



University  
of Glasgow

## **Student Parents Policy**

**For implementation in Session 2018-19**

April 2019

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## 1. Introduction

This Policy provides advice and guidance to:

- Students who are parents/guardians of children under the age of 18<sup>1</sup>. Parents-to-be should review the [Student Maternity, Maternity Support and Adoption Policy](#).
- University staff who have a role in advising or supporting students who already are parents/guardians.

## 2. Scope of the Policy

The policy covers any current or prospective student who has parental/guardian responsibilities.

The scope of this policy does not include caring responsibilities, unless you are also the parent/guardian, and the child is under the age of 18. Otherwise, caring responsibilities are covered under the [Student Carers' Policy](#).

The policy focuses primarily on the responsibilities of being a parent or guardian and the impact on study-related matters. Sources of help and advice on related issues can be found at the end of the document.

## 3. Policy Statement

The University of Glasgow believes that being or becoming responsible for a child should not, in itself, be a barrier to a student, or prospective student, starting, succeeding in, or completing a programme of study at the University. The University is committed to being as flexible as possible, whilst, at the same time, making sure that any accommodations made for the student do not compromise academic standards. The special arrangements which can and should be made for a student in these circumstances will vary for each College and, indeed, from programme to programme. However, the general approach to be taken in these circumstances is consistent across the University. This policy is based on a set of important guiding principles, namely:

- Avoiding less favourable treatment. The University and its staff shall make sure they avoid treating a student less favourably than other students on the grounds that they are, or will become responsible for the care of a child.
- Taking a flexible approach. Staff will take a flexible approach to facilitating the continued learning of students with dependents.
- Demonstrating a non-judgmental and sensitive approach. When supporting and working with a student on these matters, staff must take an open-minded and non-judgmental approach. Information provided by the student should be treated sensitively and only passed on to others on a need-to-know basis (for example, in order to set up appropriate adjustments for the student).
- Enabling informed choices. Members of staff will not attempt to direct or unduly influence a student's decisions. Their role is to provide context and advice to the student, and to explore, in consultation with the student and others, flexibility that can be applied to the student's programme or period of study to provide appropriate support.

## 4. Responsibilities

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

### 4.1 Student Responsibility

A student parent/guardian is responsible for taking reasonable steps to put in place appropriate caring arrangements for their child/ren to enable the student to engage fully with their

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<sup>1</sup>This includes parents, co-parents, step parents, guardians and foster carers.

programme of study.

A student parent/guardian has the responsibility for confirming their status. The following supporting documentation may be regarded as acceptable confirmation of the student's status as a parent:

- A birth certificate with the student named as a parent.
- An adoption certificate.
- Self-certificate outlining the parental/guardian responsibilities, in situations where other evidence would be difficult to obtain, such as kinship care, caring for step-children.
- Any other reasonable evidence.

At any point the School/College may request further information or evidence to confirm caring status or any changes to the student parent/guardian responsibility.

#### *4.2 Adviser of Studies/Arts Advising Team or Supervisor Responsibility*

At all times, staff must ensure that students with parent/guardian responsibilities are not treated less favourably than any other student on the basis of their circumstances. The University should show flexibility where possible to ensure continued learning is facilitated. Information provided by students should be treated confidentially (being passed on where necessary and only with the student's consent) and with sensitivity. Staff should not attempt to influence any student's decision but should be non-judgmental and provide impartial advice.

Advisers of Studies/Advising Team/Supervisors are the first point of contact for undergraduate and postgraduate students who are parents/guardians. When a student has parent/guardian responsibilities they should inform their Advisers of Studies/Advising Team/Supervisor as soon as possible. It is in the student's best interest to provide the Advisers of Studies/Advising Team/Supervisor with evidence of their parental/guardian status. In addition to their Advisers of Studies/Advising Team/Supervisor, students may also choose to speak to another member of staff, with whom they are comfortable, about their circumstances.

#### *4.3 School/Research Institute Responsibility*

Following discussion with the student, the Adviser of Studies or Supervisor has responsibility for notifying the relevant Subject Head(s) or identified Director within School/Research institute of the student's parental/guardian responsibility. The School/RI should ensure a consistent level of support and treatment for students where possible.

#### *4.4 University Responsibility*

The University will ensure:

- This policy is appropriately promoted to prospective and current students.
- Sufficient information is provided about the essential requirements of a programme of study for a prospective student to make an informed decision about whether the programme is realistic for them in the light of their caring responsibilities.
- Any student who has responsibility of care for one or more children during a period of study at the University is accommodated as far as practicable to allow them to complete their programme of study, providing academic standards are upheld.
- Relevant staff are made aware of the terms of this policy and their responsibilities arising under it
- Staff in the Equality and Diversity Unit are available to discuss with staff the best way to support the continuing study of such a student to ensure they are able to complete their programme of study.
- Appropriate support is available to students through various support services.
- The policy is kept under review and updated as necessary

## 5. Guidance for Staff

### 5.1 Initial Contact

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 further discussions arranged as soon as possible thereafter. Where the member of staff contacted by the student is not the student's Adviser of Studies, or Supervisor in the case of postgraduate student, permission should be sought from the student to inform the Adviser of Studies or Supervisor.

