

Guidance for students and staff on student maternity, maternity/ paternity support and adoption.

| Version No. | Description | Author | Approval | Effective Date |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------|--|----------------|
| 1.1 | Guidance for students and staff on student maternity, maternity/ paternity support and adoption. | Student Support and Wellbeing | Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee, June 2014 | June 2014 |

June 2014

Version 1.1

the place of useful learning

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Need advice about pregnancy? Please go to page 9 for more information about where to get advice and support.

This guidance outlines the University's approach to issues related to student pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption.

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1. Introduction

The University of Strathclyde is committed to supporting all students in matters relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption of a child that arise during the course of a student's studies. The University recognises that such matters can have a major impact on studies and is committed to facilitating a student's success, whilst upholding academic standards.

This guidance provides advice on how the University will approach these matters in relation to your studies.

2. Scope of the Guidance

This guidance covers any registered student who becomes pregnant, is about to become a parent or take on parental responsibilities (e.g. through adoption, guardianship or the pregnancy of a partner) or has recently become a parent. Throughout this guidance, the term "partner" includes spouses, unmarried partners and same sex partners.

This guidance also provides advice for University staff who may have a role in advising or managing the studies of a student affected by these matters.

3. Legal context

The Equality Act 2010 considers pregnancy and maternity to be a protected characteristic and prohibits discrimination on these grounds.

4. Managing Studies

The University has a responsibility to ensure that students affected by matters covered in this guidance are supported appropriately and fairly. The University recognises that each student affected by the matters covered in this guidance will have varying needs. Therefore the University's approach to supporting students and managing their studies will depend on the circumstances of the individual and the requirements of their studies.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnant students and those who have recently given birth will need to consider and discuss a range of issues relating to their studies with appropriate members of staff and agree a support plan.

Partners, adopters and guardians

Students who are taking on parental responsibilities but are not themselves pregnant may need additional support and may need to make special arrangements for their studies. The level of support, length of absences and level of flexibility needed will depend on the specific circumstances of the student concerned.

Termination and Miscarriage

The University is committed to working with medical and other agencies in ensuring that students who have experienced a termination or miscarriage are appropriately supported. The University recognises that students may be in need of support on a short or long term basis. It is recognised that some students may not wish to inform the University, and they are not obliged to do so.

For more information on absence, and what to do if circumstances have affected academic performance, see the section “Academic and Practical Considerations and Student Wellbeing” on page 5 of this guidance.

What students should do

Students should normally inform an appropriate member of staff in their Faculty as soon as they can about an issue covered by this guidance that may affect their studies. An appropriate member of staff would normally be an Adviser of Studies, Course Director, Research Supervisor or senior member of Faculty support staff.

If a student does not feel ready or able to discuss their situation with an appropriate member of Faculty staff, he or she may wish instead to speak in the first instance to one of the University’s support services – Student Counselling, Student Health, the Chaplaincy or the Advice Centre. Advice can also be sought from the USSA Advice Hub.

Students who have experienced a miscarriage or termination are not obliged to inform the University but are encouraged to do so in order that appropriate support can be offered and the effect of this experience on studies can be considered.

What the Faculty should do

Appropriate members of staff should discuss with the student appropriate adjustments to study arrangements to support the student.

In the case of a student whose pregnancy is progressing or who has recently given birth, the support plan template in **Appendix 2** may be used. The student should receive a copy of the written plan, as well as other appropriate members of staff requiring this information (including, where required, Conveners of Examination Boards). Staff must seek permission from the student before sharing information with other staff. The appropriate staff within the Faculty should also make an appropriate risk assessment in consultation with Safety Services.

Staff should remind students of relevant support services available on campus and note and record the information provided by the student on their circumstances. Relevant staff should be informed on a need to know basis to ensure that appropriate support is provided to the student without the need to ask intrusive questions.

What Professional Services should do

The University does not provide medical services or specialist pregnancy and maternity services. It does however provide support services that can assist students in matters of pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption.

