**Wellcome ISSF Family Leave Support – Guidance Document**

# **1. Scope and Purpose**

**1.1.** This document sets out the University’s guidance for providing funding to assist Life Sciences researchers who are taking family leave, with a technician or other support, to help maintain the progress of their academic work whilst they are on family leave. This scheme is specific to non-clinical researchers – clinical researchers based in MDS should refer to [the Family Leave Scheme for Clinical Lecturers](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/mds/documents/staff/edi/family-leave-support-for-clinical-lecturers-guidance.pdf).

**1.2.** This scheme has been developed within the context of the University of Birmingham’s membership of the Athena SWAN Charter and generous support from the Wellcome Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF). We are committed to supporting career development for researchers, who take extended periods of family leave when starting, or adding to, their family. It is the University’s intention that all staff should receive reasonable support during their leave and return to work period, and that pregnancy and/or becoming a parent in particular, are not barriers to career progression in perception or practice.

**1.3.** The assessment of the needs of the researcher will be discussed and agreed with their Head of School or Institute Director. The appropriate support normally constitutes a technician for a fixed period of time - but other reasonable support will be considered.

**1.4.** The scheme is funded through the Wellcome ISSF, subject to funding availability.

# **2. Application Process**

**2.1.** Applications are invited from researchers working within Wellcome’s funding remit, primarily life sciences, based within the University of Birmingham.

**2.2.** Wellcome funds are due to be fully spent by September 2022. Within this timeframe, there is no specific deadline for applications, but it is advised that applications are submitted as early as possible to enable timely recruitment of a suitable technician. It is possible for the technician to start before the family leave commences and/or continue after the researcher returns to work, funding permitting.

**2.3.** The maximum available for each application is up to £20,000, depending on the assessed needs and must be costed by the relevant College Finance team to ensure the support post is managed within budget. No additional monies will be available.

**2.4.** All researchers within Wellcome’s remit and employed by University of Birmingham are eligible to apply if taking family leave during their funded employment. **Further information regarding family leave can be found on the Staff HR Page at:** [**Family Friendly**](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/Time-and-Attendance/Family-Friendly/index.aspx)**.**

**2.5.** Applications should be made using the ISSF Family Leave Support Grant application form at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/WTFamily/>. You must provide a supporting statement detailing how the support requested will enable your research project to continue in your absence.

**2.6.** Any questions should be directed to Lucy Caton (Research Development Officer for Strategic Funds) at l.caton@bham.ac.uk.

# **3. Decision Process**

**3.1.** Decisions relating to the awarding of Family Leave Support and any management issues relating to existing awards will be taken by the Chair of the UoB ISSF panel together with input from the wider UoB ISSF panel, which includes dedicated EDI representation and support.

**3.2.** All eligible applications will receive fair and reasonable consideration. The final decision rests with the Chair of the UoB ISSF panel. There is no appeal process to the decision.

# **Notes for Applicants**

**1.** Management of technicians must have a named lead responsible who will provide support during the absence of the researcher on family leave. Involvement and interaction of the researcher while on family leave and the technician will be flexible and agreed by all those involved.

**2.** There are no consumables or equipment monies attached to the provision of a technician.

**3.** In circumstances where the researcher does not return to work following family leave, the support post would be reviewed by the Chair of the UoB ISSF panel.

**4.** In circumstances where the technician leaves before the end of the contract, the award would be reviewed by the Chair of the UoB ISSF panel.