



STUDENT PREGNANCY AND NEW PARENTHOOD POLICY

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UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON

STUDENT PREGNANCY AND NEW PARENTHOOD POLICY

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

The University of Roehampton 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 providing support, their entitlements and receive appropriate information.

In addition, students who are partners of new parents can take paternity related absence and receive advice and support. Depending on the programme of study, this may result in the length of the course being extended into the following academic year, impacting the feasibility of completing in-year.

This policy is intended for all students and apprentices; any reference to 'students' within this policy refers to both students and apprentices. Research students should also refer to the **Research Degrees Handbook** alongside this policy (please refer to appendix 5 for details on Family 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 in the first instance is the student's Academic Guidance Tutor (AGT), Student Wellbeing Officer (SWO) or Programme Leader. Research degree students should disclose to supervisors or research programme leaders. The university will need to know of their circumstances if they are to ensure affected students are made aware of the support available and in order to co-ordinate arrangements.

Students who need information about the implications of their pregnancy for their studies should seek such information from their AGT or SWO. The Programme Leader, Dean or appropriate deputy 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 school/faculty, 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.

Informed choice

Members of staff must 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 their GP or to the Family Planning Association's guidance: [here](#)

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 may be some risk to pregnancy in the first trimester and the academic school/faculty 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, moving and carrying
- laboratory, field or other practical work particularly in relation to the use of chemicals or infectious disease
- field work
- placement activities, e.g. for nursing or teacher training students

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

This Pregnancy risk assessment is incorporated into the **Student Pregnancy support form & Risk Assessment** template that is at the end of this document

Further information on health and safety considerations during pregnancy and breastfeeding is available [here](#).

A student is responsible for raising any further concerns regarding their health and safety. A risk assessment should be completed by an appropriate member of academic staff. This can be supported by the health and safety office when there are specific risks identified and further advice is required.

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

school/faculty. This should be agreed with the student and cover important areas such as communication about the student's pregnancy, health and safety, examinations, assessments and maternity-related absences. This should happen at the earliest opportunity 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, in the event of there being any complications with the pregnancy. The pregnancy support plan is valid for 12 months post birth.

3.4 Assessments and examinations

Academic schools/faculties 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 their AGT, Dean, or appropriate deputy and the Academic Services Team within the school/faculty 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. Academic staff 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 school/faculty will support the student's 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 Academic staff member 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, midwife, health visitor or an occupational therapist for clearance before recommencing their course.

As a minimum, the University requires students to take two weeks maternity-related absence for health and wellbeing reasons. While this is not a statutory requirement for students under UK law, it is adopted by the University in line with good practice and to ensure the safety of the student and their child.

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 school/faculty should take steps to ensure the student is kept up to speed with developments in the field if it is related to assessments and other critical aspects of the programme of study that the student is

An international student can usually continue to be sponsored on a Student visa if they need to interrupt their studies for a maximum of 60 days, provided they maintain appropriate engagement (normally at least one session per month). The course of study must still be completed within the existing visa dates. If a longer interruption is needed, the student will normally need to leave the UK and apply for new Student entry clearance in order to return and resume their studies. All arrangements are subject to current UKVI guidance, and students are strongly advised to seek advice from the University's Visa & Immigration team before making any decisions.

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

Students need to decide when they start their maternity related absence in agreement with their Dean or relevant deputy. 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.

3.6 International students

Study abroad students should speak to SWOs and the study abroad team to discuss their options. International students should speak to the Visa & Immigration team in regard to absence. An international student can continue to be sponsored on a Student visa if they need to interrupt their studies for a maximum of 60 days. However, during the 60 days they will need to engage with a minimum of one session (online or in person) per month; guidance on what sessions would be countable should be sought from the Visa & Immigration team. The course of study must still be completed within the existing visa dates. If they need to interrupt their studies for longer, then they will normally need to leave the UK and then apply for a new Student 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 Student visa 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 and programme team 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 Dean, or appropriate deputy, 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 an 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, Dean or appropriate deputy who is responsible for overseeing these requests.

- **Ensuring a smooth return:** Formal welcome back meetings with key staff for example, their Academic Guidance Tutor, Dean or appropriate deputy and SWO will help to ensure a smooth return. It is recommended that these meetings take place during the first week of a student's return. The student will need to make contact with their AGT/ Dean/ 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 UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) training grants

On 1 April 2010 the UKRI 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** 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 [here](#)

4.3 Breastfeeding and resting facilities

The University provides rest and breastfeeding rooms for students' use on campus. Current information will be available on NEST. The location and access to these rooms can be arranged through the student's SWO.

Some students may want to breastfeed in public. It is unlawful under the Equality Act (2010), to ask anyone not to breastfeed in public places. Tensions may arise if other people's views 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 services 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 asked in advance and a risk plan is completed and signed off by the Dean or senior manager delegated by the Dean. Children of the student parent are also allowed onto university premises, **excluding** lectures and seminars unless under exceptional circumstances and if the lecturer is asked in advance, and a risk plan is completed and signed off by the Dean or senior manager delegated by the Dean.

Students who become pregnant whilst living on campus can stay on campus until the baby is due, but they will need to notify Accommodation Services who can liaise with Health and Safety and discuss when the contract will end (so no further fees will be payable).

