

# Policy and Procedure for Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Secondary Carer (Paternity) and Adoption Leave

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# 1. Policy

Pregnancy and maternity are protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, discrimination on these grounds is strictly prohibited. DMU and its staff must ensure that all students/applicants who are pregnant, on maternity leave or breastfeeding will not be discriminated against or treated unfavourably because of: their pregnancy, the termination of a pregnancy, breast-feeding, maternity leave or any relevant reason connected to these. DMU must not discriminate against students in admissions or any part of the educational experience, or in the offer or delivery of other services provided or procured by the university.

The university will provide support to students who are about to become parents, this policy is designed to assist and help them understand their rights and processes for arranging Maternity, Secondary Carer (Paternity) and Adoption Leave.

The university recognises the important part that secondary carers and adoptive parents play in caring for a newborn or adopted child. The university also recognises that individuals who are a partner of a woman who is pregnant or has given birth should not be treated unfavourably.

These policies cover the following areas:

- Study and placement arrangements.
- Notification of leave.
- Returning to study.

For any queries regarding the information contained in these policies, please do not hesitate to contact the Faculty Manager for your Faculty in the first instance. Each Faculty has a nominated Pregnancy, Maternity Secondary Carer (Paternity) and Adoption Leave contact person and trained risk assessors.

It should be noted that in some circumstances that pregnant women, babies and children will also be protected by the Safeguarding legislation and DMU policies.

## **DMU will:**

- Offer students unbiased, non-judgmental support in making decisions about course and placement choices, exams, assessments, student housing and so on.
- Only contact a student who they believe is pregnant and who has not disclosed, if there are genuine concerns about the student's health or safety. DMU staff will avoid causing offence or perceptions of unfair treatment.
- Encourage its staff to signpost students to the appropriate Student Welfare counselling service and/or external agencies as listed in part 3 of the policy. Its staff *will not* give advice or guidance on pregnancy or termination unless they are qualified and employed to do so.
- Avoid treating students less favourably because they are pregnant, on maternity, secondary carer (paternity) or adoption leave. However DMU will take account of the outcome of health and safety risk assessments.

**Students should:**

- Inform the Faculty contact or their tutor/supervisor at least 15 weeks before the baby is due or the adoption date to ensure that suitable arrangements are put in place.
- In certain areas it is very important that as soon as the student becomes aware that they are pregnant they notify their course tutor/faculty especially if working in areas using chemical agents/biological agents and radiation as there may be potential to cause harm to an unborn in early stages and prior to getting pregnant.

## 2. Pregnancy, Maternity Secondary Carer (Paternity) and Adoption Leave Procedure

### 2.1 Pregnant Students

Students who believe they are pregnant should be advised to seek medical advice from their General Practice Medical Centre. Staff should also inform students of the welfare resources, money advice and counselling services available from Student Welfare and De Montfort Student Union (DSU) if appropriate.

DMU staff may not give advice about continuing or terminating a pregnancy, but should instead signpost students to the internal and external agencies as detailed in part 3 of this policy.

Staff must ensure a support form is completed with students to ensure that: study, placement, research, exam and assessment arrangements are considered and put in place. A risk assessment form must also be completed to protect the health of the student and the baby both before and, following the birth.

#### Action

The Faculty nominated Pregnancy, Maternity Secondary Carer (Paternity) and Adoption Leave contact person and trained risk assessor must complete, with the student, the **'Student Pregnancy, Maternity or Adoption Support Form'** in appendix 1 and the **Risk Assessment Form** in appendix 3 and inform students of internal and external resources as detailed in part 3 of this policy.

### 2.2 Students who are Adopting (or having a baby by surrogacy)

Students who are having a baby through surrogacy or are in the process of waiting for or making an adoption placement should also notify their faculty as soon as possible. (The Children & Families Act 2014 provides for regulations to be made granting an equivalent to adoption leave for parents whose babies are born through surrogacy and eligible to apply for a parental order).

Staff should inform students of the welfare resources, money advice and counselling services available from Student Welfare and De Montfort Student Union (DSU) if appropriate.

Staff must ensure a support form is completed with students to ensure that: study, placement, research, exam and assessment arrangements are considered and put in place.

#### Action

- The Faculty contact must complete, with the student, the **'Student Pregnancy, Maternity or Adoption Support Form'** in appendix 1.
- Inform students of internal and external resources as detailed in part 3 of this policy.

