

# Grants and Parenthood



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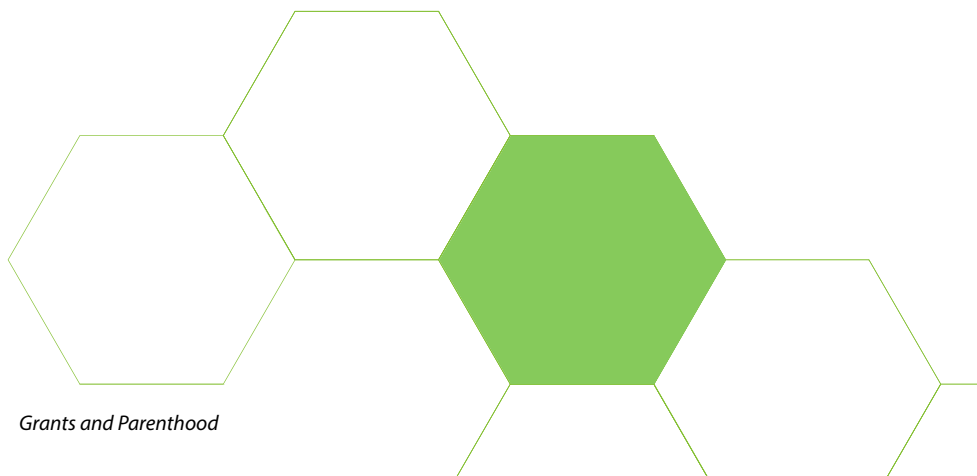
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# Grants and Parenthood

*This material presents basic information relating to parenthood and work on grant projects. It provides a general overview of the most frequent real-life situations that can help scientists who are parents find their way and achieve successful implementation of the grant in conjunction with raising a family. It does not, however, describe steps to be taken in the case of any specific grants or the practices implemented by any particular providers. At the end of this material, you will find contact details for the Grant Office specialists who are prepared to provide you with one-to-one consulting and assistance.*

*Various grant schemes are quite diverse, not only in terms of their scientific fields, but also in terms of the conditions of implementation of the financed grants. Therefore, it is always necessary to deal with the particular grant within the particular subsidy title that coincides with parenthood. It is important to distinguish between individual grants (where the recipient is an individual) and team grants (where the recipient is the entire organization, such as Masaryk University); at the same time, it is necessary to note whether or not an employment relationship is being established in connection with the particular grant.*



## Before filing an application

Some grants, typically grants awarded after the completion of doctoral study, prescribe, as a criterion of admissibility, a specific time period after the completion of the doctoral (Ph.D.) study, during which an application may be filed (e.g. seven years after completion of the Ph.D. study). This time period may be extended, usually by the duration of the applicant's parental leave.

## Before commencing investigation work under the grant

Postponement of the grant implementation commencement due to pregnancy / maternity or parental leave may not necessarily be approved. This may represent a problem, in particular in the case of individual grants where it is necessary to commence the grant implementation within a certain pre-determined period of time / academic year and where such period of time is not affected in any way by the recipient's pregnancy or maternity / parental leave.

On the other hand, some mobility grants also offer the advantage of providing a financial allowance for your spouse and child travelling with you (e.g. Fulbright scholar program).

- In the event of a grant termination or a waiver of a previously approved application, it is important to find out whether this might affect your possibility of re-applying for the same grant in the future.

In the case of team grants, it is not necessarily a problem to agree on joining the team at a later stage and to find a temporary substitute for the (male or female) scientists leaving on parental leave.

The advantage is that the parent who takes maternity / parental leave may, under the conditions specified below, conclude a new employment agreement or an agreement on work outside the employment relationship and, at the same time, receive maternity pay<sup>1</sup> in the case of maternity leave, or the child allowance<sup>2</sup> in the case of parental leave, as the case may be.

- Detailed information relating to the employees' maternity and parental leave can be found in the brochure entitled "Maternity and Parental Leave in Brief", which is available at the WLB project website [here](#).

