

Department of Paediatrics **Guidance on Managing a career break**

This guidance is aimed at assisting those having and managing a career break to ensure that the workload is planned and well managed while the employee is absent; this is of benefit to the individual and their colleagues.

The University has set guidelines for all types of leave (please see the below links), employees are required to adhere to these processes. This guidance is aimed at assisting the Department of Paediatrics manage career breaks, including maternity, paternity or adoption leave, sick leave, sabbatical and unpaid leave but it does not supersede the University regulations.

The success of the return to work post break will be dependent on the support given both prior to and after the break. It should be remembered that a career break could affect not only the individual on the break but also their line manager/supervisor and work colleagues, who may be required to cover the workload during the break. In some cases somebody may have to be employed to cover the absence.

Although it is easier to make arrangements when the leave is planned every care needs to be taken when the leave is unexpected, following sudden illness for example, to ensure a smooth return to work.

Planned Leave

Once all the formal University notifications and forms (particularly in the case of maternity and paternity leave) have been dealt with the process of dealing with the day-to-day work of the individual needs to be considered.

- Is the leave long enough or the work sufficiently urgent to require that the work be handed over to someone else/others to carry on with during the absence?

If so:

Before the leave period, hold a meeting between the individual taking the leave and the line manager/supervisor to decide on an action plan to follow for both the period leading up to the leave period and for the time immediately following the return to work.

- a) Draw up a plan of the work that needs to be continued
- b) Decide whether temporary cover needs to be employed or whether staff already in post can carry on the work.
- c) Write hand over notes for the person/people who will be taking over the work
- d) Meet up with the person/people who will be taking over the work
- e) If a number of people are sharing the workload discuss the best division of labour to fairly and most appropriately cover the role
- f) Decide whether it would be appropriate for any "acting up pay" to be paid to the person/people who will be taking over the work. Would it be necessary or appropriate to pay overtime (Grades 1-5)?
- g) Decide if a job overlap is required during hand over period
- h) Discuss whether contact and keep in touch days are something that would be useful, wanted or appropriate. If contact is going to happen agree who will initiate the contact.

- i) Discuss and agree the best way to record information for the returnee to make the return as smooth as possible

Sabbaticals : usually taken by senior academic members of staff and the individual and senior management undertakes planning for these.

Unplanned Leave

Unplanned leave is generally due to illness, accidents and emergencies or bereavement.

Again, leave taken under the above circumstances may last from a few days, in the case of short term Sick Leave or Bereavement, or may be long term in the case of long term Sick Leave. While it may not necessary to cover or hand over work when short term leave is involved, it will almost certainly be necessary to do so in the case of longer periods of absence once the full circumstances are understood and plans can be made.

Once all the formal University notifications and forms have been dealt with the process of managing the day-to-day work of the individual needs to be considered.

- Is the leave long enough or the work sufficiently urgent to require that the work be handed over to someone else/others to carry on with during the absence?

As the leave is unplanned it will not be possible hold a meeting between the individual taking the leave and the line manager/supervisor to decide on an action plan to follow, but consideration should be given about how the work could be handed back over following the return to work, especially in cases of long term sick leave. The line manager/supervisor therefore needs to:-

- a) Draw up a plan of the work that needs to be continued
- b) Decide whether temporary cover needs to be employed or whether staff already in post can carry on the work.
- c) Meet up with the person/people who will be taking over the work
- d) If a number of people are sharing the workload discuss the best division of labour to fairly and most appropriately cover the role
- e) Decide whether it would be appropriate for any "acting up pay" to be paid to the person/people who will be taking over the work. Would it be necessary or appropriate to pay overtime (Grades 1-5)?
- f) Discuss whether contact and keep in touch days are something that would be useful, wanted or appropriate. This is something that may be inappropriate in the case of Long Term sick leave and needs to be handled sensitively. It may be beneficial to the successful return of the individual to feel included in the work going on in their absence, but this would need to be handled on a case-by-case basis. If contact is going to happen agree who will initiate the contact.
- g) Discuss and agree the best way to record information for the returnee to make the return as smooth as possible

On return to work, if the returnee is coming back a "fit" Note from the GP might indicate that the returnee might be able to return to work with some support; and to suggest ways to facilitate a return to work, i.e. a phased return to work, altered hours, amended duties, or workplace adaptations.

Return to work:

On return to work, hold a meeting between the returnee and the line manager/supervisor to discuss the progress of work during the absence.

- a) If the returnee is coming back temporarily or permanently on less than full time conditions discuss which part of the workload they will be taking back on and which will be handed over
- b) Meet up with the person/people who were progressing the work
- c) Receive hand over notes from the person/people who were progressing the work
- d) Decide if a job overlap is required during handover period

Related policies

- Maternity leave - <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/maternity/>
- Paternity leave- <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/paternity/>
- Adoption leave - <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/adoption/>
- Sickness absence - <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/sickmanage/>
- Other leave reasons - <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/leave/other/>