

RETURNERS SCHEME

1. INTRODUCTION

The University is committed to supporting employees before, during and after extended periods of family friendly leave including maternity leave, shared parental leave and adoption leave.

To complement our suite of family friendly procedures, additional support is available through our Returners Scheme, which aims to minimise the impact of extended leave on work activities or to help colleagues to reintegrate into the workplace.

The Scheme supports individuals who require additional support, over and above extended family leave. This support is specifically provided to help colleagues transition back into the workplace as a result of family friendly leave and can be used to keep research on track, to cover teaching commitments or undertake project work upon their return to work.

Typically, the funding will be used to employ replacement staff to undertake some or all of the individual's commitments, and/or general workload thus allowing them to focus on research activities or project work.

The scheme has been developed in conjunction with, and agreed by the recognised trade unions.

A flowchart of the procedure is available in Appendix 1.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this scheme are to:

- Outline the additional support that is available to employees on their return to work;
- Inform employees of the eligibility criteria and application process for this additional support.

3. ENTITLEMENTS AND ELIGIBILITY

Employees returning from an extended period of family leave may be entitled to up to £10,000 to support an additional post, or up to £5,000 to support other research/project related activities. The maximum funding available in respect of each individual is £10,000 or a pro-rata amount for part-time employees.

To be eligible for additional support under the Returners Scheme, individuals must:

- Be returning to work following a period of extended family leave lasting a minimum of 6 months (continuously); or those who have taken discontinuous SPL which amounts to more than 6 months
- Have clear research or project objectives which are aligned to the School, Department or University strategy;
- Have a minimum of 6 months remaining on their contract if employed on a fixed-term basis.

4. PROCEDURE

To apply for funding, the individual must complete the Returners Scheme Application Form (**Form RSI 1**).

The completed form should be returned to the Equalities & OD Consultant along with any supporting documentation. Supporting documentation must include a statement in support of the application from the Assistant Dean for Research and Enterprise or relevant Director. A copy should also be sent to the HR Business Partner and if an academic, the School Executive Manager.

Applications must be submitted at least 3 months before the funding is required.

Upon receipt of the application, a panel normally consisting of the Head of OD & Equality, the Equality & OD Consultant, the relevant Assistant Dean for Research or Director and the Head of Finance (or appropriate nominated deputies), will consider the application as soon as practically possible but normally within 4 weeks of receipt.

The application outcome will be communicated by the Head of OD & Equality normally within 10 days of the panel decision.

If the application is successful, the panel will inform the HR Business Partner and the Finance Business Partner. If funding is to back-fill the individual, the School/Department should follow normal recruitment and selection practices.

As a condition of the funding, successful applicants are required to complete a short form outlining the benefits of the initiative and how the funding supported them. Reports should be completed at the end of the funding period and sent to the Director of People & OD who will then submit an annual report to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee.

If the applicant is unsuccessful, there is no right of appeal.

5. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The Scheme has a limited amount of funding and it is therefore not possible to award funding to every applicant. Applications will be considered using the following guidelines:

