

Reference No: Amendment to Circular 18/98; **Date:** 03/03/2008

Amendment to Circular 18/98:- Special leave without pay for career breaks: Amendment to Circular 18/98

3 March 2008.

Amendments to Circular 18/98: Special leave without pay for career breaks

Dear Personnel Officer

Please see below amendments to the Career Break circular in relation to

- Eligibility (paragraph 7) and,
- Duration and Purpose Paragraph 10.

Eligibility:

Paragraph 7 of circular 18/98 as it stands states:

“Eligibility

7. Subject to what follows, established civil servants, who have satisfactorily completed their probation and have served continuously since doing so, (periods of special leave without pay should not be considered to break continuity of service for this purpose) and unestablished civil servants, who have satisfactorily completed two years' service may apply for special leave without pay for a career break, provided they have not reached retiring age and provided they have not been appointed for a fixed term. The duration of a career break may not extend beyond retiring age.”

Recent legislation has reduced the probation period for new entrants from two years to one year. It is therefore necessary to clarify the position on the amount of service that an officer must serve before being eligible to make application for a career break. It has been decided to in order to make application for a career break, **an officer must have satisfactorily completed two years' continuous service before application for a career break can be made.**

Paragraph 7 of circular 18/98 is amended and now reads:

“Eligibility

7. Subject to what follows, established civil servants, who have satisfactorily completed two years' continuous service may apply for special leave without pay for

a career break, provided they have not reached retiring age. The duration of a career break may not extend beyond retiring age. (Periods of special leave without pay in accordance with Maternity Protection Legislation, Adoptive and Carer's Leave and Parental Leave should not be considered to break continuity of service for this purpose)."

Duration and Purpose:

Paragraph 10 of circular 18/98 as it stands states:

*"10. Eligible staff may, in general, avail of two career breaks in the Civil Service. A second career break may not be taken until the officer has served for a period equal to the duration of the initial career break. The total period of the special leave** should not exceed ten years in all and no one period of absence should exceed five years. The maximum limit of two career breaks may be waived at the discretion of the head of Department, provided the total period of special leave does not exceed ten years in total. The period of service requirement between career breaks may likewise be waived at the discretion of the Head of Department in exceptional circumstances.*

*** Other forms of special leave without pay (other than periods of less than six months, such as special leave taken under Circular 28/91 or short periods of special leave without pay for study purposes) will, in general, be taken into account when calculating this overall limit."*

With recent changes in lifestyle and increased caring responsibilities, officers may wish at different stages of their lives to avail of a career break for more than two occasions and may wish to apply for more than two career breaks within their career in the civil service. There is a facility currently in place where that the maximum limit of two career breaks may be waived at the discretion of the Department, provided the total period of special leave does not exceed ten years in total. It has been decided to amend the circular and allow officers apply for three career breaks within their career in the civil service. **All other conditions on the maximum period of five years per career break, service requirement between career breaks and the overall total period of special leave is not to exceed ten years still apply.**

Paragraph 10 of circular 18/98 is amended and now reads:

*10. Eligible staff may, in general, avail of three career breaks in the Civil Service. A second and third career break may not be taken until the officer has served for a period equal to the duration of the initial or second career break. The total period of the special leave** should not exceed ten years in all and no one period of absence should exceed five years. The period of service requirement between career breaks may be waived at the discretion of the Head of Department in exceptional circumstances.*

*** Other forms of special leave without pay (other than periods of less than six months, such as special leave taken under Circular 28/91 or short periods of special leave without pay for study purposes) will, in general, be taken into account when calculating this overall limit.*

Please bring details of these amendments to the notice of all officers serving in your Department and associate offices including officers on secondment, maternity leave, adoptive leave, parental leave, career breaks and any other relevant forms of leave.

Yours sincerely

Michael Errity
Assistant Secretary