

Retirement

Leaving British Council Employment

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Overview

This section explains the procedures that British Council staff and managers must follow when a member of staff is within two years or less of retirement at age 65. In addition it explains the options for British Council staff if they also have an earlier pension age of 60. For information on redundancy, and early retirement including retirement on grounds of ill health, see Early Retirement and Redundancy.

This section covers:

- Retirement age
- Pension age
- Leave
- Action to take at age 58
- Action to take for retirements after age 60 and before age 65
- The age 65 retirement process
- Action to take for all members of staff

Audience

This section applies to all staff working in the UK, regardless of any type of contract they hold. This is in compliance with the statutory effect of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, which implement the requirements of the European Directive in the UK. It also applies to UK-appointed staff and harmonised staff based overseas, but not to teachers and OAS staff who should refer to their own contractual terms.

Responsibilities

Members of staff, line managers and HR Services (including HR Overseas team) are responsible for carrying out the procedures in this section. In particular, members of staff have responsibility for giving sufficient notice of their intention to retire, if they wish to retire before age 65.

Policy

Retirement age

From 1 October 2006 the retirement age for all UK-appointed staff is 65. Staff who have a pension age of 60 have the option to retire on full pension benefits at any age between 60 and 65. Refer to Retirement age, Pension age, Leave, and Procedures below.

Leave

In the year in which a member of staff retires, leave is earned only up to the date of retirement. All leave must be taken before the retirement date.

Payment is made for leave not taken only if there are compelling operational reasons why it could not be taken. Payment for leave does not reckon for pension purposes.

Guidance

Retirement age

The retirement age for staff in the UK is 65. This is the age by which the British Council, as a matter of policy, requires staff to retire. Staff also have a right to request working beyond age 65. Refer to Procedures, below.

Pension age

This is the age at which the pension scheme will pay benefits in full. The British Council has two occupational pension schemes for UK-appointed staff: the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and the Central Bureau Pension Scheme (CB Scheme). The pension age in the PCSPS is age 60, and this currently applies to all PCSPS members. This means that PCSPS members who retire at age 60 will receive their pension benefits in full, based on service worked to date, and there will be no penalty for retiring earlier than age 65. Those

who retire beyond age 60, will also receive their pension benefits in full, with additional service credit for the years worked beyond age 60, subject to any limits specified in the pension scheme rules. The pension age in the CB scheme is 65, so any retirement before this date is an 'early' retirement. CB scheme members may retire at any age from 60 but for male members retiring before age 65 a penalty will be applied on benefits relating to pre-May 1990 service; this is as a result of sex equalisation of the scheme's benefits in line with European Union legislation.

Choosing when to retire

Although there is no requirement to retire until age 65, staff in the PCS and CB schemes must be aware of their option to retire from age 60 on full pension benefits. Staff may find it useful to discuss their retirement plans informally with their line manager when considering personal development during the performance management process, or at other times. Such discussions may be useful for both the line manager and member of staff when considering recruitment and succession planning; however the member of staff is only bound by letters which are issued during the age 65 retirement process.

Retirement before age 65 - important issues

If a member of staff wishes to retire at age 60, or after age 60 but before age 65, it is important they give at least 3 months' notice to their line manager. The line manager must then inform HR Services (or HR Overseas team, as appropriate) and HR Pay and Employment Relations (PER) Pensions team. Failure to give sufficient notice of an intention to retire means that the pension benefits will be paid late. The notice period for retirement cannot be waived or reduced in the way that is sometimes possible for resignation before age 60. The 3 month notice period is important, so as to provide sufficient time for the pension administrators to authorise and arrange payment of pension benefits, and to liaise with the member of staff over matters such as bank details, provision of original birth and marriage certificates, marital status, declaration of any benefits from any other pension arrangements for calculation of the Lifetime Allowance, and so on. Thus staff should be aware that the onus is on them to give due and timely notice of their intention to retire, if they wish their retirement to take place before age 65. It is also helpful, particularly in the context of overseas postings or postings relating to batch recruitment, to give longer notice to the relevant managers so that recruitment and succession arrangements can be made.

The age 65 retirement process

Retirement at age 65 and the right to request working beyond age 65

Staff who have not retired by age 64 will be notified by letter that the British Council intends to retire them on their 65th birthday. The letter also informs them that they have the right to request working beyond the age of 65, and that the British Council has a duty to consider any such request. The 'right to request' specifically refers to the member of staff continuing in their current role and under the same terms and conditions. It is not a 'right' to request a change in working hours or a move to a different job with reduced responsibility.

The criteria for considering requests for working after age 65

Approval for such requests will be rare.

One or more of the following will be taken into account:

- Critical and compelling business need
- Because no one else has the skills or knowledge
- Because of wider corporate skills shortages
- Successful performance - required in addition to one or more of the above

The following factors will not be taken into account:

- Personal circumstances
- Successful or exceptional performance without any supporting business need

- Decisions taken in individual circumstances do not establish precedent. Each request to continue working is assessed on its merits and in the light of business needs at the time.

Pre-retirement seminars

Staff who reach age 58 are invited to pre-retirement seminars arranged by HR PER Pensions team. These seminars last 2 days and take place once or twice a year. Examples of topics covered are British Council pensions, state retirement pensions, adjusting to a new way of life, age concessions and state benefits, opportunities in retirement, legal aspects for retirement, money management, health and home considerations. Although personal invitations are sent to all staff at age 58, other staff are usually invited via an announcement in the Bulletin. Staff who receive a personal invitation at age 58 and are unable to attend at the time, will not receive a further personal invitation. Instead, they should refer to the Bulletin for further invitations. From time to time HR PER Pensions team may also arrange seminars on life planning basics. These cover similar topics aimed to be more relevant to staff less close to retirement.

