

SFI Maternity/Adoptive Policy

Effective from 1st October 2019.

V2.5 - February 2024

This policy refers to maternity leave and adoptive leave of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) grant holders and SFI-funded team members, such as postdoctoral researchers and postgraduate students¹.

1. Salaried staff with PRSI eligibility

1.1 For SFI grant holders or employees on SFI-funded contracts, who satisfy the PRSI contribution conditions for maternity and adoptive leave² and can avail of social welfare maternity benefit or social welfare adoptive benefit, SFI will provide additional funding for the duration of statutory paid entitlement in the case of maternity and adoptive leave (see Section 4 below for these durations).

1.2 For employees on SFI-funded contracts, 'Additional' in Clause 1.1 refers to the difference between social welfare maternity benefit or social welfare adoptive benefit and the salary stipulated for that employee in the SFI contract.

1.3 For SFI grant holders whose salary is paid by the host institution (e.g. academic staff on a permanent or temporary contract), 'additional' in Clause 1.1 refers to a supplement to cover the hiring of additional staff at Point 1 of the New Post Doctoral Researcher (Level 2A) of the SFI Team Member Salary Scales³ for up to 30 weeks to support the administration of the project in the grant holder's absence. Note: SFI Finance will account for both Employer PRSI and Employer Pension when processing an application for an SFI Maternity & Adoptive allowance.

1.4 The employee is responsible for ensuring that social welfare maternity benefit or social welfare adoptive benefit is claimed from Social Welfare in a timely manner.

1.5 SFI will award a supplemental grant to the Host Institution upon timely receipt of the SFI Request for Maternity/Adoptive Allowance form and any relevant supporting documentation. Payment to the Host Institution will be released on receipt of completed and duly signed Acceptance Certificates as outlined in the Letter of Offer, for the cost of providing additional funding, as described in Clause 1.2 above.

¹ To be eligible for the SFI Maternity Supplement, the grant must be granted under SFI's Grant General Terms & Conditions, as described in the Letter of Offer. Applications from grants awarded under SFI's Discover Programme Grant Terms and Conditions, as described in the Letter of Offer, are eligible to apply for the supports provided by the SFI Maternity/Adoptive Policy and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Please contact maternity@sfi.ie for further information.

² Eligible persons are those who have at least 39 weeks PRSI paid contributions in the 12 month period before the first day of maternity leave or date of placement of your child or at least 39 weeks PRSI paid contributions since first starting work **and** at least 39 weeks PRSI paid or credited contributions in the relevant tax year or in the year following the relevant tax year. Alternatively, you must have at least 26 weeks PRSI paid contributions in the relevant tax year **and** at least 26 weeks PRSI paid contributions in the tax year prior to the relevant tax year. Only PRSI Classes A, E and H count.

³<https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies>

1.6 A no-cost extension can be applied to individual led grants where it relates to the maternity leave or adoptive leave, for a period of up to 12 months. Applications should be made through SESAME. No-cost extensions related to maternity and/or adoptive leave will not affect an application for a no-cost extension made subsequently during the term of the grant. For centre-type grants, requests for no cost extensions will be dealt with on a case by case basis and will consider whether an extension, or what type of extension, is required.

2. Salaried staff without PRSI eligibility

2.1 For SFI grant holders or employees on SFI-funded contracts, who do not satisfy the PRSI contribution conditions for maternity and adoptive leave and cannot avail of social welfare maternity benefit or social welfare adoptive benefit, SFI will provide additional funding for the equivalent duration of statutory paid entitlement in the case of maternity and adoptive leave (see Section 4 below for these durations).

2.2 For employees on SFI-funded contracts, 'Additional' in Clause 2.1 refers to the salary stipulated for that employee in the SFI contract.

2.3 For SFI grant holders whose salary is paid by the host institution (e.g. academic staff on a permanent or temporary contract), 'additional' in Clause 2.1 refers to a supplement to cover the hiring of additional staff at Point 1 of the New Post Doctoral Researcher (Level 2A) of the SFI Team Member Salary Scales⁴ for up to 30 weeks to support the administration of the project in the grant holder's absence. Note: SFI Finance will account for both Employer PRSI and Employer Pension when processing an application for an SFI Maternity & Adoptive allowance.

2.4 The Host Institution is responsible for verifying the ineligibility for social welfare maternity benefit or social welfare adoptive benefit of the employee.

2.5 SFI will award a supplemental grant to the Host Institution upon timely receipt of the SFI Request for Maternity/Adoptive Allowance form and any relevant supporting documentation. Payment to the Host Institution will be released on receipt of completed and duly signed Acceptance Certificates as outlined in the Letter of Offer, for the cost of providing additional funding, as described in Clause 2.3 above.

2.6 A no-cost extension can be applied to individual led grants where it relates to the maternity leave or adoptive leave, for a period of up to 12 months. Applications should be made through SESAME. No-cost extensions related to maternity and/or adoptive leave will not affect an application for a no-cost extension made subsequently during the term of the grant. For centre-type grants, requests for no cost extensions will be dealt with on a case by case basis and will consider whether an extension, or what type of extension, is required.

