



ARDEN UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT

QA 98 -Pregnancy, adoption, and family leave policy

1. Purpose

1.1. Arden University is committed to providing an inclusive environment to which all students, regardless of background, can achieve their full potential. Arden University is committed to creating and sustaining its legal duty, as outlined in the Equality Act, 2010, to protect students during periods of pregnancy and maternity. The university is also committed to supporting students whose partner may be expecting a child, students who are adopting, students who are expecting a child through surrogacy, students who terminate a pregnancy and/or students who experience a miscarriage, still birth or neo-natal death.

1.2. This Policy provides advice and guidance to applicants/students who are pregnant before enrolment or who become pregnant during their studies. The policy also aims to provide advice and guidance to their partners, and to those who have recently become parents (including through adoption and surrogacy). The primary aim of the policy is to provide information on study related support however, other sources of information and advice will also be included.

1.3 The policy is a point of reference for staff who have a responsibility to support students within the groups outlined above.

2. Scope of the Policy

2.1 The policy applies to all applicants/students who fall within the following categories:

- Students/applicants who are or become pregnant, students/applicants who have had a termination, experienced a miscarriage, still birth or neonatal death, those who have become parents through surrogacy, and those who are expecting a child into their family through adoption/fostering.
- Students/applicants whose partner is expecting a child or are co-parenting and/or who have been affected by a termination, miscarriage, still birth or neonatal death; whether they are or are not in a relationship with the parent involved.

2.2. The personal circumstances of students within these categories will be treated with confidentiality. Where consent is given, personal information will be shared with the purpose of health and safety and to ensure students and applicants are supported regarding their academic progression.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 The University believes that becoming pregnant or caring for a child should not detract from the student's experience or their ability to succeed in their studies. Arden University is committed to making reasonable adjustments; making sure no student's experience is compromised whilst ensuring academic standards are not hindered.

3.2 Reasonable adjustments available may vary between courses, this may be due to timetabling constraints, course availability and external accreditation boards.

3.3 The institution will deal with all students covered by this policy in a sensitive, non-judgemental, and confidential manner.

3.4 As outlined in section **2.2**, 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.

3.5 The health, safety and wellbeing of a student/applicant affected by this policy will always take priority.

4. Rights and Responsibilities

4.1 Student/Applicants responsibilities:

- There is no legal requirement for a student/ applicant to inform the university if they are pregnant or become pregnant whilst studying on a course.
- There is also no legal requirement for students/applicants, who come into the other groups identified in 2.1, to disclose personal information.
- Students/applicants affected by this policy are encouraged to contact their GP/local healthcare professional to seek appropriate guidance and support where appropriate.
- Arden university does encourage students/applicants to disclose pregnancy at the earliest opportunity, with a preference of at least 15 weeks before a baby's due date, for reasonable adjustments to be put in place.
- Students/applicants wishing to disclose their circumstances should complete the Pregnancy, adoption, and family leave support Plan, found on the A-Z section of iLearn. [Link to form](#) Students/applicants are encouraged to attach relevant medical evidence to this support plan. Students/applicants will then be referred to the Inclusion team who will action appropriate reasonable adjustments and pass to student support who will arrange a supportive conversation and complete a risk assessment.
- Students/applicants whose partners is pregnant, has had a termination, experienced a miscarriage, still birth, or neonatal death, or is adopting/fostering a child are advised to complete the Pregnancy, adoption, and family leave support Plan, as above.
- It is the student's/applicant's responsibility to ensure they are aware of any financial implications that may occur if they are to request certain reasonable adjustments.
- Students who decided to take a break in learning may be eligible for a Pregnancy, adoption, and family leave bursary. [Link to Ts and Cs](#)

4.2 Academic Staff are responsible for:

- Providing a flexible and inclusive environment for students affected by this policy by agreeing to and implementing any reasonable adjustments set out in the student/applicants the Pregnancy, adoption and family leave support Plan and or risk assessment.
- Providing a flexible and inclusive environment for students affected by this policy by being aware of the relevant Pregnancy and related Absence's support plan, specific to the student in question.

4.3 Inclusion services and Student Support are responsible for:

- Providing support and guidance to students who have completed the Pregnancy, adoption and family leave support Plan affected by this policy.
- Complete the risk assessment.
- Arrange appropriate reasonable adjustments.
- Share the Pregnancy, adoption and family leave support Plan and risk assessment (See Appendix C) with relevant departments.

5. Pregnancy, adoption, and family leave support Plan

5.1 Completion of the plan will trigger an appointment offer with an Inclusion adviser. The Pregnancy, adoption and family leave support Plan is not limited to, but includes the following:

- Agreed communication channels with the student/applicant.
- Arrangements for interruption to study and reasonable adjustments
- Health, Safety, and wellbeing
- Return to Study

The link to the form can be found [here](#)

6. Reasonable Adjustments

On completion of the Pregnancy, adoption, and family leave support Plan, after discussion with an Inclusion adviser and or student support, the following reasonable adjustments may be considered and proposed:

6.1 Flexibility around attendance:

- Following the birth of a baby, students are permitted to authorised absence; Arden university does not encourage any student who has given birth to return to study for a minimum of two weeks. Where there are concerns about a student/applicant's health regarding their return to study date, fitness to study medical evidence may be requested.
- For students/applicants who fall into the other categories outlined in this policy there may be flexibility around attendance for an appropriate period, depending on circumstances.

