

STUDENT PREGNANCY, MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND ADOPTION POLICY

- 1 The University of Law's Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy sits within the University's Quality and Standards Code which provides a suite of policies and supporting protocols designed to safeguard the academic standards of the University and to assure the quality of learning opportunities offered; this policy should therefore be read in conjunction with other relevant policies within the code.

Introduction

- 2 This policy has been developed as part of the commitment of the University to provide a supportive learning environment in which encouragement is given to all students to develop their knowledge, skills and competencies.
- 3 The University is committed to ensuring that students receive appropriate support during pregnancy, maternity, paternity or adoption. The University believes that becoming a parent or caring for a young child should not, in itself, prevent a student from starting or succeeding in their studies.
- 4 This policy covers any student who becomes pregnant during their studies, prospective students who are already pregnant when their studies begin, any student who has given birth within the previous 26 weeks, any student who is breastfeeding beyond 26 weeks and any student who becomes a parent during their studies.

Responsibility for this policy

- 5 Ultimate responsibility for the development of clear and effective processes and procedures associated with the maintenance of standards and quality assurance of academic provision and overseeing their application lies with the Academic Board.

Expectation

- 6 The University has in place, monitors and evaluates arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Key aims and principles

- 7 The University is committed to promoting equality in all its activities and aims to provide an environment free from discrimination and unfair treatment. A student is explicitly protected from discrimination because of their pregnancy or maternity status under the Equality Act 2010. Discrimination occurs if:
 - the student is treated unfavourably because of their pregnancy

- within 26 weeks of the day of giving birth, the student is treated unfavourably because she has given birth (this also applies in cases of still birth and neonatal death provided more than 24 weeks of the pregnancy has elapsed)
 - the student is treated unfavourably because they are breastfeeding and the child is less than 26 weeks old (if the child is more than 26 weeks old, unfavourable treatment because of breastfeeding is likely to constitute sex discrimination)
- 8 Some of the University's courses require students to meet appropriate standards and learning outcomes required by relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). The University will work as flexibly as possible to support students while considering the requirements of any PSRBs.
- 9 Any information provided by a student will be handled confidentially and will only be shared with others on a "need to know" basis in line with the University's Privacy Policy.
- 10 Staff will offer guidance in a sensitive, non-judgemental manner
- 11 This policy has been developed using the *Equality Challenge Unit guidance, Student pregnancy and maternity: implications for higher education institutions*.

Student Pregnancy and Maternity

- 12 Students are encouraged to share information about their pregnancy or maternity with a trusted member of staff, such as their Academic Coach, Student Journey Advisor, Wellbeing Advisor, Programme and Student Lead (PSL), or other member of staff as soon as is practicable so that support can be offered and put in place. However, the student is under no obligation to share this information with the University. Any information shared by the student should be treated sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis. In all cases, where information is shared with someone other than the PSL, the consent of the student should be sought to share this with the PSL and course team so that adjustments can be made to the teaching and learning environment where applicable.
- 13 International students who become pregnant prior to or during their studies should contact the Visa Compliance team as early as possible for advice on whether their individual circumstances will affect their visa status.
- 14 Students must ensure the safe supervision of any baby they may bring onto a University campus. University staff cannot take responsibility for caring for the child at any time.

Termination

- 15 If a student decides not to continue with the pregnancy, there is no need for the University to be made aware of this, although the student should be signposted to the support available through Student Support Services, the Spectrum Life Student Assistance Programme and relevant external agencies as outlined in Appendix B.
- 16 Where a student will need to miss classes, either for tests or recovery following a termination, they should inform their Student Journey Advisor (SJA) to advise they will need to miss classes for medical reasons. The SJA will advise the student about alternative sessions and the Engagement Monitoring Policy.

Miscarriage

- 17 A student who miscarries may need time off to recover. The student should inform their Student Journey Advisor (SJA) to advise that they will need to miss classes for medical reasons. Such absences will be treated in line with the University's Engagement Monitoring Policy. The student is also able to access support through Student Support Services and Spectrum Life.

Maternity Leave

- 18 Students should be encouraged to seek advice from the Wellbeing Team for support with their maternity leave and from the Money and Housing Advice Team as to the financial implications (eg on student loan funding) of taking maternity leave. All students are required to take a minimum of two weeks' leave of absence following childbirth.
- 19 Where a student takes the minimum two weeks' leave of absence, prior to return to study, they may be required to provide evidence of good health from either their midwife, health visitor or General Practitioner (GP) to their Student Wellbeing Advisor who will inform the PSL that this information has been received. It is also recommended that the student works with the Disability and Inclusion Team to establish whether a temporary University of Law Inclusion Plan (ULIP) will be beneficial to them. The student should also agree to a meeting led by their Programme and Student Lead (PSL) in accordance with paragraph 26.
- 20 Where a student wishes to take more than the required minimum two weeks, they should contact their Student Journey Advisor to request an intermission. Visa-sponsored students should first seek advice from the Visa Advice team.