3. Postgraduate students

3.1 For postgraduate students⁵ funded on SFI grants, SFI will provide additional funding for the equivalent duration of the statutory paid entitlement period in the case of maternity and adoptive leave.

3.2 For postgraduate students funded on SFI grants the amount of this supplement is equivalent to the postgraduate stipend for up to 26 weeks.

⁴ <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies>

⁵ The postgraduate student must be a research student with a studentship contract duration of 24 months or greater; this policy does not extend to taught Masters students of any duration.

3.3 This supplement is conditional on the institution not requiring the student to pay additional student fees for this period of maternity or adoptive leave; evidence will be required of same.⁶

3.4 SFI will award a supplemental grant to the Host Institution upon timely receipt of the SFI Request for Maternity/Adoptive Allowance form and any relevant supporting documentation. Payment to the Host Institution will be released on receipt of completed and duly signed Acceptance Certificates as outlined in the Letter of Offer, for the cost of providing additional funding, as described in Clause 3.2 above.

3.5 A no-cost extension can be applied to individual led grants where it relates to the maternity leave or adoptive leave, for a period of up to 12 months. Applications should be made through SESAME. No-cost extensions related to maternity and/or adoptive leave will not affect an application for a no-cost extension made subsequently during the term of the grant. For centre-type grants, requests for no cost extensions will be dealt with on a case by case basis and will consider whether an extension, or what type of extension, is required.

4. Statutory entitlements to paid leave

4.1 Maternity Leave

- 0 weeks for employees who do not satisfy the PRSI contribution conditions
- 26 consecutive weeks for employees who satisfy the PRSI contributions, whose contracts of employment (associated with SFI funding) have 26 weeks or longer to run.
- For employees with less than 26 weeks left in their contract (associated with SFI funding), their entitlement to paid Maternity Leave only extends to the end of their contract.
- Employees also have the right to an additional period of 16 weeks unpaid leave, which must be taken immediately following the maternity leave period. There is no entitlement to social welfare maternity benefit for the additional sixteen weeks leave.

4.2 Adoptive Leave

- 0 weeks for employees who do not satisfy the PRSI contribution conditions
- 24 consecutive weeks for employees who satisfy the PRSI contributions, whose contracts of employment (associated with SFI funding) have 24 weeks or longer to run.
- For employees with less than 24 weeks left in their contract (associated with SFI funding), their entitlement to paid Adoptive Leave only extends to the end of their contract.
- Employees also have the right to an additional period of 16 weeks unpaid leave, which must be taken immediately following the adoptive leave period. There is no entitlement to social welfare adoptive benefit for the additional sixteen weeks leave.

In the case of a foreign adoption, some or all of the sixteen weeks additional adoptive leave may be taken immediately before the date of placement. There is no entitlement to social welfare adoptive benefit for the additional sixteen weeks leave.

⁶ Per the [SFI Grant Budget Policy](#), Student stipends and fees are ringfenced and cannot be used for any other purpose without the express prior approval of SFI. SFI's contribution to the student stipend must be paid in full to the student.

5. Reporting requirements

The progress reporting requirements for all SFI grants includes annual reporting, completion of the annual stock take of SFI Research Outputs (formerly referred to as the SFI Census) and the completion of a Researcher Snapshot.

SFI grantees are requested to submit their annual report by 31st January every year to reflect the activity of the previous calendar year (January – December). The annual report template, which is available on SESAME, must be used. An additional final report, prepared with a template that is also available on SESAME, must be submitted within three months of the expiration date of the award. In addition to the annual report, grantees are also obliged to keep their SESAME Researcher Profile updated since the annual stock take of SFI Research Outputs is drawn directly from the data entered into the Researcher Profile; this must also be updated and completed by the relevant deadline every year.

The deadline for submission of the annual and final reports can be extended for grant holders who are on maternity/adoptive leave at the report submission deadline. These extensions must be agreed by SFI between 15 days and one month before the report submission deadline. No extension will be granted to the deadline for update and completion of the Researcher Profile in support of the annual stock take of SFI Research Outputs.

Grant holders wishing to request a reporting extension owing to maternity/adoptive leave should do so by emailing a request to their SFI Programme Manager and copying maternity@sfi.ie.

Application process

All notifications in relation to maternity and adoptive leave, and requests for extensions to the term of a grant (made in the SFI Request for Maternity/Adoptive Allowance form) should be submitted by the SFI grant holder to: maternity@sfi.ie. The form should be duly stamped and signed by all parties including the finance office within the relevant host institution, and should reach SFI at least two months before the planned start date of the claimant's maternity/adoptive leave. When SFI-salaried staff members are employed by consecutive SFI awards which span the period of maternity/adoptive leave, separate forms must be completed with reference to relevant grants.