

Policy on research support for staff returning to work after an extended leave of absence

Faculty returning from an extended period of absence, such as maternity leave, may be disadvantaged at a critical point in their career development, particularly for those on the tenure track who have not attained tenure. While the University has put some effort into supporting faculty members who take time for maternity leave, for instance, by extending the tenure clock, barriers remain.

One area that bears the impact of an extended period of absence is grant management. During the period of leave, research cannot completely be 'halted' in the way that teaching might: salaries of the faculty's research staff must continue to be paid. Moreover, the faculty members' time away from work may lead to lowered productivity of their research team. While a no-cost extension may be awarded by the grantor, the process of meeting their grants' deliverables could still be hindered.

Taking the example set by the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine) has established a formal mechanism to support faculty members in maintaining their research productivity upon returning from an extended leave of absence such as maternity leave, namely in the form of the **Leave Support Grants (LSGs)**.

Eligibility criteria: A faculty member who meets all of the following criteria may request an LSG if s/he:

1. Has a primary appointment with NUS Medicine;
2. Is on the tenure track (including assistant, associate and full professors);
3. Is returning from an extended leave of absence;
4. Has not already received two LSGs; **and**
5. Is the principal investigator of one or more grants held at NUS Medicine at the beginning of the period of the extended leave of absence, such as maternity leave.
6. **Nature of support:** A LSG of a maximum duration of two years will be awarded by the School, which should begin within one year after the faculty member's return from the extended leave of absence. The quantum will be 33% of the direct costs of all active grants held at NUS Medicine, of which she or he was the principal investigator at the time the extended leave of absence began, up to a cap of \$180,000 per LSG. The rationale for 33% assumes a setback of one year in productivity due to the extended leave of a typical grant of 3 years.
7. The faculty member is required to write a short proposal (using the MOE Tier 1 template) and a formal budget for the project to be submitted within half a year of her or his return. The proposal and budget could also be written prior to starting the extended leave of absence. Allowable research expenses should take reference from those of MOE Tier 1 grants.
8. The proposal can overlap in scope with the faculty member's existing grants.

The proposal and application form should be submitted to EOCD office at rachel16@nus.edu.sg

Points of clarification

Definition of extended leave of absence: An extended leave of absence refers to (i) maternity leave, which is the period matching the official period of maternity leave that the faculty member is entitled to, plus any additional leave taken (e.g. holiday or no-pay leave); and/or (ii) other situations that result in similar negative impact on a faculty member's job productivity, such as significant illness, being a major caregiver to the next-of-kin due to unforeseen circumstances. While the grant will be open to a range of reasons for enforced extended leave of absence, the approval for other types of extended leave will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Academic Affairs Division at NUS Medicine. There may be differences in maternity leave allowances based on the citizenship of the mother, but this policy shall apply regardless of the length of leave permitted or taken.

Relationship to tenure clock extension: None. The faculty member need not apply for tenure clock extension to be eligible for this grant.

Part-time return: If the faculty member returns on an initially part-time basis, her or his eligibility for this grant will not be affected.

Please submit completed form to the Assistant Dean through the Office of Equal Opportunities & Career Development at least SIX MONTHS prior to the end of leave period.

PART I – To Be Completed by Staff Member				
A. Staff Member's Particulars				
Name		Staff No.	Department	
Present Appointment		Period of Present Contract		
		From	to	
B. Leave Details (Please indicate extended leave of absence.)				
Type of Leave	Duration of Leave	Period of Leave		
		From	To	
Proposed Leave Support Grant - Please provide the following details where applicable:				
(a) the report of your extended leave of absence, including the follow-up activities since your return.				
(b) your proposed leave support grant programme:-				
i. the scope of the programme, the results expected from it, and the facilities (if any) for continuing or completing the research aspect of the programme in Singapore;				
ii. the institution(s) in which your placement has been/is being arranged, the periods (with approximate dates) involved, and the supervisor(s) concerned (please attach copies of relevant documents);				
(c) your extended leave of absence eligibility (please consult your department's HRP for assistance). If you have previously been seconded to an external organisation, please provide details such as the name of the organisation that you were seconded to, and duration and period of secondment.				
C. Grant Funding Quantum				
Funding requested from University operating budget allocated to Faculty/Department				
<input type="checkbox"/> Quantum of 33% of the direct costs of all active grants held at NUS Medicine (up to a cap of \$180,000 per LSG)				
		Total:		
Research Grants (All current awarded and active grants)				
Funding Agency	Project Title/ WBS	Role in Project (PI/Co-PI/Collaborator)	Project Duration (Indicate Start & End Date, if available)	Funding quantum allocated to applicant (direct cost) (\$)

D. Declaration and Undertaking

1. I declare that :
 - the information submitted complies with eligibility; and
 - I have informed the relevant offices of my intention to apply for leave or have already applied for the relevant category of leave.
2. I undertake to retain relevant supporting documents for 3 years.
3. **In the event that I leave the service of the University before completing my service obligation, I shall refund to the University all monies disbursed by the University to me during and/or in connection with my leave, including salary, allowances and benefits, and any funding, pro-rated for any part of my service obligation already completed.**

Signature of applicant:

Date:

PART II – To Be Completed by Head of Department

(Part II need not be completed if applicant is Head of Department.)

A. Application is supported Yes (If so, please complete C below.) No

Reasons/Comments:

Signature of Head:

Date:

PART III – To Be Completed by Assistant Dean of EOCD

A. Application is supported Yes (If so, please complete B below.) No

Reasons/Comments:

B. The applicant is to be provided with the following financial assistance:

- Quantum of 33% of the direct costs of all active grants held at NUS Medicine (up to a cap of \$180,000 per LSG) Amount: _____
- Others: _____ Amount: _____

Reasons/Comments:

Signature of Assistant Dean:

Date:

* Please delete accordingly.