

# Student Maternity, Maternity Support and Adoption Policy

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Approved by	Date	Review Date	Responsible Department
Senate	4/6/09		Equality & Diversity Unit/Senate Office
Senate	12/12/13		Equality & Diversity Unit/Senate Office
Senate	2/6/16		Research, Strategy & Innovation Office/Senate Office

## 1. Introduction

This Policy provides advice and guidance on issues related to study, health and safety, and finance to:

- Students who become pregnant during their studies, prospective students who are already pregnant when they commence study, students who have given birth within the previous 26 weeks, their partners and those who have recently become parents (e.g. through adoption)
- University staff who may have a role in advising students coming to them with these issues.

## 2. Scope of the Policy

The policy covers:

- any student who becomes pregnant during her studies;
- prospective students who are already pregnant when they commence study;
- any student who has given birth within the previous 26 weeks;<sup>1</sup>
- Any student who is about to become a parent because their partner (including same sex partner) is pregnant, and who expects to be responsible for the child;
- Any student who has recently become a parent e.g. through adoption.

## 3. Policy Statement

The University of Glasgow is committed to promoting equality in all its activities and aims to provide a work, learning, research and teaching environment free from discrimination and unfair treatment. The University actively seeks to develop best practice in discharging its legal responsibility.<sup>2</sup>

The University believes that becoming pregnant or caring for a child should not, in itself, prevent any student from succeeding in their studies. The University is 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 degree of flexibility that can be offered will vary between Colleges, but all Colleges 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, and Schools, Graduate Schools and Research Institutes,<sup>3</sup> 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 informed of a student's circumstances and this will be done only with the student's prior consent.

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.

Appendix A contains additional information for postgraduate research students.

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<sup>1</sup> 26 weeks following the birth of a child – this period of maternity is protected by the Equality Act 2010.

<sup>2</sup> The Equality Act 2010 places a duty to promote equality for the following protected characteristics including: pregnancy and maternity; age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

<sup>3</sup> Titles used in this policy may be subject to change. The titles are accurate at the time of printing.

## **4. Rights and Responsibilities**

This section covers rights and responsibilities for students, staff and the University.

### **4.1 For students who become pregnant during their studies**

#### *4.1.1. Confirming the Pregnancy*

A student who suspects she is pregnant should see her GP to have the pregnancy confirmed as soon as she can. If she decides to terminate the pregnancy, or miscarries, this need not be disclosed to the University. Absence from the University required as a result should be classed as 'sick leave' but there is no need to give the specific reason. Details of the University's Absence Policy can be found at <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/registry/staff/studentrecords/absence/>.

### **4.2 For students who become pregnant during their studies, those who are pregnant when their studies begin and those who have given birth within the previous 26 weeks.**

#### *4.2.1. Contacting the School, Graduate School or Research Institute*

Any students who are pregnant at the time they commence their studies, irrespective of whether they were pregnant when they accepted the place or during their studies or who becomes pregnant during their studies, should let her School, Graduate School or Research Institute know as soon as possible: the University can only make provision for the student if she lets them know she is pregnant. Whilst the Adviser of Studies or postgraduate Supervisor would normally be the first point of contact, the student can initially choose to speak to another member of staff with whom she feels more comfortable. However, students should note that the Adviser of Studies or Supervisor will require to be informed. This is in the student's best interest as, in the event of an examination or other compulsory component being missed and the student being unable/unwilling to provide evidence (e.g. because it is of a confidential nature), the Adviser of Studies or Supervisor can confirm in MyCampus that s/he has seen evidence to cover the absence.

Students who have given birth during the 26 weeks preceding the start of their programme of study are also advised to inform their School, Graduate School or Research Institute.

#### *4.2.2. Implications for Study*

The School, Graduate School or Research Institute will meet with the student to discuss how the pregnancy or maternity period<sup>4</sup> is likely to impact on her study. There may need to be an interruption of studies or a deferral of the start of study, depending on when the baby is due. The student, together with her Adviser or Supervisor will decide whether an interruption or deferral is needed and in the case of an interruption of study, the time period this needs to cover. This decision also needs to take into account the academic requirements of the student's programme. A student with a baby due near the examination period might require confirmation from her doctor that she is fit to sit exams. Time off might also be needed for medical appointments.

