

## **QA 98 - Pregnancy, Maternity and Adoption Policy**

### **Purpose**

This Policy provides advice and guidance to: - students who are pregnant before enrolment or who become pregnant during their studies, - their partners, and - those who have recently become parents (including through adoption).

It provides information on issues related to study, health and safety and accommodation (if applicable).

### **Scope of the Policy**

The policy covers any student who becomes pregnant either before or during their studies, and students who are about to become fathers. It also covers any student who is the partner (including same sex partner) of someone who is pregnant and expects to be responsible for the child, and any person becoming a parent (e.g. through adoption) of a child.

The policy focuses primarily on study-related matters, but sources of help and advice on related issues can be found at the end of the document.

### **Policy Statement**

The University believes that becoming pregnant or caring for a child should not, in itself, detract from the student's experience or their success in studies. We are therefore committed to showing as much flexibility as possible to facilitate students' success, making sure no student is disadvantaged whilst ensuring academic standards are not compromised. The amount of flexibility that can be offered may vary between courses but all departments will follow the general approach set out in this document.

The health and safety of a pregnant student will be of paramount importance at all times. The institution will deal with all students covered by this policy in a sensitive, non-judgemental and confidential manner. Only members of staff who need to be informed for valid reasons will be advised of a student's circumstances and this will be done only with the student's prior consent.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

A student who suspects they are pregnant may wish to see their GP or other agency to have the pregnancy confirmed as soon as possible. If they wish to talk in complete confidence about whether or not to continue with the pregnancy, the student can contact the Student Support Co-ordinator. They can also help refer to other agencies or organisations as appropriate.

If the student decides to terminate the pregnancy, or miscarries, this need not be disclosed to the institution. Absence from studies required as a result may, if preferred, be classed as 'sick leave' with no need to give the specific reason. However, they may wish to discuss this with any of the above if they feel this has had an effect on her studies for example if they needs to apply for an extension or leave of absence; in which case written supporting evidence will be required, either from the Student

Support Co-ordinator or the student's GP.

If the student requires support following a termination, the Student Support Co-ordinator can offer confidential emotional help and assistance.

### Contacting the Institution

If the student plans to continue with her pregnancy, they should inform the institution as soon as possible; including at enrolment or before. (The institution can only make provision for the student if we know they are pregnant.) This may be done at any stage of the pregnancy but no later than 15 weeks before the due date to ensure arrangements can be made. Whilst the Student Support Co-ordinator would normally be the first point of contact, the student can initially choose to speak to another member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. However, students should note that the relevant staff member may need to be informed in case of a compulsory course component being missed for a reason relating to the pregnancy.

The Student Support Co-ordinator can support a student with this and will also help her to complete a Maternity Support Plan. This should be developed (in writing) detailing any special arrangements required during the student's pregnancy, and other issues of note e.g. informing staff, placements, visa requirements and accommodation. (This is attached as Appendix A of this Policy.) The student should retain a copy of this, as should the Student Support Co-ordinator. The student's permission must be obtained, preferably in writing, before passing on information.

### Implications for Study

The Student Support/Welfare Adviser will meet with the student to discuss how the pregnancy may impact on her study. They may wish to interrupt her studies depending on when the baby is due, and the student together with the Adviser will decide;

- (1) whether an interruption is required and
- (2) if so, the time period this needs to cover; up to a maximum of 12 months. This decision also needs to take

into account the academic requirements of the student's course. Such an interruption (Maternity Related Absence) must be documented within the Maternity Support Plan and must indicate the starting date for such an absence and intended date of return to studies.

- (3) In the case of a student visa route student consequent visa implications.

If the student continues to study during her pregnancy, she should meet regularly with the Student Support Co-ordinator or other designated member of staff, to assess the effectiveness of any special arrangements put in place. Where necessary, further adjustments can be made.

### Health and Safety

The greatest risk to an unborn baby is during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy and so it is important that the student informs the institution as early as possible.

Health and safety measures may need to be put in place in order to protect the student and her unborn baby. Once the student has let the University know of the pregnancy, a risk assessment will be completed. This will identify any risks that may be present which could harm the student or the unborn baby, and detail steps that need to be put in place to alleviate or minimise these risks.

## Resuming studies

Any student who has given birth should not return to the institution within two weeks of giving birth.

If a student interrupts her studies (Maternity Related Absence) she should keep in regular contact with the Student Support Co-ordinator and/or a designated person from the institution. In the Maternity Support Plan they will have given a proposed return date. It is particularly important that the institution is notified at the earliest opportunity if this may change.

When resuming her studies a student will be offered at least one 'welcome back' meeting by the institution to facilitate re-integration into her course, including the assessment schedule.

The student must also notify Registry to ensure that the enrolment record is updated to indicate that they have resumed studies.

## Financial Considerations

The funding situation for a student who becomes pregnant during the period of study will depend on their individual circumstances e.g. whether they are studying full or part-time, has a partner or is single etc.

