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A) Introduction

1. Why this guideline?

Long-term employability (LE) is an important theme which will only gain in importance in the future. This is because of the ageing population, because of the anticipated scarcity in the labour market, because of the fact that everyone has to keep working for longer and because of the rapid pace of developments around us, including in education.

You therefore need to remain flexible in a changing context and take control so as to give direction and substance to your own development and long-term employability¹.

How will you go about this? This guideline will help you on your way and point out where you can find more information on this subject.

2. Agreements in the CAO HBO

The collective labour agreement for universities of applied sciences (CAO HBO) contains the arrangements made by the employers and trade unions on furthering the long-term employability of staff members in higher professional education (the LE scheme). The purpose of this scheme is to provide you with an opportunity to actively further your long-term employability, which will help you keep doing your job effectively, in good health and with satisfaction and find a healthy work-life balance.

(For more information, see Chapter M of the CAO HBO.)

3. Detailing in LE Regulations

The CAO HBO contains only the main features of the LE scheme; its implementation has been arranged in the LE Regulations. These contain implementation arrangements tailored to the specific situation at AUAS, which have been approved by the representative advisory body. They address aspects such as the manner in which the entitlement to the LE budget is determined, and the preconditions applicable to the use of the LE budget. The purpose of the LE Regulations is to make it clear to everyone at AUAS how our organisation implements the LE arrangements laid down in the CAO HBO. *(The LE Regulations can be found at [MijnHvA.nl](https://mijnhva.nl) → A-Z → L → Long-Term Employability.)*

4. LE budget and why you should use it

From 2020, you receive 45² LE hours each year in which to improve your long-term employability. If you are a bit older and within 10 years of reaching state pension age, you will receive as many as 90 LE hours³ each year. You can use this budget for various purposes, in consultation with your manager or supervisor. To this end, the collective labour agreement has identified three specific purposes of use (see Article M-1a of the CAO HBO).

Think about what you would like. Perhaps you have certain ambitions, want to gain inspiration at another organisation, have something you want to develop further, or would like to improve your work-life balance. Why not discuss this with your manager or supervisor and your fellow team members? Do not just discuss it, but put your words into action. Your LE budget is to help you preserve your long-term employability, but you will need to set the wheels in motion yourself!

¹ See AUAS Strategic Plan 2015-2020

² For full-time employees; a proportional number applies for part-time employees, provided that the conditions are fulfilled (see also the overview on page 8)

³ For full-time employees; a proportional number applies for part-time employees, provided that the conditions are fulfilled (see also the overview on page 8).

5. Joint responsibility

The primary consideration is that long-term employability is a joint responsibility of both the employer and employee. Each year, you will receive a budget in LE hours to help you enhance your long-term employability. Good employee practices dictate that you actively use this budget, while good employer practices require your manager or supervisor to support and facilitate you in the best possible way.⁴

B) Points for attention when using your LE hours

1. The consultations with your manager or supervisor

As an employee, you are responsible for your own long-term employability and for actively using the LE hours you receive for this purpose each year. You need to discuss how you can improve long-term employability with your manager or supervisor and your fellow team members.

But what does the use of LE hours involve? Perhaps the subject is still rather abstract; how do you arrange it all? Below we will list some examples to give you an idea of what is possible. You will have to decide what is important for you at this stage in your career or life. You might, for instance, spend LE hours on:

- providing informal care, the side effect being a better work-life balance;
- looking in more depth at an aspect of your work that has your special interest, such as team development;
- going for a bike ride in the context of vitality and thinking about your further development;
- following a coaching programme if you should be going through a difficult period;
- a secondment at another university of applied sciences or organisation so as to broaden your horizon.

All these are experiences which can inspire you with new ideas, offer just the support you need, fill you with enthusiasm, provide you with an opportunity to meet new people and give you new energy. You should not ignore these opportunities but grasp them with both hands.

2. Using, saving up or waiving your annual hours

You can use the LE hours assigned to you each year for one of the three purposes specified in this context in the CAO HBO (see Article M-1a of the collective labour agreement or the last page of this guideline in this respect).

Use during the year

From 2021, you are meant to use the LE hours during the year to which the entitlement relates. In principle, there is no exception to this rule. Any LE hours not withdrawn will lapse at the end of each year.

Savings balance

Obviously, you will not lose the LE hours saved up to and including 31 December 2020. You will keep these LE hours, which must then be used within a period of three years (1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023 inclusive) where possible. You need to discuss using these hours with your manager or supervisor at an early stage and record these arrangements in writing.

Waiver of rights

You also have the option to waive your rights to LE hours. since using your LE hours is a right, not an obligation, although we would advise against waiving them. Your manager or supervisor will then engage in discussion with you in an attempt to convince you that improving your long-term employability is important, not just for yourself but also for the team's results and those of the organisation as a whole. After all, the LE scheme and the LE hours are there for a reason.

During this discussion, your manager or supervisor will try to find out why you do not want to use your LE entitlements. You should not, for example, waive your rights because you are too busy. Your employer is

⁴ Where this document refers to 'he', 'him' or 'his', for all intents and purposes, 'she' or 'her' should also be considered intended.

obliged to provide you with an opportunity to use your LE hours. If you waive your LE hours all the same, your manager or supervisor will ask you to confirm this clearly in writing.

3. Making and recording arrangements in time

We recommend that you make written arrangements with your manager or supervisor at the earliest possible stage on how you will spend your LE hours. They will need this information to provide you with the best possible support, because they are responsible for the proper planning of your activities and those of the team. If you are not sure yet about the purpose and/or time, a follow-up meeting will in any case be held soon afterwards.

