



PROCEDURES REGARDING STUDENT PREGNANCY, MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND INFANT CARE

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UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON

PROCEDURES REGARDING STUDENT PREGNANCY, MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND INFANT CARE

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Roehampton is committed to creating a working and learning environment that is inclusive, where people understand, appreciate and value the diversity of each individual and where practices make people feel valued and able to participate and achieve their full potential. Legal protection for students during pregnancy and maternity has been significantly strengthened in England, Scotland and Wales with the commencement of the Equality Act 2010 (the Act). The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as one of nine protected characteristics and prohibits discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Roehampton University is mindful of its responsibilities to all students and will support students who become pregnant or have young infants throughout the period of study.

This policy statement has the intention of enabling students at Roehampton during pregnancy and maternity to continue with their studies and to ensure that pregnant students and students who have recently given birth are aware of the University's approach to pregnant student support, their entitlements and receive appropriate information.

In addition, students who are partners of new parents are able to take paternity related absence and receive advice and support.

This policy is intended for all students. Research students should also refer to the **Research Degrees Handbook** alongside this policy (please refer to appendix 5 for parental leave).

3. GUIDANCE

When a student discloses that they are pregnant it is important that they receive consistent support and advice.

3.1 Disclosure

It is important for pregnant students to be aware of the support available to them at the university with respect to their personal circumstances and with respect to their studies.

While it is not compulsory, it is recommended that students disclose the fact that they are pregnant to an appropriate person at the University. The most appropriate person to inform at first instance is either the student's Academic Guidance Tutor (AGT), Student Wellbeing Officer (SWO) or Director of Studies. The university should know of their circumstances in order to ensure that they are aware of the support available and to co-ordinate arrangements.

Students who need information about the implications of their pregnancy for studies should seek such information from their AGT or SWO. The Academic Guidance Tutor should provide information about the implications for course or programme completion including arrangements that could be made for assessments, catching up on missed seminars and lectures, course placements, time to attend appointments, maternity related absence and deferment.

A SWO will be able to support the student by liaising with internal services such as the academic department, accommodation etc. and to liaise where needed with external services.

The student finance team can provide the student with guidance on the financial implications of their pregnancy including availability of student loans, maternity benefits and maternity pay, if any and local childcare facilities.

Informed choice

Members of staff should not attempt to influence a student's decision about the continuation of the pregnancy nor make any assumptions about whether the pregnancy was planned. Some students will be delighted to discover they are pregnant while others may find this news an unwelcome shock.

If a student seeks advice from a member of staff regarding their decision to continue their pregnancy, the staff member should refer the student to the Student Medical Centre, to their own GP or to the Family Planning Association.

3.2 Health and safety

There are health and safety considerations that arise during pregnancy and breastfeeding and any risks that pregnant students could be exposed to during their studies will need to be assessed.

The highest risk of damage occurring to the foetus is during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. Students should be encouraged to notify the University as early as possible of their pregnancy (see above). Where a student is unsure as to whether they will proceed with their pregnancy, it may still be appropriate to conduct a health and safety risk assessment. With laboratory work there is some risk to pregnancy in the first trimester and the academic department should make this known to students at the beginning of their studies to encourage early disclosure.

The level of risk that a student is exposed to will depend on the requirements and nature of their programme. For many courses or areas of study the risks will be low but others that involve the following are more likely to present greater risks:

- physical activity, including lifting and carrying
- laboratory, field or other practical work particularly in relation to the use of chemicals or infectious disease
- field work

If a student is required to undertake a placement, for example a teaching placement, as part of their course, the Academic Guidance Tutor will need to liaise with the placement provider to ensure that a health and safety assessment is conducted. If practical work is a requirement of the course or area of study, this will need to be considered within a health and safety assessment. Consideration should also be given to the risks that may arise during examinations. For further information on considerations in examinations see below.

Further information on health and safety considerations during pregnancy and breastfeeding is provided in '**New and expectant mothers at work: a guide for employers**'.

A student is responsible for raising any further concerns regarding their health and safety, the risk assessment should be completed by an appropriate member of academic staff supported by the health and safety office.

3.3 Student support plan

For students who proceed with their pregnancy, a student pregnancy support plan will help coordinate support and ensure that their needs are met during pregnancy, following birth and when the student returns to their studies. Support plans should be developed jointly by the SWO and academic department. This should be agreed with the student and cover important areas such as communication about student's pregnancy, health and safety, examinations and assessments, maternity related absences. This should happen at the earliest point possible after a student discloses they are pregnant. The student is responsible for updating the university if any changes occur which mean the support plan should be reviewed by the staff member identified in the support plan. For example, any complications with the pregnancy. The pregnancy support plan is valid for 12 months post birth.