Placements

- 21 Students who are due to undertake a placement and become pregnant before starting the placement, should contact the Placements team via email at

ulbsplacements@law.ac.uk who will liaise with the employer regarding the pregnancy, provided the student has given consent to share the information. It is a legal requirement for the employer to carry out an Expectant Mothers' Risk Assessment to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the expectant mother and their unborn child(ren) prior to the start of the agreed placement.

- 22 Students who become pregnant whilst on placement, should contact their employer who will carry out an Expectant Mothers' Risk Assessment which should then be shared with the student's Student Journey Advisor and the Placements Team.
- 23 Depending on the nature of the role and the outcome of the Expectant Mothers' Risk Assessment, the placement may need to be suspended or terminated. Visa-sponsored students should seek advice from the Visa Compliance Advice team if their placement is terminated.

Apprenticeships

- 24 Students on apprenticeship courses who wish to take a break of four weeks or more must apply for a break in learning. The Individual Training Plan (ITP) will need to be reviewed and updated to reflect any revision to the timeline for training.
- 25 Where an apprentice plans to return to the same apprenticeship programme they may apply for a break in learning. The reason for the break and its expected duration must be agreed with the employer. Any breaks in learning should be recorded on the ITP and, where required, a plan made for delivery of outstanding training and/or assessments following the break. The employer will be responsible for amending the apprenticeship agreement if required.

Staff Responsibilities

- 26 When a student advises a member of University staff that they are pregnant, that they have recently become a parent or are in the process of adoption, a meeting should be set up with the student, the PSL, and where appropriate a member of Estates and Facilities, the Student Information Hub Manager or a Student Wellbeing Advisor as soon as possible to discuss any impact on their studies. The discussion should identify any support required and completion of both a Risk Assessment and a Support Plan
- 27 The staff member who leads the meeting (which should usually be the PSL) is responsible for discussing consent and verifying that the student has no objections to the information being shared with others on a need to know basis. Where consent is withheld, the staff member should respect the student's right to confidentiality and advise that support from the University will be limited as a result.

- 28 If any adjustments are needed to course/assessments and consent to share has been provided, the staff member should make a referral to the Disability and Inclusion Service who will make the appropriate arrangements and put in place a temporary University of Law Inclusion Plan (ULIP).
- 29 The completed Support Plan and Risk Assessment must be sent to the Head of Campus Operations and Campus Dean for approval prior to dissemination to other staff on a need-to-know basis.

Returning to Study

- 30 Where a student has taken time out of study, prior to return the student should contact their Student Journey Advisor to confirm their return date and to confirm whether adjustments will be required. The Disability and Inclusion Team will be able to advise on any temporary adjustments and prepare a University of Law Inclusion Plan if this is needed.
- 31 Subject to health and safety considerations, the University will take a flexible approach to ensure that students who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding are not prevented from attending their course or accessing University facilities. In order to facilitate this, babies will be permitted onto University campuses, although not into examination rooms, for short periods (e.g. in cases where childcare is temporarily unavailable) as long as their presence does not disrupt the learning of other students. In a teaching environment, where the tutor or member of staff leading the session determines that the presence of the baby is causing disruption they can require the student to temporarily leave the session until the baby is calm. It is recommended that this is agreed with the student in advance of the start of the session.
- 32 The Equality Act 2010 specifically protects new mothers with a baby under 26 weeks or who are breastfeeding from discrimination. The University does not have dedicated facilities for breastfeeding or expressing or storage of milk so students should discuss their needs with their Student Journey Advisor, Student Information Hub Manager or member of the Disability and Inclusion or Wellbeing teams as soon as possible. The staff member should then raise this with the local Estates and Facilities team to identify a suitable space for the students' use, whilst remaining mindful that it is unlawful to ask students not to breastfeed in a public area should they so choose.
- 33 Babies will not be allowed into examinations. In these circumstances, students should contact their Programme and Student Lead to discuss what appropriate arrangements may be possible. The student may nominate up to two trusted individuals on their Support Plan who will be allowed to accompany the student whilst on campus to look after the child during examinations. This information, along with

copies of the agreed trusted individuals' ID. will need to be shared with Campus Security and the trusted individuals will need to sign in/out as visitors.