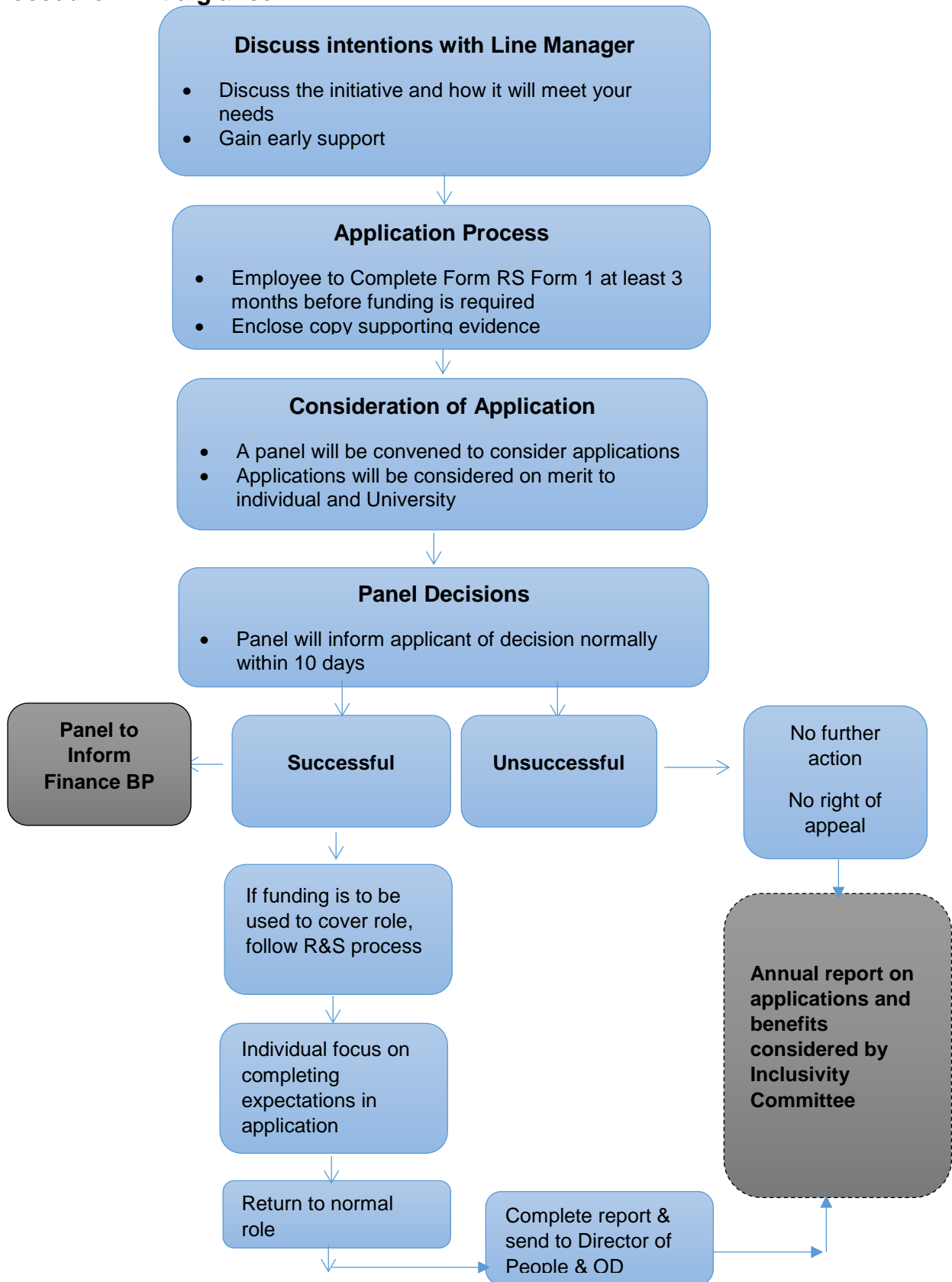
- Funding will only be awarded for the purposes identified in the application;
- For academics, the application for funding (1) fits with University and School research priorities and (2) will benefit the independent research career of the applicant; or support the development of academic practice, enhancing learning and teaching and development of pedagogical approaches
- For professional support services staff, the application for funding (1) fits with University and departmental priorities and (2) will benefit the career development of the applicant (e.g. transitional support to upskill; learning and development opportunities; expand professional network; project opportunities);
- Priority will be given to those who are requesting funds for the first time;

- If the total funding requested exceeds available funds, awards will be given to requests that the panel considers will likely have the best outcome for the individual and the University;
- Direct childcare costs will not be considered;
- There will be no right of appeal against the panel's decision;
- No support will be approved for expenditure following the end of a contract of employment.

Procedure Author – Employee Relations & Performance Adviser	Procedure Owner – Director of People and Organisational Development
Parent Policy Statement - People and Organisational Development	Public Access or Staff Only Access – Public
Version 2 – Approved June 2018	Changes and Reason for Changes – POD Policy Review Project 2017/2018

Appendix 1

The Procedure.....At a glance



Returners Scheme Form (RS1)

Name:	
Job Title:	
School/Department:	
If on Fixed Term Contract, what is the end date?	
Date Family Friendly Leave Commenced:	
Expected date of Return to Work:	

Details of the Financial Support Required

How much funding are you applying for?
(NB. Up to a maximum of £10,000)

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The Business Case

Please detail how you intend to use the funding and how you believe it will benefit your school/department, providing a full breakdown of costs. Please be as detailed as possible.

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The Personal Impact

Please detail how the funding will benefit you on your return from Family Friendly leave. Try to be as specific as possible.

Signed:

Date:

Please submit this form along with supporting statement from your Dean/Director to the Equalities & OD Consultant, Department of People & OD.