As the university does not have on campus family accommodation, accommodation cannot be provided for parents with babies and the student's accommodation contract will be brought to an end at an agreed point during the pregnancy. SWOs can support students to find alternative accommodation.

6. PATERNITY / PARTNERS

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

Flexibility will be shown to students who want to attend their partner's ante-natal 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/partner-related absence, they should inform their Programme Leader/ Academic Guidance Tutor 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/partner-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/partner-related absence, they should be made aware of the University's 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 school/faculty 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/partner 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 who are entering into surrogacy arrangements should inform their Programme Leader/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/partner 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, STILLBIRTHS AND NEO-NATAL DEATH

If a student miscarries, has a stillbirth 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 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 stillbirth or whose baby dies shortly after birth is entitled to the same length of maternity-related absence and financial and wellbeing support as previously referenced within this policy.

Student Pregnancy Support form & Risk Assessment

Pregnancy support form & Risk Assessment

This form aims to guide discussions with students during pregnancy and maternity. It should be completed and agreed with the student through joint meeting(s) with the AGT/appropriate member of academic staff and SWO.

A review should be arranged if there are any changes to the student's circumstances, pregnancy or course requirements, resulting in a change to the risks or support needs. This can be requested by an appropriate staff member or by the student. Students are expected to contact their AGT/appropriate member of academic staff and SWO if there have been any changes and they need their plan reviewed.

Contact details		
1	Student's details	
	Name	
	Address	
	Telephone	
	Email address	
	Student number	
2	Emergency contact's details	
	Name	
	Relationship to student	
	Telephone	
3	Course details	
	Course title	
	School / Faculty	
	School / Faculty 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	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

9	Are there any additional hazards that should be assessed in the following (Please state Yes/ No/ N/A) <small>If yes, please ensure that the Section on Risk Assessment (28-35) below references these identified hazards and risks.</small>	
	On the student's course?	
	For course placements or study abroad?	
	For examinations or other assessments?	
	For field trips?	
10	Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risks, who is responsible for ensuring they are implemented?	

Rest, Breastfeeding & Welfare and Study facilities

11	<p>Has the student been informed about rest facilities on campus for use by pregnant students?</p> <p>Is there easy access to toilets and more frequent breaks if required? <small>If not, please refer to Health and Safety Office or ServiceDesk</small></p> <p>During pregnancy, where will they carry out most of their studies? Is it primarily PC based, is there suitable space to move in and around the desk, suitable supportive chair etc.?</p> <p>Will the student require breastfeeding facilities when they return to study? If so, are they aware of the rest facilities that are available on campus?</p>	Location:
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	(A revised version of the risk assessment should be completed if the student's circumstances are significantly different after returning, e.g., changes to study or course.)	
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?	

Academic 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(s)?	
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		
25	Have international students or students on placement abroad been informed about:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> possible airline restrictions? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the need to check visa implications of returning home, periods of absence, interrupting their studies or extending their stay due to pregnancy and maternity? Advice should be sought from the Visa and Immigration team. 	

Students on placement		
26	Has the placement provider been notified of the student's pregnancy? (The AGT/appropriate academic should ensure this has been completed, if not already done so by the student)	
	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

27	If applicable, has the University Accommodation office been notified?	
	<p>Has the student completed a PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan)</p> <p>This may be advisable later in the pregnancy. Please contact healthandsafety@roehampton.ac.uk. Full details provided here: Fire, Health and Safety (sharepoint.com)</p>	
	If a resident student, have they already registered, or been advised to register, with the Student Medical Centre?	
	What are the student's 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?	

Risk Assessment (The information for this section should be provided by the AGT / Academic Supervisor/ PI)

	Course and School have been detailed in #3 above	
28	Is the student aware of the Emergency Number (including First Aid) (x3333) or 0208 3923333	<i>Please recommend that the student saves this number in their phone.</i>
29	Movement and Posture (e.g. practicals or activities involved in their study) Do the student's course related activities and requirements involve long periods of standing, sitting, lifting or stretching or any manual activities?	
30	Protective Equipment and clothing If protective clothing is to be worn, is it provided in suitable sizes? For example, a lab coat for a laboratory? If any other PPE is to be worn, will it fit appropriately?	This may need to be reviewed later in the pregnancy
31	Does the student's course work involve laboratories?	
	If yes, Does the student's course work involve any infection risks? If so, are hygiene precautions adequate?	
	Does the student's course involve any use of chemicals or exposure to any hazardous chemicals? e.g Life Sciences dept laboratory practicals	<i>If yes, the Supervisor / Programme Lead should be contacted to complete a separate COSHH risk assessment to determine what the student can attend.</i>
32	Does the student's studies or projects involve extremes of heat / cold?	
33	Does the student's studies or projects involve work at heights?	
	Does the student's studies or projects involve any use of stairs, steps or ladders?	
	Does the student's studies or projects involve carrying any items up or down stairs or ladders?	
34	Are there any other Health and Safety concerns with the pregnancy?	

Completed		
	Student name:	
	AGT/academic name:	
	SWO name:	
	Date completed (or last revision)	
	Will a copy of this completed Support Form be sent to those listed above?	
	Is a review required later in the pregnancy? If so, what is the agreed date?	
	Please ensure that the student has also been provided with a copy of the procedures regarding student pregnancy, maternity, paternity and infant care.	