**Academic Returners and Research Support – Policy and Framework**

**(College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences)**

As part of the University’s commitment to improving gender equality, and specifically growing the number of women in senior academic roles, the University approved a process of supporting academic returners to maintain a successful research career. The aim of this funding is, primarily, to support female academics returning from maternity leave.

**1. Eligibility**

The table below outlines who would be eligible to apply for this support:

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| **Returning scheme** | **Leave Description** |
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| Eligible for returning support | Adoption Leave |
| Maternity Leave |
| Paternity Leave – Additional – 4 months or more, continuous |
| Shared Parental Leave – 4 months or more, continuous |
| Ineligible for returning support | Maternity Leave – Unpaid/SMP only |
| Parental Leave – Unpaid |
| Paternity Leave - Ordinary |
| Shared Parental Leave – Less than 4 months, or discontinuous leave |

Research and Teaching, Research-only and Clinical staff are all eligible to apply for this funding. Staff must have sufficient time remaining on their contract/current funding, once the funding decision has been approved.

As stated, the main objective of this funding is to support female academics returning from maternity leave (although eligibility is wider, as stated above), however, partners who have taken extended leave through the Shared Parental Leave Policy of 4 months or more will also be entitled to apply.

This support may be used throughout the first 12 months return from the period of leave.

**2. What is on offer and what can it be used for?**

The funding available is a reserved pot to support a resumption of an individual’s research activity to a maximum of £10,000 (this is for all applicants no matter their FTE). This could provide buyout of teaching, research and administrative assistance; attendance at UK and overseas conferences; collaboration and learning visits to overseas research institutions; research collaboration visits; small equipment purchases; to write a grant application and training, etc. For teaching active staff, a plan of teaching cover would need to be arranged, this should be considered prior to the individual’s departure for maternity/adoption/paternity (additional) leave, and could run through to their return to work.

The funding is designed to be flexible for academics and their line managers in arranging a best-fit for the individual’s research and the cover required by the School/RI.

For all successful funding awards, recipients will be required to produce a brief report on how the funding was used, and the research outcomes from this. This report should be provided to the Head of School, Dean of Research and the Equality and Diversity Unit.

**3. Criteria**

The Academic Returners Research Support funding is not an entitlement. The individual applying would need to fit the following criteria:

* To be research active, demonstrable through either research independence or a track record of publications and income leading to independent research development.
* have a clear set of research goals, which may be reflected in their past or upcoming P&DR;
* to fit with RI/College research strategy.

To proceed for approval the application requires the support of the relevant Head of School/Director of Research Institution, the Dean of Research for the College as detailed on the form below, prior to the implementation of the support.

**4. Award Decisions**

Applications will be assessed by the Research Strategy Group then finally approved by the VP/Head of College/COG, as agreed by the CMG.