Paternity or partner-related absence

- 34 Students whose partners are pregnant or who are adopting can request to take time out of the studies to accompany their partner to medical appointments before and after the birth. This should be discussed with their Student Journey Advisor. It may be possible for Student Information to arrange for the student to attend an alternative session in these cases (subject to the usual criteria).
- 35 Where a student's partner is pregnant or adopting a child and the student wishes to take up to 2 weeks' leave, this may be requested in consultation with their Student Journey Advisor the Programme and Student Lead (this should be requested in advance, as early as possible). In the case of visa-sponsored students, the Visa Compliance Office should also be informed.
- 36 Where a student wishes to request more than 2 weeks leave, and/or is considering taking a break from their studies when their partner returns to study or work, they should discuss their options with their Student Journey Advisor/ as early as possible as this will require the student to intermit from their course. Visa-sponsored students should also seek advice from the Visa Advice Team.

Responsibility for the provision

- 37 Responsibility for the implementation of this provision lies with the University's Student Wellbeing Service.

Monitoring and evaluation of the provision

- 38 Responsibility for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy lies initially with the Wellbeing Service. Formal responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of this provision lies with the Academic Board.

Version history

Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
V1.0	Head of Student Support Services	Initial drafting	11/2/19
V1.1	Head of Student Support Services	Incorporating amends from In House Legal	29/5/19
V1.2	Head of Student Support Services	Incorporating feedback from operations/estates team	11/7/19
V1.3	Registry Officer	Change to coding convention	24/03/20
V1.3	Senior Quality Officer	Further naming convention clarifications	26/03/20
V2.0	Head of Student Support Services	Major amendments – changes to naming conventions; inclusion of information on placements and apprenticeships; Addition of Appendix E – Pregnancy Risk Assessment	24/03/2023
V2.1	Head of Student Support Services	Further amendments – taking into account comments from Director of SICA; Head of Business Operations – Apprenticeships; Head of SI – Campus Operations; Campus Dean (Leeds) and various academic staff	02/05/2023
V2.2	Head of Student Support Services	Minor amendment to para. 31 following feedback from ASQC ARP	16/06/2023
V2.3	Director of Student Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion	Minor amendments to Appendix D	06/07/2023

Appendix A Guidance for Staff

This information is to provide guidance to staff supporting students within the scope of the Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy. When a student shares information about a pregnancy or adoption, the trusted member of staff to which the disclosure has been made should work within the following principles:

- Ensure the student is not treated unfavourably on the basis of their circumstances and take a flexible approach where possible, ensuring that academic standards are not compromised
- Treat the information confidentially, only passing on where necessary and on a need-to-know basis
- Respond to the student promptly, ideally arranging a meeting to discuss further within 5 working days. If requested by the student, a female member of staff should be identified to conduct the meeting.
- Ensure that students are advised to liaise with their doctor if they have not already done so
- Ensure that students are informed of other support services available to them at the University if needed. A list of external support services which may be useful can be found at Appendix B
- Complete a Student Support Plan (see Appendix C) and ensure that a copy is given to the student. The plan should be reviewed at key points during the period of pregnancy/maternity and updated where required

Potential Implications on Studies

During the initial meeting, the staff member supporting the student should discuss the individual circumstances and any potential impact on their studies. This will depend on a number of factors including the expected due date for pregnant students, the stage of the adoption process or how recently the student has become a parent as applicable. The timing of the sharing of the pregnancy information in relation to the course will also be relevant, e.g. whether assessments are imminent, the course has just started, etc.

Possible considerations for discussion can include:

- Alternative session requests to enable the student to attend medical/external appointments (subject to space). Where alternative sessions are not possible, arrangements should be made to enable the student to catch up on any teaching sessions missed, e.g. by providing any exemplars and arranging for the student to

have an opportunity to talk to a tutor once they have worked through the workshop materials.

