



## Women Academic Returners' Programme – Guidance Notes

### Introduction

All women at the University of Sheffield are able to have maternity cover for all or part of their role whilst on maternity leave. The Women Academic Returners' Programme provides additional support if needed, either during the period of leave or upon return to work, to minimise the impact of extended leave on research activities. This programme is open to women academics and researchers across all faculties at the University of Sheffield.

This programme can be accessed if women need additional support, over and above their maternity cover, to keep their research on track, thus enabling continued career development.

- Through maternity cover and WARP the University aims to create a working environment which encourages all women academics and researchers to flourish professionally, thus benefitting the performance of the individual, the department and the University.
- This contributes to the University's target of improving the representation of women at professorial level.

Women will be able to request up to £10,000 funding to support an additional post, or up to £5000 to support other research related activity (to a maximum total of £10,000).

### 1. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for WARP funding, the returning member of staff must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be an existing member of academic or research staff
- Completed a maternity plan which has been agreed between you and your line manager (available to download at: [www.shef.ac.uk/hr/equality/support/warp](http://www.shef.ac.uk/hr/equality/support/warp))
- Be taking maternity leave for a minimum of six months
- If on a fixed term contract, have 6 months remaining on their contract following their return from maternity leave.

If these criteria create particular difficulties for you, please contact us at [warp@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:warp@sheffield.ac.uk) to discuss your case further.

### 2. Researchers on Externally Funded Contracts

There is a central budget to meet maternity costs for those on external contracts if the department or funding body does not cover this. If you are seeking funding for maternity pay or maternity cover, a 3-way conversation between your PI/line manager (either, or both if appropriate), your HR Manager and Research Finance may be needed to discuss funding requirements.

WARP cannot be used to fund contract extensions. If you are a fixed term Researcher and wish to extend your contract, please speak to your Principle Investigator, Research Finance and your HR Manager to discuss funding options.

### **3. WARP and its uses**

Women can apply for up to £10,000 to help support their research during their leave or on their return to work. There is flexibility in funding the appropriate assistance; for example, attendance at conference, an additional post to support teaching and administration, accessing coaching, attending a training course etc. However, there are certain stipulations:

- If the funding is to support an additional post, the employment costs of the post will also need to be paid out of the money awarded to the applicant
- The funding cannot be used to pay for general childcare costs to cover your expected attendance at work
- The funding cannot be used to cover maternity costs to the department (either maternity cover or maternity pay)
- The funding cannot be used towards the consumable costs of a research project.

The recruitment of any additional WARP funded post will follow the standard University recruitment procedures, including the completion of an “About the Job” document. Guidance is available on the Human Resources web pages. ([www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/recruitment](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/recruitment))

### **4. Application Process**

Please complete the WARP application form, and forward any supporting documentation e.g. ‘Planning for Maternity’ template and the ‘About the Job’ document (if applicable) to [warp@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:warp@sheffield.ac.uk). You also need to ensure that your Head of Department provides HR with a statement of support for your application. We can only process an application once we have received both applications.

Your application should be submitted **no later than 10 weeks before** the expected date that leave will commence.

HR will then review and process the application as appropriate. The programme has a limited amount of funding and consequently applications will be considered on their merit.

HR will confirm the amount to be awarded, and the dates it is to run between, to the individual and their Head of Department.

It should be noted that if a member of staff significantly changes their expected return date after the University has committed to a start date for the additional post (if applicable), it will not be possible to alter the duration of the additional post.

The applicant and the Head of Department will be sent an evaluation to complete 3 months after WARP funding has ceased; to reflect on how beneficial WARP support has been to both the applicant and the department. The ongoing evaluation of WARP is vital in helping us to improve the programme; therefore your support in this is greatly appreciated.

Please contact [warp@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:warp@sheffield.ac.uk) if you have any queries regarding the WARP application process.