In addition to advice and support on academic matters provided by the student’s Faculty, School or Department, sources of support and advice available to all students include the Advice Centre, Student Health, Student Counselling service, Chaplaincy, Disability Service and The Advice Hub at the Students Association.

Student Experience staff should ensure that correct information is recorded about student’s circumstances and this is only shared with relevant staff on a need to know basis.

5. Academic and Practical Considerations and Student Wellbeing

Cultural, ethical, religious and personal attitudes to pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption vary widely. It is of the utmost importance that staff deal with these matters in a non-judgemental manner, supporting and allowing the student to identify their own personal priorities.

Academic performance and study arrangements

Matters covered in this guidance may have an impact on academic performance. Any student who believes that their performance in assessments or examinations has been affected by medical or personal circumstances should follow the University's procedure for Absence and Personal Circumstances detailed at

www.strath.ac.uk/studentlifecycle/absencepersonalcircumstances/.

Medical and other supporting evidence should be submitted to Student Business in the McCance building along with a Personal Circumstances form.

In addition to formal study arrangements, staff should also give consideration to day to day arrangements for the support of students who are pregnant or have recently given birth. For example, permission to leave classes if feeling unwell and access to a quiet seated area close to classes or labs for students who may be fatigued.

Health and Safety

Safety Services can advise on assessing Health and Safety risk. The **University's Local Rule on New and Expectant Mothers** also provides guidance:

[www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/humanresources/occhealth/Local Rules for New and Expectant Mothers.pdf](http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/humanresources/occhealth/Local_Rules_for_New_and_Expectant_Mothers.pdf)

Pregnancy is a changing condition and risk assessments may be required on more than one occasion as conditions change with the progression of pregnancy.

It should be noted that students will not be permitted to take part in field work or study abroad after the 7th month of pregnancy.

A student must not return to University within two weeks of giving birth for health and safety reasons.

Resuming studies

If a student has suspended studies, they must inform the appropriate member of staff within the Faculty when ready to resume studies. A timetable for re-integration into the programme of study, including the examination schedule, should be part of the student's support plan.

Students must also inform the Student Business team prior to resumption of study, ensuring that a doctor's note is provided as evidence of fit to return to the University. The University record will then be updated to indicate that you are back on your programme of study.

Financial Considerations

Students should seek advice regarding implications for student loans or awards (such as bursaries or scholarships) from the Student Financial Support Team in the Advice Centre. Further advice regarding entitlement to state benefits should be sought The Advice Hub at the Student Union.

The University refund policy covers refunds of tuition fees for self-funded or privately sponsored students who suspend study. Students in this situation should approach Student Business team for further information.

Undergraduate students should note that funding will usually stop when a suspension of study begins.

Students funded by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS: www.saas.gov.uk/) must inform SAAS of their circumstances should they decide to take time out from their studies. SAAS will be able to advise on possible future eligibility. Rest of UK-domiciled students should seek advice from their relevant funding body (see **Appendix 1** sources of information and help).

Students should note that if they are required to extend period of study this may have implications for their funding and this should be clarified with the relevant funding body before deciding on a course of action. Further advice is available from the Advice Centre or from The Advice Hub at the Student Union.

Postgraduate and Research students receiving funding from external bodies should follow the guidance for their particular scheme, or contact their funding body or sponsor for further advice. Students on University of Strathclyde scholarships should contact their scholarship administrator.

International students with financial sponsors must contact their sponsors and agree a plan of action (such as deferring study and when to resume study).

Some scholarship providers may have a provision for maternity payments for students.

Immigration Considerations for International Students

Students who are subject to immigration control should seek advice from the Advice Centre at an early stage about the immigration implications of their pregnancy, financial entitlements and taking time out of their course. It should be remembered that most airlines will not carry passengers who are 7 months pregnant or more, and this should be taken into account when planning.