- Permanent class change if the student's timetable is impacted by their circumstances, e.g. switch from 2-day timetable to AM/PM classes (subject to space).
- Course transfer – it may be possible for a student to transfer to a different campus/study mode. Please refer to the appropriate Transfer Guidance notes for further details.
- Intermission – if the student wants to take a break from their studies, please refer to the intermission policy and guidance. Intermission is generally for a 1 year period however the University accepts that in exceptional circumstances, students may need to extend their break from studies, for example where there are medical reasons, or where there is no available childcare. In these cases, a further intermission request should be submitted by the student towards the end of the initial 1 year period.
- If the student has not yet started their course or is within the first 2 weeks of their studies, any deferral requests will need to be managed by the Admissions team.
- For health and safety reasons, students are required to take a minimum of two weeks compulsory maternity-related absence from their studies after giving birth.
- Examination/Coursework adjustments or concessions - although the University would not usually require evidence of pregnancy/birth date/adoption in order to put arrangements in place, should adjustments be required to assessments and/or for concession purposes, supporting documentation will be required. Requests for Course/Assessment adjustments should be referred to the Disability and Inclusion Service, with the student's consent so that reasonable adjustments can be considered, for example an additional time allowance is often useful for pregnant students needing additional toilet breaks. Concession, extensions, deferrals and mitigating circumstances applications should follow the usual process.
- International students – if the student is visa-sponsored, any absence/intermission/transfer may impact on their visa status. The Visa Compliance Team should be contacted for advice in these circumstances.
- Funding implications – students will need to consider any impact on their funding/financial circumstances and make contact with appropriate organisations where required for further advice, particularly if they are considering a break from their studies. This could include loan providers, sponsors and/or the local benefits office (UK students). The University's Money and Housing Advisors can support staff and students in understanding benefits and grants which may be available to UK students during pregnancy/maternity– staff should contact the Service for more details. Students from outside the UK will need to contact their home government for information on pregnancy and maternity entitlements.
- Accommodation – the student will need to consider whether their existing accommodation remains suitable. If the student needs to find new accommodation, the University Accommodation Service/Wellbeing Service will work with the student to look at alternative options where possible.

Appendix B

General organisations

□ **GOV.UK**

The UK government's website provides information on health, care and benefits during pregnancy, benefits for parents, and information on childcare providers in your local area [Having a child, parenting and adoption - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/having-a-child-parenting-and-adoption) (www.gov.uk) www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages/child-adoption

□ **Fatherhood Institute**

The UK's fatherhood think-tank, providing news, training information, policy updates, research summaries and guides for supporting fathers and their families. <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/>

□ **National Health Service**

Provides information relating to pregnancy, abortion, health in pregnancy and maternity, and services provided by the NHS. www.nhs.uk

□ **National Union of Students**

Provides information and advice to students and students' unions about student finance, rights and welfare. Information for student parents is available on its website, along with research and publications about students with dependant children. www.nus.org.uk

Specific organisations

□ **Adoption UK**

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

□ **Antenatal Results and Choices**

The only national charity that provides non-directive support and information to expectant and bereaved parents throughout and after the antenatal screening and testing process. www.arc-uk.org

□ **British Pregnancy Advisory Service**

Supports reproductive choice and health by advocating and providing high-quality, affordable services to prevent or end unwanted pregnancies with contraception or by abortion. Also offers a range of other reproductive health services. www.bpas.org

□ **Gingerbread**

A website of resources for single parent families www.gingerbread.org.uk www.uk-

□ **The Miscarriage Association**

Offers support and information to anyone affected by the loss of a baby in pregnancy.

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

□ **The National Breastfeeding Helpline**

The National Breastfeeding Helpline offers friendly, non-judgemental, evidence-based support and advice to anyone in the UK who needs it

www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.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

□ **Start4Life**

Information on pregnancy, breastfeeding and parenthood from the NHS.

nhs.uk/start4life

□ **La Leche League International**

Information on breastfeeding and storage of human milk

www.llli.org

External support

Togetherall

All students can access Togetherall for confidential, private and anonymous 24/7 mental health and wellbeing support. Togetherall is accessed via

<https://www.togetherall.com/en-gb/> - students can create an account using their ULaw email address.

Spectrum Life Student Assistance Programme

24/7 in the moment support is also available through the Spectrum Life Student Assistance Programme. Students can also be referred on for up to six sessions of counselling where appropriate. The SAP can be accessed in the following ways:

Freephone from the UK: 0800 831 0227

Phone from elsewhere (charged at international rates): + 353 1 518 0277

WhatsApp: Text "Hi" to 07418 360 780

Online: <https://universityoflaw.spectrum.life> (create an account using ULaw email address, then once logged in click "Support" to request call back or use live chat)

Appendix C Student Support Plan

This form should be used by staff to guide discussions with students during pregnancy, maternity, paternity or adoption planning. It should be completed and agreed with the student. It may not be possible to complete the whole format the first meeting but it 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). If the student's circumstances change, the plan will also need to be reviewed.