### 5.2 Implications for Study

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 may include:

- Agreeing periods of authorised absence and making arrangements for the student to catch-up on the materials covered in lectures/tutorials missed for reasons related to caring responsibilities to minimise academic disadvantage.
- Ensuring sufficient information is available for students to build their timetables at least one month in advance of the academic year.
- Recognising that student parents/guardians may not be able to attend academic activities in the event of late changes to timetables.
- Ensuring that the student has adequate opportunity to make up missed time e.g. through access to any missed materials, using the lecture recording facilities or rescheduling of practical activities (noting that some activities cannot be rescheduled).
- Taking account of parent/guardian responsibilities on courses which require an external placement. Where possible, priority should be given to ensuring that the placement is within reasonable travelling distance to accommodate continuing care arrangements.
- Ensuring that adequate notice of such placements and/or of distant fieldwork activities is given to allow the student to arrange any necessary alternative care or to make alternative arrangements with the course/programme if they cannot participate.
- Taking into account the student's availability when arranging activities that involve group work.
- Recognising the need to arrive late or leave early in order to place their dependent in appropriate daytime care.
- The student taking some time out from their studies, however this should be discussed with their Adviser of Studies or Postgraduate Supervisor.
- Consideration of a transfer to part-time study, where possible as not all programmes are available part time. The student should note this may have financial implications and should be discussed with their funder prior to making any decisions. The SRC Advice Centre may also be able to offer advice in this situation. (Please note that international students in the UK with a Tier 4 General Student Visa are not permitted to change to part-time study.)
- Affected assessments: The University recognises that adverse circumstances may affect a student's ability to complete assessment and has in place a number of processes to address various different situations. A student whose parent/guardian responsibilities impact them in this way should use these existing processes (further details of these should be included in programme documentation):
  - An extension of a coursework submission deadline of up to five working days may be granted where the course convener is satisfied that the student has been prevented from submitting on time due to circumstances beyond the student's control.
  - A longer extension may be granted if a Good Cause claim is accepted: this applies where

there has been a sudden onset of illness or other adverse circumstances, and which is supported by appropriate evidence.

- Where a student is prevented from attending an exam or believes that their performance has been impaired, they may submit a Good Cause claim. Again, this would only be accepted where there had been a sudden onset of adverse circumstances and is supported by evidence.

A member of staff considering such claims will expect the student to have made reasonable efforts to complete the assessment taking account of all the circumstances. For example, for scheduled assessments (exams, class tests) it would be reasonable for the student, if possible, to try to put in place contingency arrangements in the event that normal childcare arrangements fall through (e.g. the child is unwell and unable to attend school/nursery).<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, if the child became seriously unwell it would be reasonable that the parent/guardian would wish to be with their child.

It is important to take the views and wishes of the student into account, rather than applying a standard set of arrangements as one size fits all approach may not suit all students or all programmes of study. All decisions taken should be discussed with the student and, with the student's permission, the student's Adviser of Studies or Supervisor, if a postgraduate research student, should be kept informed.

### *5.3 Academic Standards*

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 to the student, and should include details on any right of appeal, or alternatively complaint.

### *5.4 Delineating Arrangements*

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.

## **6. Complaints**

Any student who feels that the University has failed to adhere to 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 informally as possible in the first instance. The SRC Advice Centre can provide impartial, confidential advice to students in this situation (contact details are provided at the end of this document).

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<sup>2</sup> From a practical point of view, in the majority of cases a student who misses assessments with Good Cause will be expected to complete the assessments at a later date so it is in the student's best interests, where possible, to have alternative child care arrangements in place so that a backlog of missed assessments does not build up.

## 7. Sources of information and support

### General information and advice

SRC Advice Centre	<a href="https://www.glasgowstudent.net/advice/">https://www.glasgowstudent.net/advice/</a> 0141 330 5360 <a href="mailto:advice@src.gla.ac.uk">advice@src.gla.ac.uk</a>
Student Services Enquiry Team	<a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/students/sset/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/students/sset/</a> 0141 330 7000 <a href="mailto:student.services@gla.ac.uk">student.services@gla.ac.uk</a>
<a href="#">Student Services (Dumfries)</a>	01387 345825
Student Parents Network	<a href="http://moodle2.gla.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=12198">http://moodle2.gla.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=12198</a>

### Finances

Department of Work and Pensions	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting/financial-help-children">https://www.gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting/financial-help-children</a> (UK only) <a href="https://www.mygov.scot/support-at-university/">https://www.mygov.scot/support-at-university/</a> (Scotland)
SAAS	<a href="https://www.saas.gov.uk/">https://www.saas.gov.uk/</a>
Students domiciled in England	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance">https://www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance</a>
Students domiciled in Northern Ireland	<a href="https://www.studentfinancenir.co.uk/">https://www.studentfinancenir.co.uk/</a>
Students domiciled in Wales	<a href="https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/">https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/</a>
HEI Discretionary and Childcare Fund	<a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/registry/finance/funds/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/registry/finance/funds/</a>

### Welfare support/advice

Counselling & Psychological Services	<a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/counselling/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/counselling/</a> 0141 330 4528
<a href="#">Student Counselling (Dumfries)</a>	01387 345825
Interfaith Chaplaincy	<a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/chaplaincy/index.html/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/chaplaincy/index.html/</a> 0141 330 5419
International Student Support	<a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/</a>
International Family Network	<a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/after/family/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/after/family/</a>
Equality & Diversity Unit	<a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/equalitydiversity/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/equalitydiversity/</a> 0141 330 1887