

Institute of Conservation

Career Breaks and Membership Fees Policy

Policy number	Other Documents 07.05
Summary	This policy outlines Icon’s support for members who are temporarily out of employment resulting from parental leave, significant caring responsibilities, or serious health conditions.
Who this policy applies to	All members of Icon.
Author/policy contact	Amy Neal, Marketing and Membership Manager
Approved by/approval level	Icon Professional Standards and Development Committee
Date effective	16 February 2026
Last reviewed or updated	16 February 2026
Frequency of review	Every three years

1.	Introduction
	<p>The Institute of Conservation (Icon) recognises the importance of supporting members who are on a career break. This policy sets out Icon’s approach to providing that support, helping members maintain their connection with the conservation profession during this period.</p> <p>Members who are registered on a career break are entitled to a 50% reduction in their membership fees. Members must apply on an annual basis and may be eligible for a maximum of five years consecutively.</p> <p>Accredited members will be exempt from the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) recall process for the period of their registered career break.</p> <p>Members on low income or who are unemployed but actively seeking work are not eligible to apply under this policy; however, they may qualify for concessionary membership rates.</p> <p>Engagement in full-time study is not considered grounds for eligibility under this policy.</p>
2.	Definitions
	<p>Career break: An individual who is not engaged in paid or voluntary work in any capacity. This includes presenting at conferences or seminars, teaching, mentoring or publication.</p> <p>Caring responsibilities: Caring responsibilities refer to the ongoing duty of a member to provide care or support to a dependent person, such as a child, partner, relative, or other individual who requires assistance due to age, disability, illness, or other circumstances. This includes both short-term and long-term caring arrangements</p>

	<p>that may affect a member’s or employee’s ability to work or participate fully in professional activities.</p> <p>CPD Recall: The requirement for Accredited members to provide a review of their CPD activities on demand to ensure their maintenance of their professional skills and knowledge to ensure they continue to practice at the ‘proficient’ level against the Icon Professional Standards.</p> <p>Health concerns: Health concerns refer to any physical or mental health condition, illness, or medical circumstance experienced by a member that may temporarily or permanently affect their ability to work, study, or participate in professional activities. This includes both short-term and long-term conditions requiring treatment, recovery time, or reasonable adjustments to support the member’s wellbeing and continued engagement.</p> <p>Parental leave: The approved period of absence granted to an individual for the purpose of caring for a child following birth, adoption, or placement. It applies equally to all parents, regardless of gender, family structure, or route to parenthood, and may be taken by any eligible parent or guardian.</p>
3.	<p>Eligibility</p>
	<p>Members may apply to be recognised as on a career break if they are temporarily unable to engage in professional conservation work due to one or more of the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal parental leave – a defined period of leave taken to care for a child following birth, adoption, or placement. • Serious health concerns – physical or mental health conditions that significantly affect the member’s ability to undertake professional activities. • Substantial caring responsibilities - ongoing care for a dependent (such as a child, partner, relative, or another person requiring support due to age, disability, or illness) that limits the member’s ability to work. • Other exceptional circumstances - situations that result in temporary professional inactivity, at Icon’s discretion, where the member can demonstrate that their ability to undertake professional work is substantially restricted. <p>To qualify, members must be entirely inactive in professional practice for the duration of the registered period. This includes refraining from any paid or voluntary professional activities such as teaching, mentoring, presenting, or publishing.</p> <p>Members with a low income, or those who are unemployed but actively seeking work, are not eligible under this policy. Such members may, however, apply for concessionary membership rates, where applicable.</p> <p>Engagement in full-time study is not considered grounds for eligibility under this policy.</p>

4.	Accredited members
	<p>Accredited members will be exempt from CPD recall for the approved period.</p> <p>Those who are due to submit their CPD recall during their registered career break will be required to complete and submit their CPD recall upon re-establishing full membership.</p> <p>Accredited members are not permitted to use their ACR post-nominals during a registered career break. Their details will be removed from the Register of Accredited Members and reinstated once full membership has been re-established.</p>
5.	Making a request
	<p>Members wishing to register as on a career break must complete and submit the Career Break Application Form. This form requires members to make a self-declaration explaining the reason for their request and confirming that they will not engage in any paid or voluntary professional activities during the approved period.</p> <p>Completed forms should be submitted to membership@icon.org.uk.</p> <p>Each request will be considered individually to ensure that it meets the parameters of this policy. Icon may request further clarification or evidence if necessary to support an application. Submission of an application does not guarantee approval.</p> <p>If a member is found to have provided false or misleading information, their registered career break status may be withdrawn, and the case may be referred under Icon’s Complaints Procedure.</p> <p>Approved members will receive written confirmation of their career break status, including the approved start and end dates of the period.</p> <p>Members must submit a new application each year and may receive support for a maximum of five consecutive years. At the end of this period, membership will revert to the standard fee rate unless a further extension is granted under exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>All personal and sensitive information provided as part of this process will be treated as confidential and handled in accordance with data protection legislation and Icon’s Privacy Policy.</p>
6.	Managing implementation and review
	<p>This Policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure that it is reflective of current regulations and guidance and is responsive to local, national, and international events.</p>