'Long-term employability' has become a staple element of the annual performance review with your manager or supervisor. This means that it is a recurring topic during this review. As your activities need to be planned in advance, your manager or supervisor may bring forward this part of the review so as to make arrangements with you at an earlier stage.

The arrangements (including amended arrangements) which you make with your manager or supervisor about how your LE hours will be spent (when, how many, purpose), or about a waiver, will always be laid down in writing and added to your personnel file.

4. What if arrangements change in the interim?

Circumstances may arise which force you to change the arrangements already made with your manager or supervisor about the use of your LE hours. In that case, you will need to discuss this with them at the earliest opportunity. Changes should be possible: after all, this is about your long-term employability and your choice on this point should prevail. However, your manager or supervisor must also have the opportunity to adjust the planning of activities. You will make new arrangements in consultation. You have to make sure that these new arrangements are laid down in writing as well.

In highly exceptional situations, it may happen that your manager or supervisor asks you to change the arrangements. If this is no problem for you, new arrangements can be made in consultation (which must again be confirmed in writing). If you are unwilling or unable to agree to the change, the earlier arrangements will obviously remain in place. The point of departure is that it is your choice on how to use your LE entitlements that matters most.

5. Balance between interests of employee and organisation

Possibility of staggering withdrawal of hours

The LE scheme is not meant to result in an uncontrolled (large) number of unused LE hours that jeopardises capacity in the workplace. This is not likely to happen if the use of the LE hours is discussed in time with all the members of the team or the department, and a proper planning of the activities is subsequently drawn up. An important point here, of course, is that you and the other team members discuss this planning and the possibilities in time, both with the manager or supervisor and among the team.

However, what happens if there should nevertheless be a situation in which too many employees want to use their saved-up LE hours simultaneously? If this poses a serious risk to the continuity of the activities of your team or the department, your manager or supervisor may cap the number of employees who can use saved-up LE hours simultaneously.⁵ However, this is an extreme measure which will only be taken if all other options have been exhausted. Managers or supervisors will always first consult a team as to whether there are any alternatives (staggering the withdrawal times, temporarily using more external workers, temporarily increasing the extent of team members' employment, etc.). Such consultation will usually result in an acceptable solution.

⁵ See Article 6(8) of the LE Regulations

If this should not be the case, your manager or supervisor⁶ may, as a last resort, cap the number of employees who can withdraw their savings balance simultaneously. Such a decision will always be reported to the Director of Operations or the director of the service or the staff department and be evaluated with the Representative Advisory Council.

Possibility of a manager or supervisor taking a different decision

If the full application of the LE Regulations has disproportionate adverse consequences for you as the employee, your manager or supervisor may decide to make a different individual arrangement with you.⁷ For example, your manager or supervisor could ask you, in the interest of the organisation, to postpone your using saved-up LE hours, despite this already having been scheduled. You agree to do so. The problem, however, is that you have already incurred costs because you are planning to spend your LE hours on a stay abroad.

This would constitute an unreasonable situation for you. In that case, your manager or supervisor may decide to provide you with reasonable compensation for the loss you sustain as a result.

Although more situations are conceivable that may have unreasonable consequences for an employee, we cannot identify them all in this guideline. In assessing such situations, AUAS assumes there is a mature employment relationship between you and your manager or supervisor and trusts the latter to make a professional and well-balanced judgment. Also note that the rule is that managers and supervisors must always seek the prior advice of their HR adviser in such cases.

6. Registration and monitoring of LE hours withdrawn and saved

Teaching staff

If you are part of the teaching staff (OP), you *only* need to register in DSPM the hours withdrawn from your savings balance (if any) and the purposes for which you are using them. There is no need to register the LE hours annually obtained, because these have already been incorporated into your annual workload. You need to make written arrangements with your manager or supervisor about how your annual LE hours will be spent (when, how many, purpose) or if you decide not to use your LE hours.

Support staff

If you are part of the support staff (OBP), you need to register in DSPM the hours withdrawn both from your annual LE budget and from your savings balance (if any), and the purposes for which you are using them. You need to make written arrangements with your manager or supervisor about how your annual LE hours will be spent (when, how many, purpose), or if you decide not to use your LE hours.

Any questions?

We hope that this guideline has provided you with some points of reference on how to use your LE hours and has raised your interest in the opportunities offered by the LE scheme. If you still have doubts or questions about your long-term employability options and applicability after reading this guideline, please contact your manager or supervisor or your HR adviser.

⁶ Always in consultation with the hierarchical manager or supervisor.

⁷ Article 13(2) ('Unforeseen circumstances') of the LE Regulations

Appendix: Overview of entitlements to LE hours (CAO HBO, Chapter M)

Conditions for LE entitlements	
Extent of employment	0.4 FTE or more
Working in higher professional education	At least three years (consecutive or otherwise) of the last five years

Size of LE budget	
Basic LE budget	45 hours per annum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in case of full-time employment - proportional in case of part-time employment (from 0.4 FTE)
Additional LE budget (on top of the basic budget)	Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who are within 10 years of reaching state pension age - who have worked in higher professional education for at least five consecutive years 45 hours per annum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in case of full-time employment - proportional in case of part-time employment (from 0.4 FTE)
<u>No</u> entitlement to additional LE budget	Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who participate in the CAO HBO <i>Werktijdverkorting Senioren</i> scheme, i.e. the Decrease in Working Hours for Older Staff Scheme (or the Older Teaching Staff Scheme preceding it)

Purposes for which LE hours may be used	
1.	Making arrangements which help employees to continue to do their job effectively, in good health and with satisfaction also in the longer term, which includes restoring the work-life balance during a limited period.
2.	Maintaining and reinforcing employees' employability in the sense of being versatile and retaining their labour market appeal, both inside and outside the organisation.
3.	Using hours for maintaining employees' professional competency and development.