Accommodation (Halls of Residence)

If a student becomes pregnant whilst living in University accommodation, she may find that this is no longer suitable for personal or health and safety reasons. She should contact the Accommodation Office and/or the USSA Advice Hub for advice and/or to transfer to more suitable accommodation.

Students whose pregnancy is continuing are encouraged to disclose their pregnancy to their Hall Manager if they are concerned that they may require support in an emergency situation, such as early labour.

Babies/Children on Campus

For health and safety reasons, as well as to avoid the disruption of classes or study, babies and children must not be brought into teaching or learning areas. Students may bring babies and children into public areas on campus, but the University cannot accept any liability for the child in these circumstances.

Students should ensure that suitable childcare arrangements are in place at times when they are expected to be at University. Students can apply to the University Nursery for a place, although these are limited.

Rest facilities, breast feeding and baby changing

The University does not currently have special facilities for expressing milk or changing babies. There are however a number of welfare rooms on campus which may be appropriate for resting, nursing and baby changing.

A list of these rooms is provided in Appendix 3. Departments and Schools may wish to consider additional local facilities for a specific student.

The University is committed to improving provision of baby changing facilities as part of the Estates development plans.

6. Support for partners (including same-sex partners) who have responsibility for bringing up the child

Any partner of a pregnant student or those adopting, who expects to be involved with raising the child, will be entitled to request time out of studies. 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 immediately following the birth.

A student in this situation should contact Advisor of Study/ Academic Counsellor, Supervisor or other relevant staff member, to discuss and agree option. The University is committed to providing support. Flexibility will be applied where possible although this will necessarily be more limited in some programmes of study than others.

Postgraduate students receiving research funding should contact their sponsor or provider prior to arranging period of leave.

7. Students becoming parents through adoption

Students about to become parents through adoption should inform the Department/ School of their circumstances as soon as possible. Arrangements can be made to allow time out of study. This may vary depending on the age of the child, the programme of study being undertaken, and the point in the academic session at which the adoption takes place. The Advisor of Study/ Academic Counsellor or Supervisor will agree the period of absence.

8. Complaints

A student may raise a complaint where s/he is dissatisfied with the flexibility offered and believes the University has failed to live up to the standards of this guidance and legal rights.

Please read the student Complaints Procedure online:

www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/humanresources/policies/student_complaints.pdf

Appendix 1: Sources of help and information

For Emergency assistance or First Aid on campus: Telephone University Security Control on extension 2222 (0141 548 2222)

If outside of campus – call an ambulance by dialling free phone 999.

For medical advice if your GP's surgery is closed, call NHS 24 on 111

Advice on Pregnancy and Reproductive Health

Students can contact their own GP service for advice on pregnancy and reproductive health issues or they can use these services:

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------|
| Sexual Health Scotland | www.sexualhealthscotland.co.uk/pregnancy | |
| The Sandyford Initiative | www.sandyford.org | 0141 211 8130 |
| Childcare | | |
| University Nursery | www.strath.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing/nursery/ | 0141 553 4125 |
| Other childcare providers | www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk | |
| Advice, support and counselling | | |
| Advice Centre Student Financial Support Team | www.strath.ac.uk/studentfinancialsupport/ | 0141 548 2753 |
| Advice Centre, Information and Advice Team | www.strath.ac.uk/sees/infoint/ | 0141 548 4273 |
| USSA Advice Hub | www.strathstudents.com/advicehub | 0141 567 5042/ 5043 |
| Chaplaincy | www.strath.ac.uk/chaplaincy | 0141 548 4144 |
| Student Counselling | www.strath.ac.uk/studentcounselling | 0141 548 3510 |
| University Accommodation | www.strath.ac.uk/accommodation | 0141 548 3561 |
| Student Health Service | www.strath.ac.uk/studenthealth/ | 0141 548 3916 |
| Adoption UK | www.adoptionuk.org.uk | 0844 848 7900 |
| One Parent Families Scotland | www.opfs.org.uk | 0808 801 0323 |
| Health and Safety | | |
| University Safety Services | www.strath.ac.uk/safetyservices/ | 0141 548 2726 |
| Government Health and Safety Executive | www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/ | |

