceased.
- viii. A career break will not count as service for the purposes of superannuation, annual leave, salary increments or redundancy calculations.
- ix. Staff on career break from RIAM may not undertake any other employment within the school.
- x. Staff on a career break must return any RIAM mobile devices to the ICT Manager before commencement of career break. Please see the [Mobile Device Policy](#) for further information. RIAM Mobile phones will be switched over to pay as you go for the duration of the career break if the staff member wishes to retain their number.
- xi. ICT will leave the staff member's RIAM user account and M365 licence available for a short period (e.g. 30 days) after the commencement of the break which will give the staff member time to copy his/her files and address book etc. and notify people of his/her alternative email address. If the career break is for one year or less this user account will be disabled so that it can be enabled easily on his/her return to work and all files, mailbox etc. will be accessible again. However, if the career break is for more than one year, his/her account will be deleted from the Active Directory after the initial 30-day period and a brand new account will be created in the Active Directory on his/her return to work.
- xii. A staff member on a career break who intends to resign from their post shall give RIAM notice in accordance with the terms of their contract of employment. Notifications to resign should be submitted in writing to Human Resources (HR) and copied to their relevant line manager.
- xiii. A career break may be terminated by RIAM if it is not used for the purpose as outlined in this policy and the Career Break Application Form.
- xiv. A staff member may be subject to disciplinary action if found to be abusing this Leave.

6. Applications

- i. An application for a career break will be considered having regard to the operational needs of RIAM and an applicant should not assume that their application will be facilitated.
- ii. Staff wishing to take a career break must complete the Career Break Application Form which is available at the end of this policy.
- iii. The Career Break Application Form should be submitted to the relevant line manager at least 3 months in advance of the commencement of the career break for administrative staff, and by 1st March prior to the beginning of the academic year for Academic staff.
- iv. The relevant line manager or faculty head will consider an application having regard to operational needs and should advise the applicant of their decision within 8 weeks of having received the application. Refer to point 10 below regarding backfill arrangements.

- v. If approved, the completed Career Break Application Form should be forwarded to HR for processing.
- vi. The granting of any application will depend on the merits of the application and on the demands and requirements of RIAM at the time of application. Within the foregoing limitations RIAM will endeavour to facilitate staff as far as possible but refusal of some applications must be expected. Refusal decisions may be appealed to Director.
- vii. On receipt of the completed Career Break Application Form, HR and Payroll office will confirm in writing to the staff member and relevant line management the precise conditions of the career break confirm and the cessation of payroll for the duration of the career break. The staff member will be notified as a leaver to revenue.

7. Extension of Applications

- i. An application for an extension to a career break must be submitted at least 6 months prior to the expiration date of a career break. At its discretion, RIAM may accept a lesser period of notice in exceptional circumstances.
- ii. Having regard to backfill considerations, if a staff member believes they require a longer extension to their career break they should apply for this duration rather than applying for an extension on a year to year basis.
- iii. An application for extension to a career break must be submitted in writing to HR who will seek the approval of relevant line management. HR will normally confirm the decision in writing to the staff member within 8 weeks of receiving the application for extension. Staff should be aware that there is no guarantee that an application for an extension to a career break will be approved.

8. Resumption of Duty

- i. Academic and Administrative staff will be assigned to vacancies in the department at the same grade and terms and conditions prior to the career break. Administrative staff may have revised duties to account for changes to the operational needs of RIAM in the period of career break.
- ii. A staff member on career break is required to give at least 3 months' notice prior to the end date of a career break, of their intention to resume duty. This notice must be submitted in writing to HR and copied to their relevant line manager.
- iii. Staff on permanent/indefinite duration contracts of employment who take a career break retain an entitlement to resume duty at their substantive grade on cessation of the approved period of the career break provided they submit written notice of intention to resume duty. If this written notice of intention to resume duty following career break is not submitted to HR at least 3 months prior to the end date of the career break, it will be assumed that the staff member is not seeking to return to the RIAM and this will be regarded by RIAM as a formal offer of resignation with effect from the last day of the career break. The effect of such resignation will be given in writing to the staff member by HR.
- iv. Requests to resume duty earlier than the expected end date of a career break will be considered in the first instance by the line manager in consultation with HR.

9. Pension Scheme

A Career break will not count as service for the purposes of pension.

- i. Members of the RIAM Defined Benefit pension scheme may increase their employee contributions on resumption of duties following the career break to make up the shortfall over an agreed period of time in consultation with payroll and/or the Finance Officer.
- ii. Members of the RIAM PRSA scheme may increase their employee contributions on resumption of duties following the career break to make up the shortfall over an agreed period of time in consultation with the payroll and/or Finance Officer.
- iii. Death in service and income protection/continuance benefits will not be maintained by RIAM for the employee of either scheme for the duration of the career break and the employee should make private provisions.

10. Backfill Arrangements

- i. Posts vacated by staff taking career breaks will be backfilled on a specified purpose basis.
- ii. Backfill appointments will cease a) when the staff member on career break resumes duty, b) if the staff member on career break is transferred/promoted to another position or c) if the staff member on career break ceases employment with the University.

11. Responsibility

HR is responsible for overseeing this policy.

12. Legislation and Regulation

[Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#)

[Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area \(2005\)](#)

[GDPR 2018](#)

[National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\).](#)

[Records Management and Retention Policy](#)

[Data Protection Policy](#)

13. Related Documents

Adoptive Leave
Parental Leave (incorporating Force Majeure)
Parents Leave
Carers Leave
Bereavement Leave
Sick Leave
Maternity Leave
Paternity Leave

Employees should refer to these policies if it is relevant to their reason for applying for leave.

14. Document Control

Approved by RIAM Governing body: 13/04/2023

Approved by Trinity Academic Council: 15/11/2023

Next review: Academic year 2027

This policy will be reviewed on a three year cycle, or as required to take into account changes in the law and the experience of the policy in practice.

Appendix 1

CAREER BREAK APPLICATION FORM

This Form should be submitted to your line manager at least 3 months in advance of the commencement of the career break for administrative staff, and by 1 March prior to the beginning of the academic year for Academic Staff.

To be completed by the Applicant

Name (in print): _____

Employee ID.: _____

Faculty/Office: _____

Home/Mobile Contact No: _____

Personal Email Address whilst on Career Break

Address for correspondence whilst on Career Break if different from current address:

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

Purpose of Career Break:

Further Education ☐ Domestic Responsibilities ☐ Starting a Business ☐ Other Employment (excluding public sector) ☐ A Stay Abroad ☐ Other (provide details below) ☐

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 with RIAM. I understand that this Career Break may be terminated if it is not used for this purpose as outlined in this application and note that I may be subject to disciplinary action if found to be abusing this leave. I have read and understand the RIAM policy and procedures for Career Breaks. I fully accept and agree to comply with same, and expressly the Pension related implications.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by Relevant Line Management/Faculty Head:

I certify that we have approved this Career Break Application in accordance with the RIAM Career Break Policy.

Commencement Date: _____ End Date: _____

To be completed by Relevant Line Management/Faculty Head:

I recommend that this application is approved / not approved in accordance with the RIAM Career Break policy. Signature: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by HR This application is approved / not approved in accordance with the RIAM Career Break policy. Signature of HR:

_____ Date: _____