
BAS POLICY ON SECOND CONSECUTIVE WINTERS FOR ANTARCTIC CONTRACT (AEP) STAFF

1. Introduction

This notice outlines the BAS policy for requests for second consecutive winters. It provides a practical approach that reflects:

- BAS's commitment to the health and welfare of its employees.
- Best practice in terms of length of contract that other Antarctic operators employ.
- The remote environment in which BAS operates.
- Retains flexibility with regard to consecutive winter staffing where there is a demonstrated business case.

2. Aims and Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To clearly outline to AEP staff and their Managers the expectation levels they should have with regards to the likelihood of permitting a second consecutive winter.
- To explain the process that AEP staff and their Managers should follow in the event of a second consecutive winter being requested.

3. Background

The British Antarctic Survey has a long tradition of consecutive winter tours for all areas of Antarctic staffing. This approach was originally based largely on the limited available transport options at the time, however exit and entry to the Antarctic over the summer months now offers considerably more options and consecutive winter contracts are no longer normally a necessity.

The consecutive double winter approach has significantly decreased in recent years since a BAS Board decision in 2006 for support staff to move to single winters and through individual's preference. A formal review was undertaken by Human Resources, with input from the Medical Unit and from AEP Managers prior to submission to the BAS Board in early 2012.

This review took account of:

- The extraordinary remote environment and working/living conditions in the Antarctic and The fatigue that is often associated with two consecutive winters
- The best practice in terms of length of deployment as reflected by other Antarctic Operators
- The average increase in subjective health complaints from those completing a second consecutive winter
- The early decision point i.e before first winter has started for AEP staff, their Managers and Human Resources to make a decision about a consecutive winter

4. The Policy

All new wintering Antarctic contracts for Rothera, Halley and Bird Island as well as KEP trade roles will normally be offered and issued as one winter contracts only.

BAS will consider the case for a second consecutive winter if a clear business case can be made Examples of this could be

- Late replacement of another member of AEP staff that has withdrawn
- Significant benefit offered by staffing continuity to a scientific programme

Any request for a second consecutive winter should come from the Line Manager, (following discussion with the AEP member) in writing to the Head of Human Resources. This would normally have to be submitted by the 31st March

Support for the request must come from the Line Manager in the form of a demonstrated business request. Human Resources and the relevant Board member will also be expected to comment on the request, taking account of the individuals welfare, before a final decision is made by the Manpower panel.

Where second consecutive winters are approved a short break from station between the winters will usually be required, subject to operational practicalities.

KEP scientific contracts only will be offered as two year contracts. The different approach in this area reflects discussions with the Government of South Georgia who are responsible for the funding of these roles.

It is also recognised that there may, on some occasions, be justifiable requests for a two year contract from the outset. These will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

It should be noted that although consecutive winters are now only by exception, non consecutive second (and beyond) winters are encouraged where satisfactory performance is recognised. Returning members of the AEP are key in retaining the Antarctic skills and experience required for the continued successful running of the Antarctic Operations.