

Fidelity launches returner programme in APAC

By [Sandra Heistrubers](#) March 9, 2021 [Comments \(0\)](#)

Fidelity International has announced that it will roll out its returner programme across the Asia-Pacific region in a bid to grow its pool of “diverse talent”, a statement it has timed with the celebration of International Women’s Day.

The global fund giant, which manages US\$706.3 billion in total assets, says the initiative targets experienced professionals seeking a return to work in the investment management industry following an “extended career break”.

The APAC programme is being launched together with Women Returners, a purpose-led consulting, coaching and network organisation, and is aimed at individuals with a background in equity research, multi-asset, fixed-income investing, product development or sustainable investing.

The initiative was first rolled out by Fidelity in the U.K., where the asset manager has recruited more than 20 returners for mid to senior-level roles in four years who had an average seven-year career break.

The APAC returners programme is open to applicants in mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and Australia who have had a career break of 18 months or more.

Fidelity will offer successful applicants a “professionally paid” six-month placement, “with the strong possibility of a permanent position at the end”.

According to the firm, the programme “aims to make the transition back to work as smooth as possible”, with each returner receiving virtual coaching support from Women Returners to help them transition successfully back into the workplace. Fidelity will also partner returners with a professional mentor and a “buddy” to support their professional development and help them develop an internal network.

Commenting on the returner programme, Paras Anand, chief investment officer Asia Pacific at Fidelity, says: “Diversity of thought is vital to our success as investors and for the business more broadly. People with varied experiences both professionally and personally are what makes our culture unique.”

He describes the programme as a “great opportunity for us to reach a talented and skilled group of professionals who might be facing hurdles to rejoin the workforce”.

“This programme ensures we are being deliberate about hiring returners, and that we have structures in place to support them and set them up for success at Fidelity.”

Anand adds that Fidelity wants 45% of its board members to be women and 35% of its global senior management roles to be held by women by 2024.

In its announcement for the launch of the APAC programme, the firm gives three examples of returners in the U.K.

Portfolio manager Sarah-Jane Cawthray, a former [Merrill Lynch](#) Investment Managers portfolio manager, re-established her asset management career in 2017 after a 15-year career break, and following training as a homeopath and working for a small printing firm.

“It is difficult to exaggerate the magnitude of returning to the workplace after such an extended period away,” she says. “I am so glad that I made the giant leap back into the workplace.”

Christine Brueschke, who works as a sustainable investing analyst for Fidelity International, returned to the industry after over 10 years away from financial services.

She says: “I feel incredibly fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time, in terms of being hired by Fidelity International in the sustainable investing team.”

Meanwhile, Fidelity investor director Stacie Mitchinson, who took 10 years out, lived in Tokyo, Hong Kong and Abu Dhabi before returning to London, where she ran adult art classes part time.

She says the programme recently ended in the U.K., with everyone in her cohort having been fortunate to secure full-time employment with Fidelity.

“I strongly recommend anyone seriously thinking about going back to work to just do it! My only wish is that I should have done it sooner,” Mitchinson says.