Procedures

Action to take at 58

1. HR Services/ HR Overseas send the Reminder of Possible Retirement within Two Years letter to the member of staff. This letter is copied to the line manager.
2. HR PER Pensions team sends an invitation to the member of staff to the next pre-retirement briefing.

Action to take for retirements after age 60 and before age 65

3. The member of staff formally gives at least 3 months' notice to the line manager of his or her intention to retire.
4. The line manager informs both HR Services (and HR Overseas as appropriate) and HR PER Pensions team of their member of staff's retirement.
5. The member of staff may refer to the HR website for further information on the preparations made, during the notice period, for the pension benefits to come into payment.

The age 65 retirement process

Step 1: between 9 and 12 months before age 65

6. HR Services/ HR Overseas send the Notification of Intended Retirement letter to the member of staff, with a copy to the line manager.
7. Six months before the member of staff's retirement date, the line manager checks that the member of staff has either sent a response to the Notification of Intended Retirement letter, or is at least aware that they need to do so.

Step 2: at least 3 months before age 65

8. The member of staff responds to the [Notification of Intended Retirement](#) letter, using the enclosed pro-forma [Response by Member of Staff](#). This response is sent by the member of staff to HR Services/ HR Overseas, with a copy to the line manager.
There are 2 possible responses:
 - The member of staff completes the form confirming their intention to retire at 65, or
 - The member of staff completes the form stating their wish to exercise their right to request working after age 65. It is not possible to make a request to

work after age 65 once there is less than 3 months to go before age 65

9. Steps 3 and 4 of the age 65 retirement process explain procedures to be followed if the member of staff returns the Response by Member of Staff form stating that they wish to request working after age 65.

Step 3: within 4 weeks of the request for working after age 65

10. HR Services/ HR Overseas forwards the request to HR PER for consideration.
11. HR PER considers the request within a reasonable period of time, normally within 4 weeks, and informs the member of staff of the decision in writing. If it will take HR PER longer than 4 weeks to consider the request, the member of staff will be informed of the expected delay.
12. HR PER Pensions team monitors the arrangements for the timely payment of pension benefits in case the request is not approved, but will alert the pension administrators to the possibility of a revised retirement date for pension payment. Staff are advised however that to avoid any delays in the payment of pension benefits, it is in their best interests not to leave requests for longer working after age 65 until the last 3 months before the retirement date, but to make such requests at least 6 months before age 65.
13. If in exceptional circumstances, HR PER agrees to the request to working after age 65, HR Services/ HR Overseas will notify the member of staff by the Letter accepting new retirement date. A new retirement date will be set and agreed in the letter. If the new retirement date is 6 months or less after the original retirement date, there will be no need to repeat the retirement process (steps 1 to 4 again). If however the new retirement date is more than 6 months after the original retirement date, the first step of the retirement process must be initiated again at least 6 months before the new retirement date, and if possible up to 10 months beforehand.
14. For most cases however, it is unlikely that the British Council will be in a position to approve working after age 65, and HR PER will consider the request further by inviting the member of staff to a meeting so that the member of staff can provide more information on their request. The time, date and venue of the meeting will be notified in the Letter advising member of staff of meeting. The member of staff has a right to be accompanied at the meeting by a co-worker of their choice provided he or she also works for the British Council. The companion can address the meeting and confer with the member of staff but is not permitted to answer questions on behalf of the member of staff.
15. If HR PER exceptionally agrees the request for working after age 65, the member of staff will be notified by the Letter accepting new retirement date, as explained above. In the event of refusal, the member of staff has the right of appeal against the decision - see step 4 below.

Step 4: the appeal process

16. Within 1 week of the decision, the member of staff appeals against the decision not to allow working after age 65. The member of staff must set out in writing the grounds of their appeal. Failure to respond within 1 week of the decision may mean that the member of staff loses the right to an appeal meeting. As with the earlier meeting, the member of staff has the right to be accompanied by a co-worker, and on the same basis.
17. The British Council considers the appeal within 4 weeks and notifies the member of staff of the decision in writing. If the appeal is successful, the member of staff will be notified by the Letter accepting new retirement date. If the appeal is not successful, the member of staff will be notified in writing. This decision is final.

Action to take for all members of staff**Recognise long service**

If the member of staff is retiring after long service, the line manager may wish to involve a senior manager in marking the occasion in some way. For staff who are retiring after 25 or more years' services, line managers should inform the office of the Chief Executive. This is so that a letter from the Chief Executive to the member of staff can be prepared. The line manager will be asked to contribute to the letter.

Make a Bulletin announcement

Arrange for publication of the retirement in the Bulletin. Use the format in the example shown below:

William Wordsworth, Head Literature Department, retires 4 September 2008 (last day in office 30 August 2008).

British Council IT system

Complete an SAP User Change Request and email it to the BSC Support Centre. Relevant guidance can be found under User change request process.

Contact the Departmental IT Co-ordinator so that the telephone and e-mail directories can be amended and computer access discontinued. If appropriate ask for an auto-reply message to be activated for a given duration giving an alternative contact.