A support plan should be devised (in writing) by the Adviser of Studies, Supervisor or other nominated staff member, detailing any special arrangements agreed during the student's pregnancy and in the first 26 weeks after the birth, and the agreed timescale for her return to study. The student should receive a copy of the support plan, as should other appropriate member(s) of staff requiring this information (including, where required, Conveners of Boards of Examiners or Progress Committees). The student's permission should be established before passing on information.

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<sup>4</sup> Maternity period: i.e. duration of pregnancy plus 26 weeks after birth.

If the student continues to study during her pregnancy and during the first 26 weeks after giving birth, she should meet regularly with her Adviser of Studies, Supervisor or other designated member of staff, to review the support plan and to assess the effectiveness of any special arrangements put in place. Where necessary, further adjustments may be made where practicable.

#### *4.2.3 Field work*

Where the student plans to take part in field work as part of their studies, during their pregnancy or the first 26 weeks following the birth of a child, a risk assessment should be carried out by the School, Graduate School or Research Institute responsible for organising the field work. There may be particular risks associated with the field work and the student should discuss this fully with the appropriate member of staff.

#### *4.2.4 Study abroad/ placement*

If the student becomes pregnant whilst on a study year abroad or a placement, she must contact the School, Graduate School or Research Institute to make appropriate plans to ensure that health is safeguarded and academic progress is properly managed.

#### *4.2.5. Maternity related absence*

All students are allowed to take maternity-related absence<sup>5</sup> following the birth of their child. The length of absence will be determined by the personal circumstances of the student and the structure and content of their course. Students are required to take a minimum of two weeks absence following the birth. Normally, registered students should be allowed to take one year out of study. Where there is concern about knowledge of the field being affected by the length of maternity related absence, the School, Graduate School or Research Institute should take steps to ensure the student is kept up to speed with developments in the field.

For example, by sending lists of key reading and new research, and dates and access to moodle. and steps can be taken to ensure access to key journals.

Students should indicate the date on which they intend to start maternity related absence as well as the length of maternity related absence that they intend to take. It is recommended that the student inform the School, Graduate School or Research Institute in writing at least 15 weeks before the baby is due to allow time to review the support plan and make the necessary arrangements and ensure information is communicated as required.

Students requiring a Visa to study in the UK must check the terms of their Visa closely and comply with any restrictions or requirements. If clarification is needed on the terms of the Visa, this should be sought immediately from the UKBA and students are advised to obtain advice from [International Student Support](https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/) (see <https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/>).

#### *4.2.6 Resuming studies*

The student must inform the School, Graduate School or Research Institute when she is ready to return and the support plan should be reviewed with her Adviser of Studies or Supervisor to ensure an appropriate timetable for re-integration into her programme of study, including the examination schedule and any special features such as fieldwork or placements. The student must also notify Registry via their School, Graduate School or Research Unit of return to study to ensure that her University record is updated to indicate that she is back on her programme of study.

#### *4.2.7. Health and Safety*

There may be health and safety measures needing to be put in place in order to protect the student and her unborn baby or a mother within 26 weeks of giving birth. This will be

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<sup>5</sup> Maternity related absence applies equally to live births and still births after 24 weeks.

particularly relevant in certain Schools, Graduate Schools or Research Institutes (e.g. where the student might be exposed to harmful chemicals or radiation, or be expected to lift heavy objects or undertake other strenuous activity). Therefore, once the student has let her School, Graduate School or Research Institute know of her pregnancy, a Risk Assessment will be completed by the School, Graduate School or Research Institute. This will identify any risks that may be present which could harm the student or her unborn baby during pregnancy, or in the first 26 weeks following the birth and detail steps that need to be put in place to alleviate or minimise these risks. It should also detail any risks that may arise from any placement period or fieldwork due to be undertaken.

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 University as early as possible.

Any student who has given birth must not return to University within two weeks of giving birth for health and safety reasons.

#### *4.2.8. Financial Considerations*

Undergraduate students should note that funding will usually stop when the suspension of study begins. Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) funded students must inform SAAS of their situation. SAAS will be able to advise on possible future eligibility. Non-Scottish UK students should seek advice from their funding body.

The University refund policy covers refunds of tuition fees for self-funded or privately sponsored students who suspend study. Students who are suspending study under this policy should submit a completed Tuition Fee Refund/Liability Reduction form, available from <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/students/money/policies/refund/>, together with proof of the pregnancy.