## 2.3 Maternity Leave and Adoption Leave

The university, in following the guidelines of the Equality Challenge Unit, recommends that students take a minimum of two weeks Maternity Leave absence or four weeks if placed in a factory or other strenuous high risk work placement (NHS student bursaries recommend a minimum of 12 weeks). Students who experience complications, for example Caesarean section or who are breast feeding, should seek advice and guidance on returning to study from their health care provider.

Students who are Adopting should also be granted a reasonable leave of absence to coincide with the adoption placement.

Students may also apply to suspend their study or research and join the course in a subsequent year if the course is still available. Research students must also discuss bursary and other contractual arrangements with the Graduate School Office as soon as possible.

The student should make arrangements as soon as possible to meet with their Faculty contact and complete the **Student Pregnancy, Maternity or Adoption Support Form** and **Risk Assessment** (appendices 1 and 3).

## 2.4 Arranging Secondary Carer (Paternity) Leave

The secondary carer may also apply for a reasonable leave of absence, normally no more than two weeks in total, from study or placement. The secondary carer is normally defined as the:

- The baby's biological father. Or
- Civil partner/same sex partner to the mother or, husband or partner
- Adoption - Civil partner/same sex partner, husband or partner to the primary carer for adoption.

The secondary carer may only apply for the leave to take time off study/placement to support the mother/primary carer or care for the child.

Faculty staff should discuss and advise the student (secondary carer) on study and placement considerations. Students who are taking Secondary Carer (paternity) leave must complete and return to the Faculty the **Secondary Carer (Paternity) Leave form** (Appendix 2).

The Faculty contact will write to the student within 28 days confirming the agreed arrangements for study, placement, research, exam and assessment arrangements. Any revision of dates should be notified to the Faculty contact as soon as possible.

### Action

- Faculty contact and student to agree study and placement considerations. These arrangements should be confirmed in writing by the Faculty.
- Student to complete and return Secondary Carer (Paternity) Leave form (appendix 2).

## **2.5 Time off for Doctor's, Ante-Natal Care and Pre-Adoption Appointments**

The pregnant student is entitled to reasonable time off to attend antenatal care on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, midwife or health visitor. Likewise the student who has pre-adoption appointments is entitled to reasonable time off to attend.

The student may be required to provide evidence in advance of such appointments to their Faculty contact. They should try wherever possible to arrange appointments outside of programmed teaching or at the start or the end of the placement working day.

Students on programmes approved by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies should discuss the implications of missed time in practice with a member of the programme team.

## **2.6 Maternity Leave and NHS Bursaries**

NHS student bursaries recommend a minimum of 12 weeks. Students may also apply to break their study or interrupt and join the course in a subsequent year if the course is still available.

<http://www.dmu.ac.uk/dmu-students/the-student-gateway/student-finance-and-welfare/student-finance-and-welfare.aspx>

## **2.7 Research Students**

Research students should take account of the terms and conditions within any bursary or other funding arrangements that they have. It may be appropriate to interrupt their studies. Students should seek advice from the Graduate School Office on these matters.

## **2.8 International Students**

International students who are pregnant should seek immigration advice as soon as possible if they require a visa to remain in the UK longer than originally planned. Advice is available from the DMU Students' Union: Welfare and Education Centre.

## **2.9 Risk Assessments and Facilities for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Mothers**

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the university is required to protect the health and safety of all students, including new, expectant and breastfeeding mothers. To ensure any potential risks are avoided at an early stage, the pregnant student is urged to tell their Faculty contact as soon as possible about their pregnancy. The Faculty contact must then complete a personal pregnancy risk assessment for them which should then be sent to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Department. Occupational Health will then contact the student to discuss their personal pregnancy risk assessment further, if necessary.

On returning to study or placement following Maternity Leave, it is important that the student notify their Faculty contact and/or the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Department (or Occupational Health Department at Leicester Royal Infirmary for NHS

funded students) if they are breastfeeding or if they are returning within six months of giving birth. This ensures the risk assessment and any study or placement adjustments can be reviewed.

If the student is still breastfeeding and require private and safe facilities to express and store breast milk they should contact their Faculty contact and/or the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Department. Private spaces are available by prior arrangement with the De Montfort Student Union in the Campus Centre. Faculty contacts should allow some flexibility in break times and study or placement hours to allow students to express milk during study or placement hours.