Contact details	
1	Student's details
	Name
	Student Reference Number
	Telephone
	Email address
	International Student? Y/N
2	Course details
	Course name
	Academic Coach
	Student Journey Advisor
	Year of course
Key dates (to be reviewed and added to over the course of pregnancy, maternity, paternity or adoption planning)	
3	What is the expected due date/adoption timeframe?
4	How many weeks pregnant was the student when she notified ULaw of pregnancy (where applicable)?
Communication with the student	

5	What is the student's preferred method of communication:	
	during pregnancy (where applicable)?	
	during maternity/paternity/adoption-related absence?	
	on return to study?	

Informing other staff and students

6	Who will need to be informed about the student's pregnancy/maternity/paternity/adoption and when would the student like them to be informed?	
	Name and title	Date

Rest facilities

7	Has the student been informed about rest facilities on campus for student use?	
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Pregnancy-related absence

8	Will the dates or times of antenatal appointments affect the student's study?	
9	Have you discussed any pregnancy-related illness that has affected the student's ability to undertake their course?	
10	If yes to either of the above questions, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to catch up?	

Assessments		
11	Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to pregnancy or maternity/paternity/adoption?	
12	If so, provide details:	
13	Does the student need any adjustments in place for assessments or during the course? If so, has this been referred to the Disability and Inclusion Service?	
Maternity/Paternity/Adoption-related absence (students should provide information in writing at least 15 weeks before the due date/expected adoption date)		
14	How much absence does the student intend to take?	
15	When does the student intend to start this absence?	
16	When does the student intend to return ?	
17	Will the dates of this absence affect the student's ability to complete any course module requirements?	
18	If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to complete the module?	
19	What information will the student require during their absence to keep up to date on course developments?	
20	Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student?	
Funding/Financial Implications		
21	Has the student been referred to the University Money and Housing Advisors to investigate any potential impact on funding/finances?	

22	Specify any follow-up required:	
Baby feeding/campus access		
23	Does the student intend to bring their baby onto university facilities on their return to study?	
24	Does the student intend to breastfeed or express milk?	
25	If yes to Q23/Q24, has this been referred to the campus Estates & Facilities team?	
26	Name and contact details of trusted individuals (max. 2) who are authorised to attend campus and look after the baby whilst the student attends teaching on campus	
International students		
27	Have international students or students on placement abroad been informed about:	
	the need to check any visa implications of returning home or extending their stay due to pregnancy and maternity/paternity/adoption?	
Concessions		
28	Have students been informed about ULaw's concessions process in the event that their circumstances affect examinations and assessments?	
Return to study		
29	What support will be provided to the student on their return to study? (e.g. meetings with key staff, etc)	
Further information		

30	Any other information or comments	
Signatures		
Plan to be reviewed on		
Agreed by staff member		
Name		
Title		
Signature		
Date		
Agreed by student		
Name		
Signature		
Date		

Appendix D – Guidance for Campus Student Information and Estates & Facilities Teams

Where students have recently given birth or are breastfeeding and request to bring babies on campus, as noted in the Policy, the University will facilitate this as long as it does not cause disruption to other students. In these circumstances, students should be referred to the campus Student Information or Estates & Facilities Team who will consider room availability and how this can be enabled in their campus.

When a room has been identified, Student Information or Estates & Facilities will liaise with the student to confirm the details and discuss the following:

- Babies must be supervised at all times whilst they are on campus
- Consideration must be given to other students and staff
- A member of staff cannot take responsibility for caring for the baby at any time
- Be aware of potential risks and hazards present in the building (and complete a Risk Assessment)
- Refer to paragraph 31 of the Policy in respect of requests to bring a baby into a teaching session
- If the baby is at any time unwell, they should not be brought into the University, particularly if they are sick with an infectious disease. In these circumstances, the student should contact the Student Information team regarding attending an alternative session where possible
- The timelines where any room is available for use and any limitations of this, e.g. if it is not possible to provide a room for a full day, this should be clarified in advance.
- Where the student needs to bring someone on site to supervise the baby, the protocol for signing them into the building and which areas of the campus they are/are not able to access

Appendix E. Pregnancy Risk Assessment

Student Name	
Student Reference Number (SRN)	
Course of Study	
Campus	
Assessor Name	
Date Risk Assessment Completed	

Assessment Area / Risk Activity: New and Expectant Student Mothers

Item No.	Activity / Material etc	Hazard	Persons at risk	Likelihood	Severity	Risk Rating L x S = R	Control Measures	Final Rating
1			New and expectant mothers					
2								
3								
4								



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