Students in this situation should approach Registry for further information.

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. Further guidance is provided in Appendix A.

International students with financial sponsors must contact their sponsors and agree a plan of action (such as deferring study/ when to resume study etc.). Those international students who are not entitled to any maternity benefits in the UK may prefer to return home for the duration of their pregnancy. It should be remembered that most airlines will not carry passengers who are seven months pregnant or more, and this should be taken into account when planning.

The benefit rules are different for EU students and international students, and further advice should be sought from the International Student Support, or SRC Advice Centre.

#### *4.2.9. Accommodation*

Students who become pregnant whilst living in University accommodation may find that this is no longer suitable for health and safety reasons. Contact should be made with the Accommodation Office for advice.

For further sources of help and support, please see the 'Sources of Information and Help' section at the end of this document.

#### *4.2.10. 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 must ensure they have suitable childcare arrangements in place at times when they are expected to be at

University. Students can apply to the University of Glasgow Nursery for a place, although these are limited.

Students must not bring babies or children to University with the expectation that any staff member will take responsibility for caring for the child whilst the student is in classes.

Students may of course bring babies and children into public areas of the University but the University cannot accept any liability for the child in these circumstances.

The University provides baby change facilities on campus in the following locations:

- 1) Room 103A Disabled Ladies toilet in 1A the Square (the change table can be wheeled to the gents from the ladies toilet if requested)
- 2) Room 124A Visitor Centre Disabled Toilet (next to the University shop).

#### 4.2.11. *Breastfeeding*

Nursing mothers should be aware that there are no designated facilities for breast feeding<sup>6</sup> or for expressing and storing milk on campus.

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

Any student discovering he is 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 immediately following the birth. A student in this situation should contact his/her Adviser of Studies, Supervisor or other staff member, to discuss this. Flexibility will be shown where possible although this will necessarily be more limited in some programmes than others. It should be noted that the Adviser of Studies or Supervisor will require to be informed, even if discussions involve a different staff member.

For students receiving research funding, it may be possible for a period of maternity support leave to be allowed, and students should contact their sponsor or provider prior to arranging leave. See Appendix A for further guidance.

Students requiring a Visa to study in the UK must check the terms of their Visa closely and comply with any restrictions or requirements. If clarification is needed on the terms of the Visa, this should be sought immediately from the UKBA and students are advised to obtain advice from [International Student Support](https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/) (see <https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/>).

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

Students about to become parents (e.g. through adoption) should inform their School, Graduate School or Research Institute 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 event takes place. Again, the Adviser of Studies or Supervisor will be informed if discussions involve a different staff member.

## **5. Complaints**

Any student who feels that the University has failed to live up to the standards of this policy may raise a complaint under the University's Complaints Procedure (see <https://www.gla.ac.uk/connect/complaints/>). It is suggested that problems are resolved as

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<sup>6</sup> The Equality Act 2010 gives explicit protection to women wishing to breastfeed.

informally as possible in the first instance. The SRC Advice Centre can provide impartial, confidential advice to students in this situation (contact details at the end of this document).

## **6. Guidance for Staff**

This section provides guidance on the support of students coming under the scope of this policy, for use by any member of staff with a role in advising or supporting students. At all times, staff must ensure those students are not treated less favourably than any other student on the basis of their circumstances. In line with the University's legal obligations, flexibility should be shown where possible to ensure continued learning is facilitated.

Information given by students should be treated confidentially (being passed on where necessary only with the student's consent) and with sensitivity. Staff should not attempt to influence any student's decision but should provide impartial advice.

When a student contacts a member of staff to discuss any circumstances covered by this policy, a response should be made within five working days and a meeting arranged as soon as possible thereafter. If the member of staff being contacted by the student is not the student's Adviser of Studies or Supervisor, the Adviser of Studies or Supervisor should nonetheless be kept informed. Staff must inform the student of this intention.

