

**Reference No:** E103/2/83; **Date:** 05/04/84

## **Circular 2/1984:- Special leave without pay for career breaks**

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Circular 7/84 sets out the arrangements for special leave without pay for career breaks in the civil service. The purpose of this Circular Letter is to provide additional information for management. The provisions of Circular Letter 2/76 governing special leave will, subject to what follows, apply to career breaks.

### Applications

2. Subject to the provisions of Circular 7/84, applicants eligible for career breaks should be facilitated to the greatest extent possible and within a reasonable period. An application should not be refused except where the Head of the Department is satisfied that release would not be in the public interest or that the officer concerned is in a key role and cannot be replaced within a reasonable period having regard to work requirements. Applications from staff with specialist skills or qualifications would require careful consideration. The approval of this Department should be obtained before an application for a career break is refused.

### Return to duty

3. At the end of career breaks, officers will return to fillable vacancies as and when they arise in their grade and department. Staff changes should be carefully planned so that an officer returning may be assigned to a vacancy when the career break ends or as soon as possible thereafter. If it is anticipated that there will not be a suitable vacancy when an officer is due to return, the officer should be given the maximum notice possible and an indication of when a suitable vacancy is expected.

### Probation

4. Career breaks under these new arrangements may be granted only to officers who have completed probation. Where, however, special leave without pay is at present granted to officers who have not completed probation the more favourable arrangements will continue.

### Revision of Circular Letter 2/76

5. This Circular Letter supersedes the arrangements in Circular Letter 2/76 concerning

- care of young children (18.1)
- restrictions on educational leave (21.1 and 21.3)
- restrictions on appointments abroad (29.1)

### Records

6. Departments should keep details on the officer's personal record of the duration and purpose of any career break granted. The duration of any career break should be taken into account when Form E Gen. 24 is being completed.

7. The Department of Social Welfare should be notified of the RSI number of each officer going on a career break so as that Department may consider the continued eligibility of the officer for limited social welfare benefits. Officers going on career breaks should be advised of the desirability of maintaining

entitlement to limited social welfare benefits by payment of voluntary contributions to the Department of Social Welfare. Enquiries may be made to the Voluntary Contributors Section of that Department (Telephone: 72 65 97).

#### Enquiries

8. Queries about the operation of this scheme of career breaks should be addressed to this Department (John Mc Gettigan, Telephone: 77 96 01, Ext. 451

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William P Smith  
Deputy Secretary