The student is therefore advised to contact the Student Support Adviser at an early stage in the pregnancy to discuss student funding and benefit entitlement.

## Babies/Children on Campus

Babies and young children are not permitted on campus.

## Breastfeeding

A student is welcome to feed their baby in any public area in centres.

## Support for fathers and partners (including same-sex partners) who will have responsibility for bringing up the child

Any student discovering they are to become a father, or any partner of a pregnant student (including same sex partners) who expect to be responsible for raising the child with the mother, will be entitled to request time out of study. This is likely to include time off for medical appointments prior to, and after, the birth, as well as a period of maternity support leave for and immediately following the birth. A student in this situation should contact the Student Support Co-ordinator and Centre Manager, to discuss this. Flexibility will be shown wherever possible although this may be more limited for some courses than others.

## For students about to become parents (e.g. through adoption)

A student about to become a parent (e.g. through adoption) should inform the institution as soon as possible if they may require support.

Arrangements can be made to allow time out of study, similar to Maternity Related Absence. This may vary depending on the age of the child and the course being undertaken, the student support adviser can assist with identifying and requesting support and / or leave.

[Appendix A](#)

**Pregnancy, Maternity & Adoption Support Plan**

This form aims to guide discussions with students during pregnancy and maternity. It should be completed and agreed with the student.

The form should be reviewed and updated with the student on a regular basis; in particular, at the key stage of 15 weeks before the student's due date or if the student's circumstances change. The form will also be reviewed and updated during the student's maternity related absence.

Contact details	
<b>1</b>	<b>Student's details</b>
	Name
	Address
	Telephone
	Email address
	Student number
<b>2</b>	<b>Emergency contact's details</b>
	Relationship to student
	Telephone
<b>3</b>	<b>GP contact details</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Course details</b>
	Course title
	Departmental contact
	Year of course
<b>5</b>	<b>Details of the student's first point of contact</b>
	Name
	Title

	Location	
	Telephone	
	Email	

Key dates (to be reviewed and added to over the course of pregnancy and maternity)

<b>6.</b>	When is the student's due date?	
<b>7.</b>	How many weeks pregnant was the student when they notified the institution of pregnancy? (if less than 15 weeks before her due date)	

Communication with the student

<b>8</b>	What is the student's preferred method of communication:	
	· during pregnancy?	
	during maternity-related absence(if applicable) ?	
	on return to study?	

Informing other staff and students

<b>9</b>	Who is the student's main point of contact in the institution, and when would she like them to be informed?	
	<b>Name and title</b>	<b>Date</b>

Pregnancy-related absence

<b>10.</b>	Will the dates or times of antenatal appointments affect the student's attendance?	
<b>11.</b>	Has the student experienced any pregnancy-related illness that has affected her ability to undertake her course?	
<b>12.</b>	If yes to either of the above questions, has the institution been made aware, and arrangements made to enable the student to catch up?	

Assessments

<b>13.</b>	Is the student unable to complete any assessments by their submission date, due to her pregnancy or maternity?	
<b>14.</b>	If so, provide details:	
<b>15.</b>	What alternative arrangements have been made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments?	
<b>Maternity-related absence</b> (students should provide information in writing at least 15 weeks before their due date). This should be completed and agreed with the institution.		
<b>16.</b>	Has the student discussed this with the institution? And obtained a written agreement?	
<b>17.</b>	When does the student intend to start maternity-related absence?	
<b>18.</b>	When does the student intend to return from maternity-related absence?	
<b>19.</b>	Will the dates of maternity-related absence affect the student's ability to complete any course and/or module requirements?	
<b>20.</b>	If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to complete the module?	
<b>21.</b>	What information will the student require during maternity-related absence to keep up to date on course developments? For example, lecture notes to be uploaded onto iLearn, plus any handouts, or a hard copy provided to the student.	
<b>22.</b>	Who will be responsible for providing the academic coursework materials to the student?	
International student support (visa holders only)		
<b>23.</b>	Has the student obtained visa advice from an International Student Adviser, to discuss visa implications?	
Financial support		
<b>24.</b>	Has the student been to the Student Support Co-ordinator?	
Extenuating circumstances		

<b>25.</b>	Has the student been informed about the Universities extenuating circumstances policy in the event that their pregnancy or maternity affects assessments; and made aware of how to apply for extensions, leave of absence?	
<b>Return to study</b>		
<b>26.</b>	What support will be provided to the student on their return to study? (eg meetings with key staff, put in contact with other student parents, etc)	
<b>Further information</b>		
<b>27.</b>	Any other information or comments	
<b>Signatures</b>		
Plan to be reviewed on		
<b>Agreed by staff member</b>		
Name		
Title		
Signature		
Date		
<b>Agreed by student</b>		
Name		
Signature		
Date		

Policy Name:	Pregnancy, Maternity and Adoption Policy
Policy Reference:	QA98
Approval Authority:	Exec
Last Approved:	September 2021
Responsible SMT Lead:	Director of Student Experience
Responsible Department:	Student Experience

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Review Frequency:	3 years