<sup>1</sup> Czech equivalent: *peněžitá pomoc v mateřství*

<sup>2</sup> Czech equivalent: *rodičovský příspěvek*

## Changes in the course of grants under implementation

It is always necessary to take into consideration the conditions of the particular grant provider and the particular type of the grant. The situation is usually easier in the case of team grants, where it is necessary to find a substitute for the given person in compliance with the rules of the particular assigned grant (the type of the given position usually determines whether the relevant change is classified as material or non-material, which has an impact on the manner of reporting such changes – a material change is usually subject to the grant provider's approval) and depends on the position occupied by the scientist-parent (investigator or team member). A substitute must be found in compliance with the rules of the assigned grant (which, in some cases, may restrict the circle of persons who may take the position of the grant investigator). These situations must always be discussed directly with the grant provider as early as possible, but it is not usually necessary to terminate the grant; a change can be approved or an amendment to the existing contract can be concluded.

In the case of some grants (e.g. grants of the European Research Council - ERC), it is even possible to claim some of the associated costs as eligible costs, but it must always be specifically consulted in advance.

### **Basic information pertaining to maternity and parental leave and the associated benefits**

- The entitlement to statutory maternity pay for a period of (up to) 28 weeks (or 37 weeks in the case of multiple pregnancies) excludes the possibility of working for the same employer in the same position, which may present complications for the smooth continuance of the grant. During maternity leave the parent may be employed under a different employment agreement (or an agreement on work performed outside employment relationship), provided that the employee should not, under this different agreement, perform the same work or same type of work that he/she regularly performs for the employer (i.e. a scientist may not be employed as a scientist again, but can be employed as an administrative employee, for example). It may not be possible in some cases to conclude a new agreement for a different position in the case of grants that are more precisely specified. In the case of continued co-operation, including adjustments of the FTE (e.g. reduction of the FTE), under the same employment agreement, the parent would lose entitlement to the maternity pay. Subject to fulfilment of the pre-determined general rules, the benefit may also be paid out to the parent's spouse (fathers are entitled

to maternity pay if they agree with the child's mother in writing and the mother waives her entitlement to this benefit; in such a case, the father who takes the paternity leave and receives the maternity pay must fulfil the same conditions as the mother, i.e. he must have a health insurance policy).

- Maternity leave following childbirth may never be shorter than 14 weeks and may not under any circumstances be terminated or interrupted sooner than 6 weeks after the date of childbirth.
- Furthermore, it is necessary to consider safety risks or any other limitations associated with pregnancy and maternity. In certain specific cases, it may be necessary to resolve the situation by means of transferring the employee to a different position, or it may even constitute an obstacle to work on the employer's side (where the employee continues to be entitled to his/her salary compensation). In the event of transfer to a different position with a lower salary, a compensation payment can be used (see the brochure "Maternity and Parental Leave in Brief", available [here](#)).
- In the course of the parental leave, parents can make primary or secondary income practically without any restrictions, without any fear of losing the entitlement to the child allowance that may be, according to the currently applicable legislation, paid out until the child is four years of age. The only statutory conditions are that the parent ensures full-time day care for the child. And it does not make any difference whether such care is provided by means of using a nursery, kindergarten or baby-sitting provided by a family member or other person. Stricter rules apply only for children under two years of age. These children may only be sent to a nursery, kindergarten or another pre-school facility for a maximum of 46 hours per month; otherwise, the parent loses the entitlement to the child allowance.

In the case of individual grants, it is again a matter of the specific rules of the given scheme. For example, the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic reflects parental and maternal obligations in the case of post-doc grants, but each case must be resolved individually. At the moment, it is only possible to file two applications for changes per year.

- In the event of a grant termination or waiver of an already approved application, it is important to find out whether this might affect your possibility of re-applying for the same grant in the future.

An ombudsman has been involved in resolving the existing situation in the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic in connection with drawing post-doc grants where risks of indirect discrimination have been identified. He has identified the following main problems:

**1. In the event of pregnancy, it is not possible to postpone the grant implementation.**

**2. The rule allowing only two fixed dates within a calendar year for filing applications for grant interruption may result in a reduction in the applicants' sickness pay calculation – specifically in maternity pay.**

**3. The recipient's obligation to inform the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic in writing of all changes pertaining to the investigation that might influence the grant implementation, in the face of the fact that the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms guarantees protection of private and family life, specifically the right to information, self-determination and autonomous decisions on personal integrity.** The information about a woman's pregnancy is confidential and represents a piece of sensitive personal data.