There are no restrictions on breastfeeding or bottle feeding in public areas, such as the cafes, campus centre food court and sports and leisure centre.

A fridge is available, by arrangement, in the offices of the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Department for the storage of expressed breast-milk.

### **Action**

- Staff to ensure that Risk Assessment arrangements are in place for pregnant women and new mothers. (appendix 3)
- Faculties should identify with the support of the Occupational Health Department if required, areas for breast feeding mothers to express and to store breast milk.

## **2.10 Assessments and Examinations**

Reasonable adjustments should be explored in order that the student can, if necessary, complete the requirements of their course or module before taking Maternity Leave. Course teams should consider alternative forms of assessment for students who are on Maternity Leave.

The Faculty contact and the student should discuss examination deferral and any special examination requirements as early as possible:

<http://www.dmu.ac.uk/dmu-students/the-student-gateway/academic-services/examinations-office.aspx>

The student may also wish to discuss this with Student Welfare staff and DSU (De Montfort Student Union).

## **2.11 Students in University Accommodation**

The University only offers single occupancy accommodation. Students should seek advice on accommodation, and being released from their contract from the DMU Accommodation Office (if appropriate), Sulets, or their accommodation provider.

## **2.12 Field Work**

If students plan to take part in field work whilst pregnant, this must be specifically addressed in the Risk Assessment completed by the Department as there may be special risks associated with the field work.

## 2.13 Placements in other Countries

Students who are or become pregnant whilst on a placement abroad should contact their personal tutor/supervisor to make appropriate plans to ensure that their health is safeguarded. The risk assessment process will then be activated.

## 2.14 Keeping in Touch during Maternity or Adoption Leave

The university may make reasonable contact with the student (and vice-versa) while they are on Maternity Leave to discuss a range of issues – e.g. to discuss plans for returning to study or to keep the student informed of important developments with their course or programme of study. Students should consider keeping up with their course emails and with information posted on course web and blackboard sites. The student may wish to discuss arrangements for keeping in touch with their Faculty contact prior to the start of their Maternity Leave.

## 2.15 End of Adoption Placement

Where an adoption placement is ended, then students may wish to renegotiate a return to study date.

## 2.16 Still Births and Miscarriages

If the student's foetus or baby is miscarried or still born, they are entitled to take sick leave or apply to interrupt their course.

Counselling and advice services are available through Student Welfare and the DSU. See 'Resources List' in part 3 of this document.

## 2.17 Babies and Children on Campus

**From the Safety Policy: SP3/1 General Safety Matters.**

While not wishing to be restrictive, it is necessary to take into account the fact that children, as a result of their immaturity and lack of experience, will be at greater risk than adults. It is therefore necessary for the university to take measures to protect children on university premises.

In particular the following activities require additional measures to protect children:

- work experience;
- participation or attendance at an event, course or open day;
- playing or entering university property from public space, footpaths etc; or
- whilst attending childcare facilities.

There will be occasions when a member of staff, student or visitor will wish to bring a child onto university property for a short period of time to low hazard areas (e.g. offices, reception areas and general circulation/public spaces), during which the child will be under the immediate supervision of the adult. Children are not permitted in high hazard areas (e.g. workshops, studios and laboratories).

There are no restrictions on breastfeeding or bottle feeding in public areas, such as the cafes, campus centre food court and sports and leisure centre.

There is a baby changing facility in the Campus Centre.

## 3. Resources

### 3.1 DMU services

#### De Montfort University– Money and Welfare Team

If you need help to manage your money because you are in debt, or if you are worried that you will not be able to afford to stay at university, we can help you manage your finances and access funding that you might be eligible for. Find out more about the support we can offer you.

Advice is also available on benefits, the financial implications of deferring or leaving your course and we can also refer you to other DMU departments and outside agencies for general welfare issues.

<http://www.dmu.ac.uk/dmu-students/the-student-gateway/student-finance-and-welfare/student-finance-and-welfare.aspx>

#### De Montfort University – Counselling, mental health and wellbeing

Offers a range of services aimed at promoting emotional wellbeing and helping you to achieve your full potential at DMU.

Counselling deals with a range of issues including depression, anxiety, stress and confidence building. Life coaching can support personal development helping you to maximise your potential.