3.4 Assessments and examinations

Academic departments should take responsibility for managing any adjustments for pregnant students. If a student is due to give birth near to or during assessment deadlines or the examinations period and wishes to complete their assessed work or sit their examinations, they should be allowed to do so.

In examinations, pregnant students may require rest breaks and they may need to visit the toilet more frequently than a student who is not pregnant. They may also require a more comfortable and supportive chair. Consequently, the student may need to sit the examination in a separate location to other students.

If students are concerned about sitting examinations or meeting assessed work deadlines or if they have a pregnancy related health condition, they should be advised to seek advice from their midwife or doctor. If the students' midwife or doctor advises against the student sitting an examination or trying to meet the assessed work deadline, the student should contact the Department in order to explore options such as mitigating circumstances, extensions to submission deadlines, deferrals and alternative forms of assessment. A pregnancy support plan should be sufficient evidence to support extensions as required. Students will need to provide evidence to support requests for deferral or alternative assessment as per the mitigating circumstances policy.

3.5 Length of maternity related absence

All students should be allowed to take maternity related absence following the birth of their child. How long the student will want to take and can take will be determined by their personal circumstances and the structure and content of their course. Tutors should not automatically require students to interrupt for a full year but should work with the student to establish a suitable return to study date earlier if appropriate. Whilst the academic department will ensure to support the students maternity related absence and individual circumstances, it may be in the student's best interest to interrupt in order to give them the best opportunity to complete their work.

Where course structure or content prevent a student from returning to study sooner than they would like to, the reason given will need to be justified in writing to the student.

If the Tutor has concerns about the health of the student in relation to the student's proposed return date and course requirements, these concerns should be expressed in writing and the student should be recommended to return to their GP, health visitor or an occupational therapist for clearance before recommencing their course.

As a minimum, students are required to take two weeks compulsory maternity related absence. The maximum period that students may take off at any one time for maternity related absence is normally 12 months, although this may be extended in very exceptional circumstances. The student's Department should take steps to ensure the student is kept up to speed with developments in the field.

Students should be enabled, as far as is possible, to complete the requirements of their course or module before they take maternity related absence. In some cases, the student may want sit examinations or submit alternative forms of assessment during their maternity related absence. Where a student is unable to complete their course or module before taking maternity related absence, they should, if possible, be allowed to complete the course or module on return.

Students need to decide when they start their maternity related absence in agreement with their Tutor. Where a student is close to their due date and unable to study as planned, the University may, in consultation with the student, start their maternity related absence earlier or, if appropriate, explore alternative methods through which the student can meet their course requirements.

Study abroad students should speak to SWO's and study abroad team to discuss their options. International students should speak to the visa compliance team in regard to absence. An international student can continue to be sponsored on a Tier 4 visa if they need to interrupt their studies for a maximum of 60 days. This means that the student won't need to leave the UK and their visa won't be affected in any way. If they need to interrupt their studies for longer, then they will normally need to leave the UK and then apply for a new Tier 4 entry clearance in order to return to the UK and resume their studies. With regard to short-term visa students, as sponsors do not have any monitoring and reporting duties, there is no UKVI guidance regarding their absences. However, it is clear from the guidance that they should not overstay their visa and cannot apply to extend this visa in the UK. UKVI does not have any specific guidance for Tier 4 students' absences due to pregnancy but for absences in general.

Returning from maternity related absence

The date that a student intends on returning from maternity related absence should be agreed with the student prior to their starting maternity related absence (see above). However, this date may change during the course of the student's maternity related absence and students should be encouraged to notify their Tutor as soon as possible of any change in their expected return date.

Before a student returns from a period of maternity related absence consideration should be given to their needs on their return. Options should be discussed with the student in the development of their support plan and can be confirmed with the student prior to their return from maternity related absence. For example:

- **Varying the rate of study:** students should be made aware of any options that exist to resume their programme on a part-time basis, only if part time study is available option for their course. If no current options are available and a student requests to study on a part-time rather than a full-time basis, the request should not be declined unless it can be justified. If requests are declined, justification should be provided in writing. A student should make requests in writing at the earliest point possible to the AGT or Head of Department who are responsible for overseeing these requests.
- **Ensuring a smooth return:** Formal welcome back meetings with key staff for example, their Academic Guidance Tutor or Director of Studies and SWO will help to ensure a smooth return. It is recommended that these meetings take place the first week of a students return. The student will need to make contact with their AGT/ Director/ SWO at least 3 weeks in advance of returning.

4. SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

4.1 Student Scholarships

Students in receipt of a scholarship will be entitled to the scholarship for the months within a year that they are registered for study on a pro rata basis. If a student interrupts their studies, they will not be eligible to receive any scholarships.

4.2 Research council training grants

On 1 April 2010 the UK research councils introduced harmonised maternity leave and pay entitlements for students in receipt of training grants. Students in receipt of a training grant should refer to the current terms and conditions of their grant provider as early as possible.

Sources of financial support for students during pregnancy and maternity

This section focuses on sources of support for UK home students. EU and international students should be advised to contact their home government and sponsor for information on pregnancy and maternity entitlements.

Regulations on undergraduate student financial support in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland contain provisions for discretion when determining if all or part of a student's **grant or loan** due is payable when a student is absent from their course for reasons other than illness. When deciding whether it would be appropriate to pay all or part of the grant or loan support consideration is given to:

- the reasons for the student's absence
- the length of the absence; and
- the financial hardship caused by not paying all or part of the support

Students are likely to require support if they want to continue receiving their grant or loan when they take maternity related absence and further information should be sought on the process for continuing loan or grant payments from the grant or loan administrator.

Any student can apply for the University **Student Hardship Fund** if they are absent from their course for reasons other than illness and would be unable to return due to hardship. However, there is no guarantee that funding will be granted as resources are limited. More information on how to apply can be found **here**.

Pregnant students may be entitled to government welfare benefits and grants and these should be explored in the first instance as, unlike student loans, they do not need to be repaid. Student Finance will be able to provide information on the benefits and grants available and information is also provided by ante natal clinics and on the government's website www.direct.gov.co.uk.

4.3 Breastfeeding and resting facilities

The University provides rest and breastfeeding rooms for students' use on campus. These can be found in the following locations: Whiteland's G044. These rooms can be accessed through security.

Some students may want to breastfeed in public. It is unlawful under the Equality Act (2010), to ask students not to breastfeed in public places. Tensions may arise if other people view's on breastfeeding in public differ. Where the protected rights of others conflict with the rights of the student to breastfeed, the needs of the student who is breastfeeding should take precedence.

5. ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY FACILITIES

Students who are breastfeeding will not be denied access to university facilities or service on the grounds that they are breastfeeding. As long as babies are supervised at all times by the student parent and the student is considerate of the needs of others, babies should be allowed onto university premises, excluding lectures and seminars unless under exceptional circumstances and if the lecturer is informed in advance. Children of the student parent are also allowed onto university premises, excluding lectures and seminars unless under exceptional circumstances and if the lecturer is informed in advance, and a risk plan is completed and signed off by the Academic Head of Department.

Students who become pregnant whilst living on campus are able to stay on campus until the baby is due, but they will need to notify Accommodation Services who can liaise with Health and Safety and also discuss when the contract will end (so not further fees will be payable).

Due to not having on campus family accommodation the university can not provide accommodation for parents with babies and the students accommodation contract will be brought to an end at an agreed point during the pregnancy. SWO's are able to work with students to support them to find alternative accommodation.

6. PATERNITY

If a student is unable to meet a coursework deadline or other requirement of their programme because of their partner's pregnancy are entitled to apply for mitigating circumstances, providing medical evidence of the pregnancy/birth. Paternity leave is in entitlement of all those whose partners have a baby.

Flexibility will be shown to students want to attend their partner's antenatal appointments. In addition, students may need to take time off if their partner has complications with their pregnancy or a serious pregnancy-related illness.

If students want to take paternity related absence, they should inform their Academic Guidance Tutor or of their partner's pregnancy as soon as possible and preferably at least 15 weeks before the baby is due. Early notification should be encouraged as partners may need to attend antenatal appointments. Tutors of students who are on paternity related absence should provide materials from seminars and lectures missed.

If a student chooses to sit an exam while their partner is in labour or during their paternity related absence, they should be made aware of the University mitigating circumstances policy. If a student is unable to sit an exam or submit coursework on time because of their partner's pregnancy or labour the student should contact the Department in order to explore options such as extensions to submission deadlines, deferrals and resits. Such arrangements may also be appropriate if the student's partner has a serious pregnancy related illness. In some circumstances a student may wish to interrupt their studies for up to 12 months for paternity reasons, this should be discussed with the Academic Guidance Tutor at the earliest point possible. Interruption of studies for any longer should be discussed on an individual case basis.