Whilst it is recognised that each request must be dealt with on an individual basis, there are a number of measures that can be used in order to enable the student's continuation of study. These include:

- Allowing time out of study (for a pre-determined amount of time) for the birth and a period of time thereafter.
- Prior to and after the birth, giving permission for periods of absence for medical appointments, and making arrangements for the student to catch up on missed classes.
- Showing a degree of flexibility regarding assignment deadlines if the student's circumstances make it difficult for them to be met.
- Allowing resit examinations to be counted as first attempts where the pregnancy or birth prevents the student from taking them at the usual first attempt.
- Consideration of any requests to transfer to part-time study, where this is possible (although the student should bear in mind the financial implications of this course of action). Staff should refer the student to the useful contacts section.
- Offering support to help the student reintegrate to their studies after any period of prolonged absence.

It is important to take the views and wishes of the student into account, rather than applying a standard set of arrangements. All decisions taken should be based on discussion with the student.

Whilst an appropriate degree of flexibility should be exercised, care must be taken to ensure that academic standards are not compromised. A balance must be achieved between ensuring the student is not disadvantaged, and giving undue special treatment. It is not necessary for the University to grant every request made, although efforts should be made to meet reasonable requests. Requests should not be refused solely on the basis of being too costly to implement, although this will necessarily be considered when assessing the overall 'reasonableness' of a request. If any request is refused, the reasons for the refusal should be provided in writing for the student.

Where specific arrangements are required to be put in place for a student who is already

granted additional arrangements (e.g. on the grounds of disability), these should be kept separate in order that it remains clear which arrangements relate to which particular circumstance. This ensures that these arrangements are in place for the required amount of time and also clarifies adherence to the different pieces of legislation.

For staff requiring more detailed guidance, advice can be sought on any of the above from the Equality & Diversity Unit.

## **7. Sources of information and help**

### **Reproductive Health and Pregnancy advice**

The Sandyford Initiative <https://www.sandyford.scot/>  
0141 211 8130

British Pregnancy Advisory Service <https://www.bpas.org/>  
08457 304030

### **Childcare**

University Nursery <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/nursery/>  
0141 330 6441

Other childcare providers [www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk](http://www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk)

### **General information and advice**

SRC Advice Centre <https://www.glasgowstudent.net/advice/>  
0141 330 5360

One Parent Families Scotland <https://opfs.org.uk/>  
0808 801 0323

Adoption UK <https://www.adoptionuk.org/>  
0844 848 7900

### **Finances**

GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/extra-help>  
GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/families>

GOV.UK – Child Benefit <https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit>  
Child Benefit Office <https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit/eligibility>

SAAS <https://www.saas.gov.uk/>

Students domiciled in England <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

Students domiciled in Northern Ireland <https://www.studentfinanceneni.co.uk/>

Students domiciled in Wales <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/>

**Health and Safety advice** <https://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/index.htm>  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg373.pdf>

**Student Counselling** <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/counselling/>  
0141 330 4528

**University Accommodation** <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/accommodation/>  
0141 330 4743

**Chaplaincy** <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/chaplaincy/>  
0141 330 5419



**International Student Support**

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/>  
0141 330 2912

**Equality & Diversity Unit**

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/equalitydiversity/>  
0141 330  
1887

The list of useful contacts is correct at the time of printing – July 2020. Please check the web for up to date contact information. Please note the University of Glasgow does not endorse or take responsibility for the information provided by external organisations.

## Appendix A – Postgraduate Research Students Additional Guidance

This policy covers all PGR Students with parental responsibilities, including non-birthing partners. All PGR students are entitled to take parental leave under this policy as set out below:

1. Any student wishing to take a period of parental leave must contact their College Graduate School office as soon as possible to discuss leave options and make arrangements / apply for the period of leave. Supervisory teams should also be consulted so that the period of leave has minimal impact on the student's work and so that their return to work is handled sensitively.
2. Employer, Visa or Funder terms and conditions normally overrule University Policy in terms of leave allowances and available funding. By accepting a studentship or Visa, the student is agreeing to the specific terms and conditions of the funder, employer or UKVI which may differ from the entitlements in points 3-5.

### 3. Maternity/Adoption: 2 weeks min/12 month max

- 3.1 Any student who has given birth must not return to University within two weeks of giving birth for health and safety reasons.
- 3.2 Students requiring a Visa to study in the UK must check the terms of their Visa closely and comply with any restrictions or requirements. Students should consult with the International Student Support Team and/or UKVI. If clarification is needed on the terms of the Visa, this should be sought immediately from the UKVI.

