Additional support during pregnancy and after pregnancy leave

Effective from 1 December 2024

Why?
During pregnancy and in the months after pregnancy, mothers/birthparents might face a negative impact on their (scientific) career. Aiming at stimulating scientific staff members to take proactive actions to cope with these challenges, the Faculty of Science has initiated a policy to provide financial support to compensate for these negative consequences. The application for this financial support should be carefully planned and submitted prior to maternity leave. The type of support depends on the scientific position of the applicant.

For scientific staff on a permanent contract and for scientific staff on a fixed term contract that cannot be extended[1], the Faculty of Science has a compensation scheme in place, which is up to a maximum of 40K€ for scientific staff on a permanent and up to a maximum of 25K€ for scientific staff on a fixed term contract. It is not possible to apply for a contract extension and for the financial support through the compensation scheme, these two options are mutually exclusive.

This financial support should be used to assist scientific staff members to maintain their scientific activities and visibility during pregnancy and the year after their return from maternity leave. This financial support can, for example, be used to hire a student assistant or postdoc to support research or to realize a temporary reduction of the teaching load following the return. These funds are explicitly not meant for substitution of the staff member for their teaching load during the pregnancy leave[2], nor to fund regular research costs.

This document contains the guidelines and practical information regarding the execution of this policy as adopted by the faculty board.

Who?
Financial support is applicable to scientific staff members on a fixed term contract (PhD candidates, post-docs) who cannot extend their contract[3], or scientific staff members on a permanent contract (Assistant-, Associate- and Full Professor) taking pregnancy leave.

What?
The staff member can apply for up to 25K€ (fixed term contract) or 40K€[4] (permanent contract) to support their research during their pregnancy or upon return after pregnancy leave. Staff members on a fixed term contract who extend their contract according to the CAO regulations, cannot apply for additional financial support in the context of the pregnancy leave compensation procedure.

---

[1] Scientific staff on a fixed term contract may be able to extend their position for the duration of their pregnancy and maternity leave (usually 4 months). This applies to PhD candidates and, dependent on the number and duration of previous contracts, this may also apply for post-doctoral scientists.
[2] The supervisor together with the teaching director are responsible to arrange teaching replacement during the leave.
[3] Reasons for not extending the contract may be having reached the maximum number and duration of previous contracts, or when deliverables/deadlines require additional help for practical work during pregnancy, instead of extra time at the end of the project.
[4] Funds from the UWV's pregnancy benefit scheme not used for paying the applicants' salary or teaching replacement during pregnancy leave will be used to cover this policy and will be topped up from the faculty board's general policy budget to the approved support amount.

The funds may be used for targets intended to lessen the negative impacts of reduced productivity during pregnancy and immediately after pregnancy leave on the applicant's career and to enable the applicant to continue research associated activities by e.g.:

- Hiring personnel to support research (e.g. research assistants and technicians for lab-work, post-doctoral scientists to continue research and supervise PhD student during pregnancy).
- Paying for travel and housing for one accompanying person or covering onsite baby-sitter/daycare at the venue when attending international conferences or visiting institutes, or other reasonable childcare expenses related to conference visits.
- Increase research time after their return from leave by e.g. hiring assistant teachers to cover their own teaching responsibilities.
- Inviting collaborators to visit the institute to increase visibility.
- Costs incurred to safeguard supervision of PhD candidates, such as a short term stay of the PhD candidate at a collaborators' institute.

The funds may **not** be used for:

- Costs associated with regular research activities (such as consumables, server space, field assistants, etc.).
- Travel costs (travel, housing, subsistence) and conference fees incurred by the applicant or by other family members (except for family member taking care of the baby, see second bullet above).
- Support regular teaching activities during the pregnancy leave (except supervision of students during their research internship).
- Regular childcare.
- Costs associated with additional childcare during teaching activities.
- Costs associated with office supplies (e.g. computer, phone, chair, desk, books, etc.).

As the funds are made available in connection to pregnancy and in the immediate period thereafter, they **must be used within one year**[5] following the staff member's return from their pregnancy leave, and within the contract period. If not spent, the remaining funds will be returned on a pro rata basis to the institute and faculty board. The funds must only be used **to cover additional costs** incurred to maintain research and visibility. Applicants are encouraged to only ask for targets that contribute to counteracting potential negative effects of pregnancy and childbirth on their scientific career. This support scheme is not to be interpreted as a regular grant where the standard practice is to apply for the maximum amount. Approval of the individual targets depend on whether they are within the objectives of this compensation policy, sufficiently supported by the information provided, and a realistic itemized budget plan is provided.

[5] Extension of this period may only be granted in exceptional circumstances beyond the applicant's control. In that case the applicant must submit a new application form and whether the extension (which must not be longer than 6 months) is granted depends on a positive advice by the managing director, the designated GenDI representative and the decision of the FoS Director of Operations.

How?

The steps as outlined below need to be followed to get the application approved[6]:

1. *Applicant* (staff member) discusses the plans with a designated Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion (GenDI) representative and their direct supervisor;
2. *Applicant* sends the proposal, accompanied by an itemized budget plan[7], to the managing director at least three months before the start of their pregnancy leave[8];
3. *Managing director* of the institute checks the application with Finance & Control (F&C) and Human Resources (HR);
4. *Managing director* of the institute forwards the proposal (including an indication of the cost to be covered by the UWV pregnancy scheme and by the faculty board) to the designated Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion (GenDI) representative for advice;
5. *GenDI representative* forwards the application, including the GenDI chair's advice, to the FoS Director of Operations for the final decision;
6. *FoS Director of Operations* communicates the final decision[9] with the applicant and the GenDI representative, with a CC to the managing director, the involved director of education (if applicable), HR, and F&C;
7. *HR* takes care that the application and final decision is included in the digital personnel file.

The plan will then be executed under supervision of the managing director and applicant.

[6] Note: these actions need to be taken before the pregnancy leave. If you have any questions or face problems along the process, please feel free to contact the GenDI representative (GenDI-committee@science.ru.nl).

[7] It is important to inquire with F&C beforehand to get a realistic indication for the costs involved when hiring research assistants or post-doctoral scientists.

[8] If the funds are used to hire new personnel (including research assistants) for lab-work during pregnancy, the application must be submitted at least three months before the intended starting date for the personnel.

[9] The final decision will depend on the argumentation about how each of the applied for targets contribute to counteracting potential negative effects of pregnancy and childbirth on the scientific career.

Radboud Universiteit

Application form for additional support during and after pregnancy leave (Pregnancy Leave Compensation Scheme)

General information (applicant)

Name: _____

U-number: _____

Institute: _____

Department: _____

Educational institute (if applicable): _____

Description of the plans (max. 500 words) (please include an itemized budget plan as a separate file)
Signature applicant
Statement of support research institute including advice F&C and HR (max. 100 words) *Amount to be covered by institute (UWV pregnancy scheme):* *Amount to be covered by the Faculty Board:*
Name & signature institute

Advice chair Gender, Diversity & Inclusion Committee
Name & signature GenDI chair

Final decision FoS Director of Operations
Name & signature FoS Director of Operations