



Recruitment
& Employment
Confederation

CAREER 
RETURNERS



Career returners
recruiter guidance:
Part three

Addressing your concerns about returners



“At the end of the day returner hiring is all about fantastic talent.”

Employer on hiring career returners

“We hire returners because it makes business sense, not just because it is the right thing to do.”

Employer on hiring career returners

Frequently Asked Questions

I am worried that returners have lost their skills?

There is often a false perception that skills are lost during a career break. The reality is that returners haven't forgotten the skills they honed before their career break and they will return very quickly.

Crucially, returners also bring valuable transferable skills and experience gained during their break that can greatly benefit the workplace.

For instance, those with caregiving responsibilities typically strengthen their time management, resilience, and multitasking abilities, along with high levels of empathy and emotional intelligence.

In the Career Returners Indicator 2024, 75% of returners had upskilled for their return and 93% believe that the skills they gained during their break will increase the value they bring to an employer.



“Our Career Returners Programme has welcomed over 100 professionals who have taken career breaks ranging from 2 to nearly 30 years and has a very high conversion rate to permanent colleagues.”

Employer on hiring career returners

Are returners committed to going back to work?

Many recruiters assume that all returners are primarily seeking part-time, home-based roles to accommodate family life. While this may be the case for some, many returners are highly ambitious and eager to re-enter the workforce and advance their careers.

The Career Returners Indicator 2024 confirmed that around 70% want to return to work on a full-time basis. A degree of flexibility is essential for the majority, with hybrid working the preferred working model for 82%.

This corresponds to the overall trends among the current working population who increasingly value flexibility.



Are returners confident enough to take on a professional role?

“Career Returners has helped us access a truly diverse pool of talent that matched the critical skills that we need for our teams. We have been blown away with the calibre, engagement and potential of the 18 colleagues who make up our first returner cohort.”

Employer on hiring
career returners

Recruiters may be concerned about the impact of the loss of confidence on adjustment to the work environment. It is true that, despite their skilled profile, experienced professionals looking to resume their careers do report a loss of confidence due to their break.

Nearly 90% of respondents of the Career Returners Indicator 2024 reported this, with a third seeing this as their biggest barrier. However, this confidence quickly rebuilds with focused support, in terms of interview preparation and transition support once they are back at work. If a support structure is put in place, returners can be up-to-speed in weeks, not months. It’s also important to note that there is no identikit returner.

For many returners with shorter career breaks, or those who have kept their skills and networks up to date, the confidence barrier is less of a challenge. These returners can be ready to hit the ground running with minimum extra support.

Read guidance number four of the collection on [“10 steps to become a returner-inclusive recruiter”](#)



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