<http://www.dmu.ac.uk/dmu-students/the-student-gateway/counselling-mental-health-and-wellbeing/counselling-mental-health-and-welbeing.aspx>

#### De Montfort Students' Union (DSU)

##### SECS Clinic

The Student's Union runs a SECS Clinic, every Thursday 10am-12pm and 1pm-3pm from the Welfare and Education Centre. The clinic offers free condoms and pregnancy testing alongside confidential information and sign posting for all students. Students are also able to talk to the Choices Nurse who visits the Students' Union every Thursday (term time only) for under 25's and is available for drop in appointments between 11.30am-2.30pm.

<https://www.demontfortstudents.com/support/secs/>

##### Welfare and Education Centre

The Welfare and Education Centre is a **free, confidential and independent** advice service provided by your Students' Union based on the 1st floor of the Campus Centre. The Centre can assist you with **virtually any welfare or course related problem** whilst you are studying at this university. We aim to provide everything from one-off simple advice to long-term support with on-going issues. We also provide advocacy for DMU students both within the University and externally. For example,

we can represent you at a DMU disciplinary or academic offences hearing or in court to recover your housing deposit.

[www.demontfortstudents.com/welfare](http://www.demontfortstudents.com/welfare)

### **Sulets**

Sulets is a student union run lettings agency to help students find suitable, high quality accommodation ranging from self contained studio apartments to 7 bed houses. Sulets charge no admin fees to students.

[www.sulets.com](http://www.sulets.com)

## **3.2 External services**

### **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](http://www.adoptionuk.org.uk)

### **Direct Gov**

Direct Gov is the UK government's website [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk). 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 <https://www.gov.uk/find-registered-childminder>

### **Equality Challenge Unit**

'Student pregnancy and maternity: implications for higher education institutions'

<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/files/student-pregnancy-and-maternity-implications-for-heis.pdf/view?searchterm=pregnancy>

### **Family and Childcare Trust**

Family and Childcare Trust aims to make the UK a better place for families, through research, campaigning and information provision, and working with government, employers and parents to reduce pressures on family life.

<http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.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 website contains impartial advice on pregnancy, abortion and adoption and also contains a list of useful organisations.

[www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)

## **Miscarriage Association**

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

[www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://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](http://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 neonatal death.

[www.uk-sands.org](http://www.uk-sands.org)

# Appendix 1

## Student Pregnancy, Maternity or Adoption Support Form

This form aims to guide discussions with students during pregnancy, maternity or adoption. It should be completed and agreed with the student over a period of meetings.

The form should be reviewed at key stages (e.g. 16 weeks pregnant, 24 weeks pregnant, or similar times leading to adoption, and prior to return to study); or at key points of the academic year (e.g. prior to examinations and field trips). If the student's circumstances change, the plan will also need to be reviewed.

(Form developed from ECU (2010) **Student pregnancy and maternity: implications for higher education institutions**)

<b>Contact details</b>		
<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>Course details</b>	
	Course title	
	Department	
	Departmental contact	
	Year of course	
<b>4</b>	<b>Details of the student's first point of contact within the HEI</b>	
	Name	
	Title	
	Location	
	Telephone	
	Email	

**Key dates (to be reviewed and added to over the course of pregnancy and maternity or adoption process)**

<b>5</b>	What is the student's due date, or proposed date of adoption?	
<b>6</b>	How many weeks pregnant was the student when she notified HEI of pregnancy? (not applicable for adoption)	

**Communication with the student**

<b>7</b>	What is the student's preferred method of communication:	
	during pregnancy?	
	during maternity or adoption related absence?	
	on return to study?	

**Informing other staff and students**

<b>8</b>	Who will need to be informed about the student's pregnancy or adoption and when would the student like them to be informed?	
	<b>Name and title</b>	<b>Date</b>

**Health and safety assessment for students who are pregnant or in the maternity period (six months following childbirth, or breastfeeding). (attach copy to this form)**