Students may take a maximum of 52 weeks of maternity/adoption leave. If you are funded, please consult your funding terms and conditions for more information. University scholarship holders are treated in line with UKRI guidance, e.g. the first 26 weeks at full pay, 13 weeks at the rate of statutory maternity pay and 13 weeks unpaid.

- 3.3 The submission deadline of the student will be adjusted in line with the amount of any maternity or adoption leave taken. If the student is in receipt of funding (e.g. UKRI studentship, University or College scholarships), the funding end date will also be adjusted in line with the funder's terms and conditions. Not all funders provide financial support to cover maternity/adoption leave, or multiple periods of maternity/adoption leave so do check your terms and conditions carefully.
- 3.4 If no funding exists for parental leave within the funder or employer terms and conditions, or the student is self-funded, the student will receive no funding from the University during the period of parental leave. Students should contact their Graduate School and the SRC Advice Centre to enquire if other funds are available to them (e.g. hardship funds).
- 3.5 Should a student withdraw from their studies after a period of paid parental leave, any stipend paid during that period would normally be recovered by the University. If a student returns for three months or less, payments may be recovered on a sliding scale.

### 4. Ordinary Parental Leave

Partners are entitled to up to 10 days paid Ordinary Parental Leave on full stipend if they are currently in receipt of a stipend and their funder permits this. Ordinary Parental Leave cannot normally start before the birth or adoption and must end within 56 days of the birth or adoption. A student's final submission date will be adjusted to account for this period of leave, effectively extending their funding for the same period. Any further leave may be taken as unpaid parental leave as a suspension of studies.

## 5. Unpaid Parental Leave

Partners may also take an extended period of unpaid parental leave, up to a maximum of 50 weeks, taking into account any periods of 'ordinary parental leave', with their studentship extended accordingly. This will be recorded as a suspension of studies. Unpaid parental leave must be completed within 12 months of the birth of the child. This leave may be taken in up to three blocks of leave or all at once.

## 6. Shared Parental Leave

6.1 Shared parental leave is not an additional entitlement to leave. Instead, it enables leave to be shared between parents. For shared parental leave, the student must be sharing the care of their child during the year following the birth or adoption of their child and be one of the following:

- the birth parent;
- the primary adopter;
- the spouse, civil partner, or partner of the birth parent / primary adopter.

6.2 As with any period of leave, students should discuss their plans with their supervisory team and consult their Graduate School for appropriate guidance and to make any necessary arrangements.

6.3 Applications for shared parental leave should normally be made at least eight weeks before the leave is requested to begin to allow sufficient time for review and administration of payments.

6.4 Students should apply to their Graduate School through normal channels for parental leave, making clear that they are applying for shared parental leave, confirming their eligibility and that of their partner for shared parental leave, and providing the name and contact details of their partner's employer or confirmation of their partner's self-employed status. The University will act on this information in good faith but where any information has proved to be misleading the University reserves the right to recoup any payments made incorrectly or through the provision of erroneous information.

6.5 In order to be eligible for shared parental leave, the student must be in receipt of a University-funded studentship or be in receipt of funding that offers provision for shared parental leave at the expected time of the birth of the child or adoption and one of the following must be the case:

- Both parents or adopters are University-funded students or are students whose funding allows shared parental leave to be taken. In this case, with the consent of both students, the University will permit the leave to be shared and the normal stipend (up to 26 weeks or pro-rata) to be shared in the period following the birth of the child. The periods of leave do not have to be consecutive (each parent could take shorter periods or could take the leave at the same time); or
- One parent or adopter is a University-funded student or a student whose funding allows shared parental leave to be taken, and the other is employed and entitled to shared parental leave. If the eligible birth parent or adopter chooses to curtail their maternity or adoption leave, this may be shared by the partner. If the eligible birth parent chooses to curtail their maternity or adoption pay, the partner may be entitled to a stipend at the rate usually provided to them by the University up to a maximum of 26 weeks (or pro-rata); or
- One parent is a University-funded PGR or a student whose funding allows shared parental leave to be taken, the other is self-employed and entitled to maternity allowance. If the eligible birth parent chooses to curtail their maternity leave, this may be shared by the partner. If the eligible birth parent chooses to curtail their maternity allowance, the partner may be entitled to a stipend at the rate usually provided by the University for up to a maximum of 26 weeks (or pro-rata).