

Pregnancy and Maternity/Paternity leave: Guidance for students

Principles

1. The University is committed to ensuring that it adheres to the Equality Act 2010, this includes fairly treating students who are pregnant, going through adoption and on maternity or paternity leave.
2. The University intends to provide students who are new or expectant parents (i.e. students who are pregnant, have given birth within the last six months or are breastfeeding, plus students who have adopted a child) with access to a range of support services and appropriate study-related adjustments to ensure that barriers are reduced to starting, succeeding in, or completing a programme of study.
3. Students are strongly encouraged to disclose a pregnancy as early as possible or if they are breastfeeding to an appropriate member of staff (e.g., their Personal Tutor, Supervisor, or a member of MySurrey Hive staff).
4. Disclosing a pregnancy will enable there to be consideration of support needs, and any necessary protective measures can be taken to protect them and their child. These will be discussed and outlined in an Individual Support and Adjustments Plan.
5. Unless advised otherwise (because of the demands of specific programmes) students are not obliged to disclose, but if they choose not to disclose a pregnancy, the University may not be able to provide protection from certain hazards, to take a fully flexible and planned approach to their programme of study.

Support Plan

Once a student has disclosed their plans for pregnancy, adoption, or maternity/paternity leave., a member of staff, usually the PhD supervisor or personal tutor with a student success team adviser, will meet with the student to draw up an Individual Support and Adjustments Plan.

This plan will be much as possible meet the needs of the student and the requirements of the programme. In technical programmes, this should be referred to the Faculty Health and Safety advisor for input.

Where a student is on a Student Visa, advice should be sought from the Visa Compliance team and, depending on the timing of the pregnancy, NHS support should be discussed with the student's General Practitioner to ascertain any costs of care.

If there are any areas of concern, these should be resolved with the School/Department Director of Learning and Teaching.

The Plan should be reviewed regularly throughout the pregnancy by the personal tutor/supervisor and the student, especially should difficulties occur throughout the pregnancy.

The Plan should cover, as relevant:

- a) Health and Safety Risk Assessment
- b) Communications with staff and students and with the student during maternity/paternity leave
- c) Examinations and assessments
- d) Placements and fieldwork
- e) Study and placements abroad

- f) Visa implications
- g) Financial, Accommodation and practical planning
- h) Review dates

Breastfeeding facilities

The University provides private facilities for breastfeeding and/or expressing milk. A list of where these facilities are is available at:

- Wellbeing Centre
- Surrey Sports Park – first aid room

Any questions about facilities should contact the Health and Safety team (safety@surrey.ac.uk).

Applicants

Applicants are advised to inform the Head of Admissions (admissions@surrey.ac.uk) so that consideration can be given to appropriate support being available from the commencement of their programme of study.

Consideration of any support or study related adjustments will be conducted confidentially and entirely separately from consideration of the student's application for admission.

Source of information and advice

- Centre for Wellbeing, centreforwellbeing@surrey.ac.uk 01483 689498
- Guildowns Medical Centre, www.guildowns.nhs.uk
- NHS Pregnancy guide, <https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/>
- SANDS (Stillbirth and neonatal death charity), <https://www.sands.org.uk/>
- Miscarriage Association, <https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/>
- Marie Stopes (Reproductive choices), <https://www.mschoices.org.uk/> BPAS <https://www.bpas.org/>
- Perinatal Mental Health Support
 - MIND, <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/postnatal-depression-and-perinatal-mental-health/about-maternal-mental-health-problems/>
 - PANDAS, <https://pandasfoundation.org.uk/>

Final version: September 2021

Individual Support and Adjustments Plan template

Name of Student				
URN				
Name of Person(s) meeting with Student				
Date				
Risk Assessment A health and safety focussed risk assessment should be carried out for each individual case; this is especially important if the student is undertaking a programme which entails exposure to additional risks, such as hazardous materials or activities. Generic relevant hazards are identified in the template, and these should be discussed between the student and staff member and updated / expanded as appropriate. Advice on completion is available from the Health and Safety Office (safety@surrey.ac.uk)				
Significant Hazard	Perceived Nature of Risk	Generic Control Measures	Residual Risk Low/Medium/High	Additional Control Measures
Display Screen Equipment	Increased susceptibility to musculoskeletal disorders and deep vein thrombosis (DVT)	DSE assessment to be undertaken if not already in place. Workstation should provide adequate adjustment to allow for increase in abdominal size. Advice on posture to prevent musculoskeletal problems, including adjusting working practices to avoid continuous sitting at workstation (risk of DVT)	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review DSE assessment as pregnancy progresses
Slips, Trips & Falls	Increased risk of injury due to physical change and or hormonal changes	Extra caution should be taken when moving about the site. Individual may have difficulty negotiating stairs during later stages of pregnancy	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review as pregnancy progresses
Lifting and carrying loads	Increased risk of musculoskeletal injuries due to the weakening of the skeletal structure.	Reduce amount of physical work that may be associated with your studies Avoid any lifting or carrying of heavy loads	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review as pregnancy progresses

Welfare	Access to toilets to protect against risk of infection and kidney disease	Provision of easy access to toilet facilities and more frequent breaks from work activity. Consideration should be given to providing access to quiet area where the individual can rest as necessary.	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review as pregnancy progresses
Temperature / humidity	Lower tolerance to heat and humidity resulting in discomfort/faint	Individual may require more breaks to access fresh air for periods during the day Individual to have access to fresh drinking water	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review as pregnancy progresses
Fatigue	Fatigue from prolonged standing or physical activity, or as a consequence of sleep disturbance	Avoid long periods of time standing. Allow for more frequent periods of rest. Aspects of any group, project, laboratory or field work may need to be modified as physical capability will reduce as a result of pregnancy	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review as pregnancy progresses
Work Related Stress	Individual vulnerable to stress due to hormonal, psychological and physiological changes during Pregnancy and the postnatal period.	Monitoring and reduction of risks in relation to work demands, relationships with other students or staff and requirements of studies. Study situations which may reasonably be anticipated to present heightened stressors may require further adjustment.	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review as pregnancy progresses
Out of Hours Working	Long study hours can affect the health of pregnant women.	Allowance made for tiredness and nausea at early stages of pregnancy.	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review as pregnancy progresses
Personal Safety	Unsafe situations or fear of unsafe situations can increase risks associated with pregnancy	If there is a perceived risk of an unsafe situation, the student should remove herself from the situation immediately and seek the assistance of Security and / or a member of staff.	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review as pregnancy progresses

Access / Egress	Mobility may be impaired during later stages of pregnancy	The student should be advised to use her own assessment as to her mobility and energy levels throughout her pregnancy and adjust her work pattern and approach accordingly. She should be advised not to exceed her physical comfort zone and should always bear emergency egress in mind during her work and movement around campus.	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review as pregnancy progresses
Working at height	Loss of agility and/or balance	Modify tasks to avoid aspects of working at height	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review as pregnancy progresses
Exposure to hazardous materials	Risk to the health of the mother and child.	Assess risk and avoid exposure.	To be discussed and agreed with the student	Review as pregnancy progresses

ACTION PLAN					
Develop and agree with the student a prioritised action plan to support the risk assessment					
Action to be taken to further reduce risk	Person responsible for completing action	Completion date (Prioritised on risk)		Action closure	
		Date	Priority	Signature	Date
Review DSE assessment as pregnancy progresses	DSE Assessor				

Study planning (especially regarding group work) to take account of potential decreases in capabilities as pregnancy progresses	Student in consultation with staff member				
Action:					
Action:					

Communication about a pregnancy	
Discuss and record the members of staff who will need to be informed about the pregnancy, and whether they also want fellow students to know	
When is the student happy for members of staff and fellow students to be informed?	
Who will be responsible for informing members of staff and fellow students?	
Communication with the student during a pregnancy (regarding the pregnancy, and before any maternity or paternity absence)	
Identify and record any information which will need to be communicated to the student (e.g. relevant procedure, deadlines, etc)	
Discuss and record the student's preferred method of communication, and who should they contact if they have any concerns, or their circumstances change	
Antenatal care	
When are the student's antenatal appointments?	
What arrangements will be made to enable the student to catch up if any appointments coincide with seminars and lectures?	
Examinations and assessments	

Will the pregnancy affect the student's ability to meet coursework deadlines or sit examinations?	If 'yes' which ones:
If so, what measures can be taken to ensure the student meets the requirements of the programme? <i>For example, would alternative methods of assessment, a changed deadline, etc be appropriate?</i>	
10) Has appropriate evidence been provided to enable the University to justify the adjustments? <i>NB: assumes that the Extenuating Circumstances procedures and evidence requirements will only need to be applied if unforeseen circumstances require a change to the agreed plan.</i>	Y/N and attach
<i>Placements, fieldwork and study abroad</i>	
Is the student required to undertake a placement or fieldwork as part of the programme?	
If so, will the pregnancy affect their ability to complete the required placement or fieldwork?	
Does an additional risk assessment need to be undertaken in relation to the placement/ fieldwork (e.g. to satisfy employer's requirements)?	
If yes, what measures can be taken to ensure they can fulfil these requirements? For example, could the student undertake the placement or fieldwork at an earlier stage of the pregnancy, or on their return from maternity or paternity-related absence?	
If the student is already abroad, do they wish – and are they able – to complete the programme of study or placement?	
If they return home, what arrangements will be made for them to resume their programme of study or placement?	
If the student is required to undertake a programme of study or a placement abroad that has not started, what arrangements will need to be made with the host institution?	

Maternity or Paternity-related absence

The student may wish to interrupt their study for up to two years, or they may wish to return as soon as possible after giving birth. In the latter case the University's guidance would be to adhere, as a minimum, to the provision within employment legislation which prevents people from working within two weeks of giving birth. The agreed date of return should take account of the student's preferences and the requirements of the programme.

To ensure arrangements can be made, students are asked to notify the University at least 15 weeks before the expected birth of their child as to when they would like their maternity or paternity absence to commence. If appropriate evidence is provided (e.g. the standard from Mat1B), the agreement of this plan supersedes the need for Extenuating Circumstances procedures to be followed; unless unforeseen circumstances subsequently require a change to the agree plan.

When is the student likely to start their maternity or paternity- related absence, and when are they likely to return?	
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Is it appropriate in view of the demands of the programme for there to be a review by Occupational Health before return to study? (Detail of any specific arrangements to make)	
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Financial, accommodation and practical planning

Where relevant, the student should be advised on finance, accommodation, scholarships, UKVI. This can be facilitated through the student success team and noted here, as required.

The support plan should be reviewed at key stages and prior to return to study. Key dates should be agreed with the student and communicated in writing.

Dates for planned reviews of the support and adjustment plan	
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Date for contacting the student to discuss return to study (minimum 8 weeks before agreed planned return date).	
Contact to be made by (<i>name of staff member</i>)	