Appendix 2 : Student Support Plan¹

This form aims to guide discussions with students during pregnancy and maternity. It should be completed by the appropriate staff within the Faculty and agreed with the student. It is not intended that all 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 (e.g. 16 weeks pregnant, 24 weeks pregnant, 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 need to be 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 |
| | Year of course |
| | Department/ School/ Faculty |
| | Department/ School/ Faculty contact |
| Key dates (to be reviewed and added to over the course of pregnancy and maternity) | |
| 4 | What is the student's due date? |
| Communication with the student | |
| 6 | What is the student's preferred method of communication? |
| | During pregnancy |

¹ www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/files/student-pregnancy-and-maternity-implications-for-heis.doc/at_download/file

| | | |
|--|---|------|
| | During maternity-related absence | |
| | On return to study | |
| Informing other staff and students | | |
| 7 | 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) | | |
| 8 | Has a risk 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 | |
| 9 | Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risks, which is responsible for ensuring they are implemented? | |
| Pregnancy-related absence | | |
| 10 | Will the dates or times of antenatal appointments affect the student's study? | |
| 11 | Have you discussed any pregnancy-related illness that has affected the student's ability to undertake the course? | |
| 12 | If yes what arrangements have been made to enable the student to catch up? | |
| Assessments | | |
| 13 | Is the student unable to complete any course work or assessments due to her pregnancy or maternity? If so, provide details: | |
| 14 | What alternative arrangements have been made for Any outstanding or incomplete assessments? | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 15 | Will the student need special arrangements for any formal examinations she is due to sit? | |
| Maternity-related absence (students should provide information in writing at least 15 weeks before their due date) | | |
| 16 | When does the student intend to start maternity- related absence? | |
| 17 | When does the student intend to return from maternity-related absence? | |
| 18 | What information will the student require during maternity-related absence to keep up to date on course developments? | |
| 19 | Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student? | |
| International students/ those on placement abroad | | |
| 20 | 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 | | |
| 21 | Has the placement provider been notified of the student's pregnancy? | |
| 22 | Is the placement provider aware of the University's guidance on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity? | |
| 23 | Will the student be able to complete her placement? If not what alternative arrangements | |
| 24 | Who is responsible for liaising with the placement provider? | |
| Mitigating circumstances | | |
| 25 | Have students been informed about the University's mitigating circumstances arrangements in the event that their pregnancy or maternity affects examinations and assessments? | |

Return to study

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 26 | What support will be provided to the student on their return to study? (e.g. meetings with key staff etc) | |
|----|---|--|

Signatures

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Plan to be reviewed on | |
|-------------------------------|--|

Agreed by staff member

| | |
|------|--|
| Name | |
|------|--|

| | |
|-------|--|
| Title | |
|-------|--|

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Signature | |
|-----------|--|

| | |
|------|--|
| Date | |
|------|--|

Agreed by student

| | |
|------|--|
| Name | |
|------|--|

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Signature | |
|-----------|--|

| | |
|------|--|
| Date | |
|------|--|

Appendix 3: Welfare Room facilities on campus

The University has a number of rooms available which may be used for first aid, rest and recuperation and breastfeeding.

Departments/ Schools may wish to make additional local arrangements for a student, in consultation with Safety Services.

| Building | Room Number |
|---|--------------------|
| Colville Building | 409 |
| Curran Building | 417 |
| Hamnett Wing Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Science | 214 |
| John Anderson Building | 510a |
| Livingstone Tower | 217, 218, 220 |
| Royal College Building | 201, 201a |
| Stenhouse Building | 106 |
| Students' Union | 106 |
| Centre for Sport and Recreation | 221 |