In other compulsory elements of courses such as field trips or work placements, the University will consider the feasibility of students undertaking them at an alternative time.

7. ADOPTION / SURROGACY ARRANGEMENTS

Students who have been matched for adoption or are entering into surrogacy arrangements should inform their Academic Guidance Tutor or Student Wellbeing Officer. If the student is the primary legal parent, a plan should be in line with the guidance relating to when a student informs the University that they are pregnant. If the student's partner is the primary legal parent the student should be allowed time off study in line with advice provided on paternity leave upon the formal adoption of the child. Primary adopter definitions are understood as outlined in the following government guidance [here](#). Government guidance on surrogacy arrangement can be found [here](#).

8. MISCARRIAGE, STILL BIRTHS AND NEO-NATAL DEATH

If a student miscarries, has a still birth or their baby dies shortly after they are born, tutors and Student Wellbeing Officers should meet with the student to determine what support they are receiving and to identify what further support the University can to provide.

If a student miscarries they are likely to need time off study for tests and to recover. If they become pregnant again they are likely to require more tests and monitoring than those who have not previously miscarried.

A student who has a still birth or whose baby dies shortly after birth should be entitled to the same length of maternity related absence and financial and wellbeing support as a student whose baby does not die.

A: Pregnancy support form

This form aims to guide discussions with students during pregnancy and maternity. It should be completed and agreed with the student through a joint meeting with the AGT and SWO. It is not intended that the form should be completed at a first meeting as initially a student will be unable – and should not be expected – to respond to all the issues raised.

The form should be reviewed at key stages (eg 16 weeks pregnant, 24 weeks pregnant, and prior to return to study); or at key points of the academic year (eg prior to examinations and field trips). If the student's circumstances change, the plan will also need to be reviewed. Students are expected to contact their AGT and SWO at these key points or as they need their plan reviewed.

Contact details		
1	Student's details	
	Name	
	Address	
	Telephone	
	Email address	
	Student number	
2	Emergency contact's details	
	Relationship to student	
	Telephone	
3	Course details	
	Course title	
	Department	
	Departmental contact	
	Year of course	
4	Details of the student's first point of contact within the HEI	
	Name	
	Title	
Key dates (to be reviewed and added to over the course of pregnancy and maternity)		
5	What is the student's due date?	
6	How many weeks pregnant was the student when they notified HEI of pregnancy?	
Communication with the student		
7	What is the student's preferred method of communication:	
	= during pregnancy?	
	= during maternity-related absence?	

	= on return to study?	
Informing other staff and students		
8	Who will need to be informed about the student's pregnancy and when would the student like them to be informed?	
	Name and title	Date
Health and safety assessment (attach copy to this form)		
9	Has an assessment been conducted that covers (where relevant):	
	= the student's course?	
	= course placements or study abroad?	
	= examinations or other assessments?	
	= field trips?	
	= return from maternity-related absence?	
	= breastfeeding?	
	= safety of baby if attending seminars and lectures with a parent?	
10	Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risks, who is responsible for ensuring they are implemented?	
Rest facilities		
11	Has the student been informed about rest facilities on campus for use by pregnant students?	Location:
Pregnancy-related absence		
12	Will the dates or times of antenatal appointments affect the student's study?	
13	Have you discussed any pregnancy-related illness that has affected the student's ability to undertake their course?	

14	If yes to either of the above questions, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to catch up?	
Assessments		
15	Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to their pregnancy or maternity?	
16	If so, provide details:	
17	What alternative arrangements have been made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments?	
Maternity-related absence (students should provide information in writing at least 15 weeks before their due date)		
18	How much maternity-related absence does the student intend to take?	
19	When does the student intend to start maternity-related absence?	
20	When does the student intend to return from maternity-related absence?	
21	Will the dates of maternity-related absence affect the student's ability to complete any course module requirements?	
22	If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the	

	student to complete the module?	
23	What is the study plan for the student whilst absent? What information will the student require during maternity-related absence to keep up to date on course developments?	
24	Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student?	

International students/those on placement abroad

Have international students or students on placement abroad been informed about:

= possible airline restrictions?

= the need to check visa implications of returning home or extending their stay due to pregnancy and maternity?

Students on placement

Has the placement provider been notified of the student's pregnancy?

Has the placement provider conducted a health and safety assessment? **Please attach to plan.**

Is the placement provider aware of the HEI's policy on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity?

Will the student be able to complete their placement?