<b>9</b>	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?	
<b>10</b>	Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risks, who is responsible for ensuring they are	

	implemented?	
<b>Rest facilities</b>		
11	Has the student been informed about rest facilities on campus for use by pregnant students?	
<b>Pregnancy or adoption - related absence</b>		
12	Will the dates or times of antenatal or pre-adoption 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?	
<b>Assessments</b>		
15	Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to her pregnancy, maternity or adoption leave?	
16	If so, provide details:	
17	What alternative arrangements have been made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments? (it is the student's responsibility to apply for any required exam deferrals)	
<b>Maternity or adoption-related absence (students should provide information in writing at least 15 weeks before their due date)</b>		
18	How much maternity or adoption-related absence does the student intend to take?	
19	When does the student intend to start maternity or adoption-related absence?	
20	When does the student intend to return from maternity or adoption-related absence?	
21	Will the dates of maternity or adoption-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 information will the student require during maternity or adoption-related absence to keep up to date on course developments?	
24	Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student?	

<b>Financial support</b>		
25	Has the student been informed about sources of financial support or been referred to an external organisation that can do so?	
26	Is the (UK) student aware of how any benefits they receive will affect their student support entitlements, and vice versa?	
27	Specify any follow-up required:	
<b>Baby feeding</b>		
28	Does the student intend to feed their baby on university facilities on their return to study?	
29	Does the student intend to breastfeed? If so, see health and safety section above.	
30	Has the student been informed about the facilities available?	
<b>Childcare</b>		
31	Has the student been informed about childcare facilities in the local community?	
32	Is the (UK) student aware that their mode of study will affect their childcare funding entitlements?	
<b>International students/those on placement abroad</b>		
33	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?	
<b>Students on placement</b>		
34	Has the placement provider been notified of the student's pregnancy or impending adoption?	
35	Has the placement provider conducted a health and safety assessment?	
36	Is the placement provider aware of the HEI's policy on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity?	
37	Will the student be able to complete her placement?	
38	If not, what alternative arrangements will be made?	

39	Who is responsible for liaising with the placement provider?	
<b>Extenuating circumstances</b>		
40	Have students been informed about the HEI's extenuating circumstances policy in the event that their pregnancy, maternity or adoption affects examinations and assessments?	
<b>Accommodation</b>		
41	Does the student intend to move to alternative accommodation?	
42	Has the student received advice on alternative accommodation and terminating existing accommodation contracts?	
43	At what point does the student want to move to alternative accommodation?	
44	Will the student require university accommodation?	
<b>Return to study</b>		
45	What support will be provided to the student on their return to study? (e.g. meetings with key staff, put in contact with other student parents, etc)	
<b>Further information</b>		
46	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		

## Appendix 2

### Secondary Carer (Paternity) Leave Form

Please complete this form and return it to your Faculty contact as soon as possible. If you have any queries about your Secondary Carer or Paternity Leave rights then please do not hesitate to contact your Faculty contact.

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Faculty/Department</b>	
<b>Course</b>	
<b>Year</b>	
<b>The baby is due on</b>	Date:
<b>If the baby has been born, please enter the actual date of birth</b>	Date:

Please complete the following section of this form:

I would like Paternity Leave to start on	Date:
I want to be away from study or placement for one or two weeks (please specify)	

#### Father/Partner's declaration

I declare that:

- I am
  - The baby's biological father. Or
  - Civil partner/same sex partner to the mother or, husband or partner
  - Adoption - Civil partner/same sex partner, husband or partner to the primary carer for adoption.
- I have responsibility for the child's upbringing.
- I will take time off study/placement to support the mother/primary carer or care for the child.

Father/Partner signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Mother/Adopter's declaration

I declare the information provided in this form is correct.

Mother/Adopter signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

### Pregnancy Risk Assessment Template

This template covers the main additional hazards to pregnant women. When reviewing the risk assessment areas that are not applicable to the area of work can be deleted. Any areas scoring a high risk rating may need additional controls to those listed in this assessment.

Please contact OH&W for advice if required.

This assessment should be reviewed for each individual pregnant woman as the risk factors may vary from person to person and amended accordingly, then passed to OH&W for information.

This assessment should be reviewed with the pregnant women every 3 months (or sooner if environment or pregnant women's health changes) for the duration of the pregnancy.

This risk assessment should be completed using the guidance of the HSE's guide Ind(g)373 New and Expectant Mothers at Work which can be found on the OH&W intranet pages.

(delete red text after completing your risk assessment)

Please find link to Risk Assessment <https://sites.google.com/a/myapps.dmu.ac.uk/hr-intranet/home/ohs-w/a-z-all>.