**4. The possibility to interrupt the grant implementation only for the precise period of one year.** This rule does not correspond with the system of maternity and parental leave in the Czech Republic and, moreover, it does not allow an interruption for a shorter period of time.

The situation is still being discussed by competent institutions, but there is no comprehensive solution yet.

In addition, the rules applicable to post-doc grants were newly modified in 2014 and these grants are now being called "junior grants". A new condition has been prescribed before filing an application in the form of a six-month continuous stay abroad at the post-doc level. This rule has been widely criticised, not only due to its discriminatory nature for parents, but also due to the disadvantaging of people who take either several shorter internships or who obtained a doctoral degree in a different country. The personnel composition changes in the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (in autumn 2014) are expected to re-open the discussion of these rules.

## Research plan for the maternity period

Set up and write down a basic plan of how your research could continue during your pregnancy and maternity. Such a plan will help you in successfully continuing your research and in being able to better discuss the situation with your supervisor and your colleagues. Try to answer the following questions:

How much will you be able to do before childbirth? Try to define the key milestones that you will be realistically able to achieve before you start your maternity leave. Focus on those that require your physical presence at the workplace.

**Do you know someone who could assume your specific tasks for the term of your leave?**

- Some members of your wider team could take over some specific tasks and continue with their implementation; try to reach an agreement with them in advance.
- With the research group leader, find out or discuss what the possibilities of financing a substitute who could take over your work are and whether any grant financing could be used.
- Upon grant preparation, consider whether it would be possible to create a position for an assistant who would assist you at times when you need to reduced your workload or when you are physically restricted from performing certain activities representing a health risk.
- In any case, clarify who will receive “credit” for the implementation of the given tasks, i.e. how any publications or other outputs would be assigned. Also, make an agreement, if possible in writing, as to how long this substitution would last and think of what your return would look like – at what time, to what position, for what FTE.

Does it seem sensible for you to take advantage of any flexible types of work? Drawing the time-off in connection with your childbirth and maternity means that you are fully entitled to interrupt your work and devote your time only to your family. However, if you wish to continue working under some adjusted conditions, it is advisable

to think about it in advance and discuss the possible alternatives at your workplace. Consider what particular tasks would be suitable for such an adjusted regime (e.g. preparation of grant applications, study of literature, writing of articles, conference calls).

Set up a worst-case scenario plan in case of any health problems during your pregnancy. Consider possible resolutions to common situations that might occur, for example if you need bed rest, if there is a premature childbirth, or if you need a longer convalescence after childbirth.

→ Taken from the materials of the National Postdoctoral Association, Washington D.C., available [here](#).

## Contact details for the Grant Office specialists

**CEITEC Grant Office** | <http://www.ceitec.cz/grant-office/t1615>

### **Cetocoen | RECETOX Grant Office**

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**We recommend that you also consult with your HR department specialists regarding your specific situation.**





## Are you interested in one-to-one consulting in the area of work-life balance?

Beginning in March 2013, employees can take advantage of our consulting services provided as a part of the WLB project. The employees of OP RDI projects can address our consultants with their queries related to balancing their personal and work lives:

- Are you planning to take maternity or parental leave and do you want to get familiar with your rights and obligations?
- Are you planning to return to work from maternity or parental leave and are considering flexible forms of employment (part-time, compressed work week, etc.)?
- Do you want to learn more about the available forms of balancing your personal and work life and find a way to come to an agreement about them with your employer?
- Are you interested in the up-to-date information relating to grant financing with respect to female scientists leaving on maternity or parental leave?

In such cases, do not hesitate to contact the WLB project consultants either by telephone or e-mail during workdays.

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**More information on the WLB project:**

<http://www.ceitec.eu/work-life-balance-project/t1364>





Project Partners:

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