

## **Annex B**

### **Long-term Sick Leave Policy for Fellows**

#### **1. Purpose and scope**

1.1. This policy covers Schmidt Science Fellows (hereafter “Fellow/s”) in receipt of active support from the Schmidt Science Fellows program at any stage of the Fellowship Research Placement (hereafter “Fellowship”). This policy has been reviewed to ensure it is applicable across the range of national and regional jurisdictions where Fellows may be located.

1.2. In the unfortunate event that a Fellow is seriously unwell or injured such that this prevents them from undertaking the requirements of the program or their placement for more than one month, the Fellow will receive support in accordance with the terms of this policy to take leave from the Fellowship in which they are participating.

1.3. Fellows are not employees of the program and are located throughout the world, in association with host institutions. Our long-term sick leave policy aims to be flexible and adaptable, within clear principles, to provide the most appropriate financial and logistical support for each individual circumstance.

1.4 This policy is non-contractual and may be amended or withdrawn at any time. Sick Leave is offered on a discretionary basis and each request will be considered fairly with regards to the particular circumstances of each case.

#### **2. Procedure**

2.1. A Fellow seeking to take a period of sickness absence will normally be expected to have discussed their situation with their placement PI in the first instance. Should a medical practitioner issue a Fellow with certification that they should not work for one month or more then they should inform the Executive Director of this without undue delay. Fellows must provide a copy of their medical certificate, including information on the start date of absence from the lab and program, and expected or estimated duration of absence. If a Fellow does not comply with the requirement to notify the Executive Director (as above) or comply with any other reasonable requests concerning the implementation of this policy, they may not be entitled to benefit from the provisions of this policy.

2.2. Requests and queries will be managed in confidence and in accordance with any applicable Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.

#### **3. Long-term sick leave eligibility for current Fellows**

3.1. Providing the criteria and procedure described above at section 2 is met the Fellow will ordinarily be entitled to support under the provisions of this policy. The period of sick leave will begin as notified on the initial medical certificate.

3.2. Support for absence from the program for long-term sickness would normally be limited to a maximum of 12 months cumulatively, over the duration of a Fellow's Fellowship.

3.3. In the event that a Fellow is certified long-term sick necessitating more than three months' absence before beginning their Fellowship Year, the program will normally propose deferral until a later Fellowship Year.

3.4. Sickness absence of less than one month is normally required to be managed by a Fellow and their PI within usual work flexibility and in accordance with the PI's own policies and procedures.

3.5. Each Fellow's circumstances will be discussed with the individual to ensure that this policy is implemented in the way that best and most appropriately supports their needs, their long-term interests as a Fellow, the aims of the program and, to the extent appropriate, taking into account any provision or support available from any host institution.

#### **4. Placement**

4.1. A Fellow on long-term sick leave will be expected not to work, even remotely. Where possible, the program will extend the placement period of any Fellow requiring long term sick leave of more than one month by the equivalent period of time to enable the completion of placement projects (up to a maximum of 12 months).

#### **5. Global Meetings**

5.1. Global Meetings are held at international locations periodically throughout the Fellowship Year. Should a period of long-term sick leave which has been notified to the Executive Director (as above) entail a Fellow missing one Global Meeting that they would otherwise be committed to attend, the program will require and support them to attend the corresponding Global Meeting in the following year.

5.2. However, in the event of a Fellow missing two or more Global Meetings due to long term sick leave, the program will require and support them to attend all of the Meetings in the following year (in addition to the Global Meetings they were able to attend in the previous year), to provide the opportunity for them to develop relationships within a cohort environment.

#### **6. Stipend payments for Fellows**

6.1. Regular stipend payments to Fellows will ordinarily be suspended for the duration of any period of long-term sick leave. Any balance of stipend payments will resume on a pro-rated schedule once the Fellow returns to the program.

6.2. A Fellow on long-term sick leave of between one to three months will be entitled to an additional sick leave supplement of a maximum \$25,000 for the full three months (for the duration of the Fellowship), pro-rated for periods less than three months.

6.3. Long-term sick leave of three to 12 months does not entail further additional stipend. For example, a 2021 Fellow taking three months or more sick leave after six months on the program would have a stipend payment schedule as follows:

- Regular payments - \$50,000 (initial stipend of \$25,000, second payment of \$25,000)
- Long-term sick leave payment – capped at \$25,000
- No stipend payments while on the remainder of long-term sick leave
- Regular payments resume on return to the program - \$50,000 (balance of regular stipend, payable as \$25,000 and \$25,000).

6.4. Where a Fellow is receiving their stipend through their host institution, the program will liaise with the institution to ensure – to the extent possible - that any arrangement with the host institution will be (at minimum) equivalent to the benefits of this policy, and the associated payments as explained in the example above.

6.5. Fellows should not receive program benefits in the event that institutional provision would meet or exceed the level the program would provide, but the program will ordinarily fund the incremental difference should an institutional benefit have a lower value than the program's provision. Fellows should also ensure they receive all relevant national or local government benefits applicable to their circumstances and entitlements and should seek their own advice in relation to this.

## **7. Mentoring and keeping in touch during sick leave**

7.1. Fellows on long-term sick leave should expect to be contacted from time to time by their Academic Council Mentor in order to discuss their wellbeing, expected length of continued absence, appropriate plans to stay up to date with their host lab and, when appropriate, return to work plans. Such contact is intended to provide reassurance and will be kept to a reasonable minimum. A meeting with a Fellow's Academic Council Mentor is required before a Fellow returns to work. If a Fellow has any concerns or if there are any material changes relevant to long-term sick leave (whether about the reason for their absence or their ability to return to the program, for example), they should contact their Academic Council Mentor as soon as reasonably practicable.

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