

Career (Industry) Break Guideline

What is it?

This document describes the guidelines for employees wishing to take a period of leave without pay from their employment with RMIT University (“RMIT”) for the purpose of gaining professional experience in an industry other than education and research (taking a “career break”).

A “career break” is a period of approved leave without pay for the purpose of gaining professional experience in an industry other than education and research.

Who is this for?

This guideline applies to all continuing employees of RMIT University.

1. Eligibility

1.1 To be eligible to apply for a career break an employee must:

- a. be employed on a continuous basis;
- b. have at least two years’ continuous service with the University, and
- c. have no outstanding moneys owed to the University.

2. Features

- 2.1. An employee may receive payment by an employer in an alternate industry for services performed during this period.
- 2.2. The terms of the career break must be agreed in writing between RMIT and the employee.
- 2.3. A Career break may be approved for a maximum period of up to 12 months.

3. Approval Process

- 3.1. Employees wishing to take a Career break should discuss and seek approval from their line manager in the first instance, and then complete the Career (Industry) Break Agreement (to be provided by the People team at point of application)
- 3.2. The employee must give the University at least 6 months’ notice of their intended commencement date.
- 3.3. Applications are approved by the DVC or relevant Direct Report of VCE Member.
- 3.4. The granting of an industry break is not automatic, but will be based but not limited to the following:

- the relevance of the proposed industry break to the strategic objectives of the University; and
- the extent to which the proposed industry break will enhance the staff member's contribution to a discipline, profession, or the University's strategic capacity; and
- the capacity of the employee to carry out the industry break and make effective use of the opportunity; and
- the capacity of the workplace to adjust or maintain its regular functioning during the proposed period of absence; and
- the capacity of the employee at the time of approval to contribute at least one further year of service after completing an industry break.

3.5 For a career break to be approved, the request must be made for one or more of the following reasons:

- to improve and enhance professional knowledge in the employee's field of expertise or responsibility relevant to the employee's position at the University
- to obtain practical experience in the workplace relevant to regular duties and responsibilities to gain development by means not normally available whilst at the University and undertaking regular duties
- to meet the specific capability, knowledge and skill needs of the University as outlined in the University's strategic plan.

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3.6. Applications may be declined at the discretion of the University.

4. Prerequisites to Commencement

4.1. Prior to commencement of the industry break the employee must:

- a. complete a Conflict-of-Interest Form [Conflict of Interest Declaration Portal](#)
- b. sign a Career (Industry Break) Agreement (to be provided by the People team at point of application)
- c. ensure that the external entity, if applicable, signs the relevant declaration section of the Career Break Agreement to indicate their understanding that they are contracting with the employee and not with the University and that the University has no responsibility or liability for work conducted by the employee.

- d. Have utilised all available paid Annual Leave.
- e. Return all RMIT IT equipment including laptop, monitor and mobile phone.

5. During the Career Break

- 5.1. If the duration of the Career break is 6 months or less, the employee will retain their access to the University's IT systems, except in exceptional circumstances. If the industry break is more than 6 months, the employee will not have access to the University's IT systems.
- 5.2. Industry breaks are taken using leave without pay. Unless otherwise provided by the enterprise agreement, the employee does not accrue leave during this period.
- 5.3. An employee on a Career break is not covered by the University for the purposes of workers compensation or any other insurance.
- 5.4. An employee wishing to extend an industry break must submit their request at least 6 months prior to the expiration of the agreed period, noting that industry breaks must not exceed 12 months. If the requisite notice is not provided the University may elect to decline the request.
- 5.5. The employee must not use their University title or position, or the University's name, brand, address, stationary, email, telephone or premises for meetings.
- 5.6. The employee must not use University bank accounts to receive or hold funds that are raised through activities undertaken or in connection with the Career break.
- 5.7. The employee must continue to comply with their obligations as a staff member of the University with respect to [intellectual property](#), [conflict of interest](#), and confidentiality.

6. Returning to the University

- 6.1. The University will use all reasonable endeavours to return the employee to the position that they occupied prior to their Career break, or a position commensurate with their skills and experience. However, in the event that no such position is available the employee agrees their employment will end by way of resignation.

More Information

- Contact [People Connect](#)

Document history

Version	Last updated	Authority	Author
1.0	26 April 2024	Employee Lifecycle Policy	Policy and Workplace Relations