If not, what alternative arrangements will be made?

Who is responsible for liaising with the placement provider?

Accommodation

	What are the students plans to move to alternative accommodation if living on campus?	
	Has the student received advice on alternative accommodation and terminating existing accommodation contracts?	
	At what point does the student want to move to alternative accommodation?	

B: Student Pregnancy Risk Assessment

Student Name:		Student Number			
Student email address		Student Contact number			
Course Title:		Programme Convenor / Supervisor			
Year of Study					
Due Date:		Date of Maternity Leave:		Date of this Assessment:	
Wellbeing Officer					
Address					
Brief Description of day -to -day activities					
Travel Arrangements, if applicable					
Checklist					
Medical or Disability	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Control Measures	
Does the student have any relevant medical conditions or disability that would be a concern during pregnancy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Is the student registered with the Student Medical centre?					

Is the student aware of the Emergency Number (x3333) or 0208 3923333				<i>Please recommend that the student saves this number in their phone.</i>
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Movement and Posture (e.g. practicals or activities involved in their study)	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Control Measures
Does the student's day involve long periods of standing, sitting, lifting or stretching or any manual activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Where do they carry out most of their studies? Bedroom, library, student room? Thing to consider are: Is it primarily PC based ,is there enough room to move in and around the desk, suitable supportive chair etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Protective Equipment and clothing	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Control Measures
If protective clothing is to be worn, is it provided in suitable sizes? For example, a lab coat for a laboratory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If any other PPE is to be worn, will it fit appropriately?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Hazardous Substances	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Control Measures
Does the student's course work involve laboratories?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>If yes, the Supervisor / Programme convenor should be contacted to complete a separate COSSH risk assessment for the student to determine what the student can attend.</i>
If yes, further questions should include: - Does the student's course work involve any infection risks? If so, are hygiene precautions adequate? - Does the students course involve any use of chemicals or exposure to any at hazardous chemicals? e.g Life Sciences dept laboratory practicals - Extremes of Heat / Cold	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Work at Heights	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Control Measures
Does the role involve any climbing up and down stairs, steps or ladders?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the role involve any carrying items or boxes up and down stairs or ladders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Welfare	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Control Measures
Has the support available from Student Services been communicated to the student?				
Are there any concerns with the pregnancy?				

Is there somewhere quiet for them to rest if required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there easy access to toilets and more frequent breaks if required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Accommodation	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Control Measures
Does the student live on campus?				
Does the student foresee any challenges with their accommodation arrangements?				
If the student lives on campus, has the head of Accommodation services been notified?				
Has the student completed a PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan)				<i>This may be advisable later in the pregnancy. Please contact healthandsafety@roehampton.ac.uk . Full details provided here</i>

Student name (Print):	AGT Name (Print):
Student Signature:	AGT Signature:
Date:	Date:
	Is a review required later in the pregnancy, if so, the agreed date is:

Please ensure that the student has been provided with a copy of the procedures regarding **student pregnancy, maternity, paternity and infant care.**

Additional risk assessment form should be completed if a student is due to attend a placement or study abroad whilst pregnant
Subsequent risk assessment form should be completed if a student returns to Univeristy whilst breastfeeding.

Health & Safety Contact: healthandsafety@roehampton.ac.uk

Further information

Adoption UK

Adoption UK is a national charity run by and for adopters, providing self-help information, advice, support and training on all aspects of adoption and adoptive parenting.
www.adoptionuk.org.uk

Direct Gov

Direct Gov is the UK government's website. It provides information on health, care and benefits during pregnancy; benefits for parents and; information on childcare providers in your local area which can be found at www.childcarelink.gov.uk.
www.direct.gov.uk

Family and Parenting Institute

The Family and Parenting Institute provides support to parents in bringing up their children and has a range of resources for parents.
www.familyandparenting.org

Family Planning Association

The Family Planning Association's mission is to establish a society in which everyone can make informed choices about sex, relationships and reproduction. Its web site contains impartial advice on pregnancy, abortion and adoption and also contains a list of useful organisations.
www.fpa.org.uk
Helpline: 0845 122 8690

Miscarriage Association

The Miscarriage Association offers support and information to anyone affected by the loss of a baby in pregnancy.
www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

National Union of Students

Many student unions provide impartial advice and free pregnancy testing kits for students.
www.nus.org.uk

SANDS

The Still birth and neonatal death charity provides support to anyone affected by the loss of a baby and conducts research into the causes of still and neo-natal death.
www.uk-sands.org/Home.html