6.1 Interruption to study:

- Students/applicants may wish to consider taking a Break in Learning; a maximum of 12 months interruption to study can be requested. This decision also needs to be considered in line with the academic requirements of the student's course.
- All international students who hold UKVI Tier 4 Visas and are affected by this policy should seek additional support through Student Support to establish their options.

6.2 Other Adjustments

- All students affected by this policy are encouraged to keep in touch with student support during periods of absence so that the effectiveness of adjustments can be assessed and where appropriate, further adjustments can be made.

- Where students or applicants do not wish to take a Break in Learning, the University will aim to provide flexibility to their preferred style of engagement. This may include creating a study plan to help manage workload, or support to apply for [Extenuating Circumstances](#) without the need to provide further evidence than that provided in Pregnancy, adoption and family leave support Plan.
- In some cases, students/applicants who study on Blended Learning courses may request for a module to be released as Distanced Learning. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with the relevant department. If students do request this, it is the student's responsibility to abide by attendance regulations for the remainder of their academic year to avoid financial implications to their maintenance loan (where appropriate).

6.3 Resuming studies.

Students/applicants who are affected by this policy are encouraged to keep in regular contact with Student Support. 'Keep in Touch Days' will be suggested and agreed, where appropriate, between the student/applicant and Student Support. The aim of these points of contact is for the student to provide any updates on their personal circumstances that may impact their Return to Study date. The student must also notify Registry to ensure that the enrolment record is updated to indicate that they have resumed studies.

7. Wellbeing & Welfare support

7.1 Students/applicants should seek advice on the [financial implications](#) of any reasonable adjustments relating to this policy. Students can contact Arden's finance team by emailing studentfinance@arden.ac.uk and can contact Student Finance England directly, if appropriate:

0300 100 0607
Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm
Saturday, 9am to 4pm

The funding situation for a student/applicant will depend on their individual circumstances e.g., whether they are studying full or part-time, has a partner or is single etc. Students can seek welfare advice and financial support through Arden's Inclusion services (inclusion@arden.ac.uk) and can find further information on Arden's financial support [here](#)

7.2 Students/applicants who fall within all groups covered by this policy, who may experience challenges with their mental health and wellbeing can also access support through Inclusion Services

7.3 Students/applicants who may be affected by termination, miscarriage, still birth and/or neonatal death can access signposting support via the [Inclusion Portal](#).

7.4 UK based students, whether they are Blended, or Distanced Learning students can access 1:1 mental health and wellbeing support as well as fully funded counselling support through Arden's Inclusion services. Students should email inclusion@arden.ac.uk to request this.

8. Babies/Children on Campus

Babies and young children must be always accompanied by a responsible adult whilst at an Arden study centre; babies and young children are not permitted to attend taught sessions on campus. All students and staff must comply with protocol and procedure outlined in the [Safeguarding Policy](#).

9. Breastfeeding

Students/applicants should contact their Study Centre to see what facilities are available for private breastfeeding, expressing and milk storage; provision may vary across different study centres. Student can find details for their relevant study centre [here](#)

10. Related Policy

- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Break in Learning](#)
- [Extenuating Circumstances](#)

Policy Name	Pregnancy, Adoption and Family Leave Policy
Policy Reference	QA98
Approval Authority	Students, Quality & Standards Committee
Last Approved	November 2023
Responsible SMT Lead	PVC Student Experience
Responsible Department	Student Experience
Policy Contact	Debbie Groom, Head of Student Success (dgroom@arden.ac.uk)
Review Frequency	3 Years

Appendix A

[Link to Pregnancy and related Absence Support Plan](#)

Appendix B

HEALTH AND SAFETY Student pregnancy/maternity risk assessment

STU:	
Student Name:	
Mode of study:	
Study centre (if appropriate):	
Date:	

Section 1 – complete for all students

Question	Answer	Notes
1.1 How many weeks pregnant are you?		
1.3 Are there any complications/health issues the University needs to be aware of?		

Section 2 – DL students only

2.1 Does your home working environment meet your needs? Do we need to supply you with any additional equipment?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.2 Whilst studying can you take comfort breaks as required?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.3 Whilst studying are you able to have food/nibbles and drinks as required?	Yes ☐ No ☐	

2.4 Are there any space constraints under/around your desk?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.5 Do you suffer from Extremes of hot and cold?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.6 Depending on pregnancy stage—do you have any mobility issues, would you able to leave the centre/office freely without assistance? If not we need a temporary PEEP	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.7 Is your study workload putting unnecessary strains on you?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.8 Do you have any placements on your course?*	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.9 Are you involved in any research projects as part of your course?*	Yes ☐ No ☐	

3. Section 3 – BL students only

2.1 Does the study centre study environment meet your needs? Do we need to supply you with any additional equipment?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.2 Whilst in lessons can you take comfort breaks as required?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.3 Whilst in lessons are you	Yes ☐	

able to have food/nibbles and drinks as required?	No ☐	
2.4 Are there any space constraints under/around your desk?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.10 Do you suffer from Extremes of hot and cold?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.12 Depending on pregnancy stage—do you have any mobility issues, would you able to leave the centre/office freely without assistance? If not we need a temporary PEEP	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2.14 Is your study workload putting unnecessary strains on you?	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2. Do you have any placements on your course?*	Yes ☐ No ☐	
2. Are you involved in any research projects as part of your course?*	Yes ☐ No ☐	

Where adjustments or a PEEP are required, please action, or refer on to the team responsible.

*For students who answer yes to this question please refer on to the department for further discussion

Coach Name:

Date: