

# University of Kent Pregnancy and Maternity Policy Appendix 2

## Guidance for Students

This Guidance Document is designed to be referenced alongside the University of Kent Student Pregnancy and Maternity Policy and its accompanying appendices: Appendix 1; Guidance for Staff and Appendix 3: Summary of Help and Advice.

### Students (and applicants)

Students and applicants covered by this policy are **responsible for**:

- Disclosing their pregnancy or plans to adopt a very young child to a trusted member of staff within their School at an early stage of their pregnancy, with a view to discussing any necessary support arrangements or adjustments – particularly where elements of their programme of study might present a health and safety hazard to the student or unborn child.
- In the case of applicants, it is advisable to inform the Head of the Recruitment and Admissions Office at an early stage so that consideration can be given to appropriate support being available from the commencement of their programme of study
- Ensuring the safe supervision of any child they may bring onto campus

Students and applicants covered by this policy are **advised to**:

- Read the policy in order to understand the University's approach to supporting pregnant students and students with very young children
- Ensure that they have a clear idea of what will be expected of them on their course of study in order to understand the potential impact of pregnancy related absence
- Discuss any concerns they have relating to their pregnancy with the University Medical Centre or their own GP and, if required, staff in one or more of the following services: The University Medical Centre, Sunlight Centre Surgery (Medway), GK Unions Together Advice Service (Medway), Kent Union Advice Centre, Student Support and Wellbeing, Kent Hospitality Accommodation Office and the Chaplaincy.

### 1) Informing the School

Please note that it is particularly important that a student informs their School at an early stage of a pregnancy where there is a potential risk to the health and safety of the student and/or their child (see below). The School should then carry out a risk assessment as soon as possible to minimise any potential risk.

Students are advised in the strongest possible terms to inform their School at the earliest opportunity if they are pregnant, have a child, or are planning to adopt a very young child, whilst they are a student at the University of Kent, both for their own safety and the safety of their unborn child. It is important to note that a School will not be able to take a flexible approach to their programme of study, or provide specific support to the student, unless it knows about the situation. If requested, the School will identify a female member of staff to discuss such support needs.

Whilst making a decision on whether or not to inform their School, students are encouraged to consider the following:

- There may be elements of a programme of study that could present a health and safety risk to a pregnant student and/or the child<sup>1</sup>. A student's School will not be able to arrange appropriate risk assessments unless it is aware of the students' pregnancy.
- If a student's pregnancy-related absence (for example, for antenatal appointments) impacts significantly on the student's studies, the School will only be able to take proper account of the reasons for absence if they are notified of these<sup>2</sup>.
- In some cases, a student's pregnancy-related absence from University might be something that the student needs to discuss with other organisations. For example, if a **postgraduate research student** is in receipt of a University or Departmental Scholarship or funding from a Research Council or other external body, they should refer to the terms and conditions relating to their award. The student will generally be required to notify their supervisor and in some cases a relevant Request form will have to be completed, supported by a MATB1 certificate or doctor's letter. This could make it more important for the student to notify the School of the situation
- Sometimes, the absence of a student from University can adversely affect the work of other students they are working alongside (for example, on a group project or in a research team), which might make it more important to notify the School, so that plans can be made to deal with any such issues arising from the absence

Various sources of advice and support are available to students, whether or not they decide to notify their School of their circumstances.

Students who choose to intermit should complete the relevant sections of a Leave to Intermit Form logging the reason for intermitting as being Pregnancy / Maternity Leave. This data will be collated annually and analysed in line with all University of Kent Equality and Diversity data. Data is analysed at an Institution level on an annual basis to enable the University of Kent to make continuous improvements to the student experience.

## 2) Process for students and Schools where a pregnancy has been declared

This section outlines a series of steps for students and staff to follow in order to discuss and respond to the requirements of an individual student who is pregnant or is planning to adopt a very young child.

**Step 1:** The student is strongly advised to consult the University Medical Centre or their GP to discuss medical issues relating to their pregnancy prior to approaching their School. *It is particularly important to take advice at an early stage if there is any possible health and safety risk.*

Since the focus of this 7-step process is on considering the implications of pregnancy on the student's programme of study and academic work, students are also reminded that they can, at any

<sup>1</sup> It is important to point out that, in the case of students with a potential exposure to hazardous radiation or chemicals, the greatest risk to the health of an embryo or foetus arises within the first 13 weeks of pregnancy. Students in these circumstances are strongly advised to inform their School of their pregnancy in order to allow a risk assessment to be undertaken. Further guidance on such risks can be found in the annex to this policy.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of pre-arranged antenatal appointments, the School would normally need to be notified of these in advance in order to take these into account.

stage, contact other sources of non-academic advice and support (including the Student Counselling Centre, the Kent Union Student Advice Centre or GK Unions Together Advice Service, the Chaplaincy, Nursing Services etc.)

**Step 2:** The student and the relevant staff member **must meet** to discuss and agree a plan for their continuation of study. Whenever possible, the member of staff should contact the student within 5 working days of the request being received from the student and meet them as soon as possible thereafter.

**Step 3:** As soon as a student discloses a pregnancy, the designated Health and Safety Officer within the School is informed so that a risk assessment, or series of risk assessments, are undertaken to ensure that there are no elements of the programme of study that present a risk to the health and safety of the student or the unborn child. Advice and guidance is provided in Appendix 4: Risk Assessment Guidance. If no HSO is available, the Director of Studies should complete the Risk Assessment.

**Step 4:** A student who is considering suspending studies or changing the mode of study from full time to part-time should explore this at an early stage with their School and the Income Office and the Financial Aid Office to identify any potential impact that the flexibility proposed may have in terms of payment of tuition fees and the implications on any student funding.

An appointment should also be made with the Kent Union Advice Centre or GK Unions Together Advice Service to discuss potential benefit entitlement and other applicable child care allowances.

**Step 5:** The student and staff member should meet to discuss and agree a written plan for the student's continuation of study (detailing any specific flexibility agreed to allow the student to continue their studies) and a copy held by the student and the School. Where the agreed accommodations fall under mitigating circumstances, the relevant form should be completed and submitted as normal.

**Step 6:** The staff member overseeing the support arrangements should communicate the agreed continuation plan to the Academic Adviser/Research Supervisor and other relevant teaching staff and/or examination boards, as appropriate. Information should be passed on sensitively.

**Step 7:** The student and their Academic Adviser/Research Supervisor (or other chosen/designated staff member) should monitor the situation on an on-going basis, particularly to assess the effectiveness of any special arrangements that have been agreed to facilitate the student's continued study.

The student can request further meetings with their School, particularly if they are experiencing any difficulties with their academic work as a result of these arrangements.

Where a student is dissatisfied with the degree of flexibility offered, they may ask their School for information about the local complaints procedures or make a formal complaint, if appropriate, in line with the Dignity at Study Policy [www.kent.ac.uk/academic/handbook/dignity-at-study.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/academic/handbook/dignity-at-study.html)

### 3) Miscarriage or still birth

In the event of a miscarriage or stillbirth a student may wish to access support from:

- the Student Wellbeing Team, Canterbury [www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing/](http://www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing/)
- the Student Wellbeing Team, Medway [www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing/contact/?tab=medway](http://www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing/contact/?tab=medway)
- SANDS - the stillbirth and neonatal deaths society: [www.kentsands.com/](http://www.kentsands.com/)

#### 4) Supporting a student in their decision whether or not to continue with their pregnancy

Whilst only the student can make the decision as to whether or not to continue with their pregnancy, a range of services across the University and Kent Union / GK Unions can assist by providing confidential support and information about the options available, and, in some cases, other practical assistance. These services include, for example:

- the Student Wellbeing Team, Canterbury [www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing/](http://www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing/)
- the Student Wellbeing Team, Medway [www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing/contact/?tab=medway](http://www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing/contact/?tab=medway)
- The University Medical Centre, Canterbury [www.kent.ac.uk/medical/index.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/medical/index.html)
- The Sunlight Centre Surgery, Medway [www.sunlightsurgery.co.uk/](http://www.sunlightsurgery.co.uk/)
- The University Nursing Service [www.kent.ac.uk/medical/services/uns.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/medical/services/uns.html)
- Kent Union Advice Centre, Canterbury [www.kentunion.co.uk/advice/](http://www.kentunion.co.uk/advice/)
- GK Unions Together Advice Services [www.gkunions.co.uk/advice/](http://www.gkunions.co.uk/advice/)

A student who decides to terminate a pregnancy is under no obligation to inform their Academic School of their decision to do so. However, the student may find it helpful to speak to a member of staff in their Academic School in confidence about their situation prior to submitting a Concessionary Form if one is required for academic purposes (such as missed academic deadlines for medical reasons).

Students also have access to external organisations for information, advice or support. These include:

- The student's own GP,
- The Marie Stopes Pregnancy Advice Service [www.nhs.uk/Services/clinics/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=2972](http://www.nhs.uk/Services/clinics/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=2972)
- Canterbury Health Centre Family Planning Clinic [www.canterburyhealthcentre.co.uk/clinics-and-services.aspx](http://www.canterburyhealthcentre.co.uk/clinics-and-services.aspx)
- Medway NHS Healthcare Centre [www.medwayhealthcarecentre.nhs.uk/contact1.aspx](http://www.medwayhealthcarecentre.nhs.uk/contact1.aspx)

#### 5) Student whose partner is pregnant

In most cases, full-time and part-time programmes are likely to be flexible enough to enable a student whose partner is pregnant, or whose partner is about to adopt a child, to take authorised absences— perhaps to attend antenatal appointments with their partner and/or take some time to be with their partner around the time of the birth or adoption.

In the case of research students, some funding bodies may allow a period of time for paternity or maternity leave. Students should refer to the terms and conditions relating to their award.

Where circumstances are more complex, a student whose partner is pregnant or about to adopt may still wish to discuss this with their School (normally their Academic Adviser/Research Supervisor) – especially if they feel that this may significantly affect their studies. In these circumstances, staff members are encouraged to demonstrate a similar degree of flexibility to that described in Section 2 above

- In such circumstances a student may wish to seek support from the Student Wellbeing Team [www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing/](http://www.kent.ac.uk/studentwellbeing/)

If a student requires legal advice concerning parental status etc. the Kent Union Advice Centre or GK Unions Together Advice Service can direct the student to appropriate sources of such advice: [www.kentunion.co.uk/advice/](http://www.kentunion.co.uk/advice/) or [www.gkunions.co.uk/advice/](http://www.gkunions.co.uk/advice/)

Kent Union Advice Centre or GK Unions Together Advice Service can also provide Visa advice to International students whose partner is pregnant or who has given birth in the UK.

Such advice will also be available from the Canterbury or Medway District Citizen's Advice Bureau: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/) [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/canterbury-district/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/canterbury-district/) or [www.medwayadvice.org.uk/](http://www.medwayadvice.org.uk/)

## 6) New student parent support and facilities

Whilst the procedure proposed in Section 5 above relates to a student during pregnancy, this also provides a helpful model for considering flexibility for a student who has recently become a parent, including through adoption. As above, what constitutes a reasonable degree of flexibility to take account of a student's parental responsibilities will vary from School to School and from programme to programme.

### Bringing children onto campus

Students may be accompanied by children in **general public areas** such as the campus eateries, or in one-to-one tutorials if the Academic Adviser permits. Children brought onto the campus are the responsibility of the adult who brings them and must be supervised at all times. From a health and safety perspective, the University environment is not, in general, designed for, nor does it take specific account of, the needs of young children and toddlers; therefore close and continuous supervision by the parent / carer will be required at all times. Under no circumstances should children be brought into areas where there is the possibility of a risk to health and safety unless specific authorised approval has been given by an authorised member of the relevant School, in relation to an individual proposed entry.

Parents are allowed to bring their children into **the University Libraries** for a short time providing that they are supervised at all times. The University cannot be held responsible for what might happen to an unattended child in University buildings. There are silent study areas that are unsuitable for children to use. If a child causes disruption to other University Library users the parent and child may be asked to leave. The libraries may house materials on open access shelves or have available on PCs that some parents would find unsuitable for their children to see.

Students **should not** bring their child with them into any **public teaching and research areas** – such as lecture theatres, seminar or teaching rooms, laboratories or shared work spaces – and so they will need to make arrangements for the care of their child whilst they are in these locations.

### **Baby changing facilities on campus**

There are currently baby changing facilities located in the Colyer-Fergusson building, the Sports Pavilion and Phase 2 of the Templeman Library development (open academic year 2017-2018) on the Canterbury campus.

There are currently no facilities available at the Medway campus, although work is being undertaken to improve this. Nearest facilities are located in the Dockside Outlet Centre.

The Oaks Day Nursery in Canterbury and the Busy Bees Nursery in Medway may also be able to make suitable facilities available by arrangement.

Oaks Day Nursery – 01227 827 676 [oaksnurserykent.co.uk/](http://oaksnurserykent.co.uk/)

Busy Bees Nursery – 01634 890 250 [www.busybeeschildcare.co.uk/nursery/chatham](http://www.busybeeschildcare.co.uk/nursery/chatham)

### **Breastfeeding facilities on campus**

Whilst there are no restrictions on feeding (bottle feeding or breastfeeding) at the University, there are currently no specific facilities available for these purposes or for the preparation of food or expression of milk. Should a student require a private space for these purposes, they can speak to Student Services who should endeavour to provide a private, safe area for the student's use.

All Kent Union, Kent Hospitality, Gulbenkian and GK Union outlets will warm up baby food if requested.

The Oaks Day Nursery in Canterbury and the Busy Bees Nursery in Medway may also be able to make suitable facilities available by arrangement

Oaks Day Nursery – 01227 827 676 [oaksnurserykent.co.uk/](http://oaksnurserykent.co.uk/)

Busy Bees Nursery – 01634 890 250 [www.busybeeschildcare.co.uk/nursery/chatham](http://www.busybeeschildcare.co.uk/nursery/chatham)

### **Emergency short term child care**

In some circumstances, the Oaks Day Nursery in Canterbury and the Busy Bees Nursery in Medway may be able to provide emergency support for parents who have need for short term emergency childcare; for example in the event of their regular childcare provider being ill, or for students who need to take examinations and have no other childcare cover

Oaks Day Nursery – 01227 827 676 [oaksnurserykent.co.uk/](http://oaksnurserykent.co.uk/)

Busy Bees Nursery – 01634 890 250 [www.busybeeschildcare.co.uk/nursery/chatham](http://www.busybeeschildcare.co.uk/nursery/chatham)

### **Accommodation – Canterbury**

The University has only a few rooms suitable for couples but we regret that there is no accommodation suitable for students with children. Students, who need this type of accommodation, or more choice, should rent from private sector landlords.

Further advice on renting suitable private sector accommodation is available at [www.homestamp.co.uk](http://www.homestamp.co.uk) a Canterbury student housing accreditation scheme operated by Kent Student Union or [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)

#### **Accommodation – Medway**

All accommodation at Liberty Quays is for single occupancy only and has no provision for housing children. Further advice on renting suitable accommodation for children is available at GK Student advice centre <http://www.gkunions.co.uk/advice/> and also [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)

## Pregnancy and Maternity Policy – Appendix 2a (Guidance for Non EEA International and Postgraduate Students)

International and Postgraduate Research students have particular requirements that need to be considered when making alternative arrangements for their continuous study; particularly in regard to Tier 4 Visa's and Research grants. This section of the Guidance provides specific advice in these areas and should be consulted alongside the main Policy and Appendices 1 and 2.

### Guidance for International Students

If an international student requires a Tier 4 General Student visa to remain in the UK during their period of study, UK Visa's and Immigration (UKVI) regulations must be taken into consideration. An international student wishing to suspend their studies for more than 60 days will need to leave the UK. Both the School and the student should seek advice from the Kent Union Advice Centre or GK Unions Together Advice Service as early as possible during the pregnancy. This will enable colleagues to ensure that any arrangements agreed with the student comply with UKVI requirements. Early discussions are also important because a late or unexpected decision to fly home could be affected by health considerations.

Kent Union Advice Centre and the GK Unions Together Advice Service are also able to provide Visa advice to a student whose partner is pregnant and gives birth in the UK.

### Guidance for Tier 4 International students

This section of the policy aims to provide information about the University's position on sponsoring Tier 4 students who become pregnant during the course of their studies, who have recently had a child or who are the partner of a person in one of these situations.

#### Home Office legislation

The University has a legal responsibility in relation to the sponsorship of international students under the points-based immigration system. Unfortunately UK Visas & Immigration offer no special visa concessions to pregnant Tier 4 Visa holders. The University is **not able** to continue sponsoring students on a Tier 4 Visa if they take a period of leave or intermission of **more than 60 days**, regardless of the reason for taking an intermission.

#### Maternity or paternity intermission of up to 60 days

Students wishing to take an intermission for maternity or paternity reasons are asked to note that the University will only continue to sponsor their Tier 4 (General) Student Visa for a maternity or paternity intermission of **up to 60 days**. However, if the intermission will result in the student being unable to complete their course within their current grant of leave then Tier 4 sponsorship will be withdrawn. After the end of the **60 day period** students are expected to return to their full-time studies and continue as normal.

#### Maternity or paternity intermission of more than 60 days

This affects students who wish to have an intermission for more than 60 days or extend their initial 60 day maternity or paternity period.



Intermissions of more than 60 days mean students will not be engaged in studies for a significant period of time. In line with the Tier 4 Sponsor Guidance, as well as the University's policy on intermissions for Tier 4 students, the University will report students to the Home Office where an intermission is more than 60 days and students will be expected to leave the UK. A report made to the Home Office will result in a Home Office Curtailment Letter being sent to a student which requires the student to leave the UK by a specific date.

It is recognised that students may be unable to return home depending on the stage of pregnancy, medical issues or complications which may arise. We recommend that students speak to the Advice Centre at the earliest opportunity or seek specialist immigration advice if unable to leave the UK.

**Please note that international students in the UK with a Tier 4 General Student Visa are not permitted to change to part-time study**

## Guidance for Postgraduate Students

Note for Postgraduate Research Students: This Guidance should replace Step 2 of Appendices 1 and 2 as appropriate.

### **Step 2: Postgraduate Research Degree Students**

In the case of pregnancy in a research degree student, the appropriate individual to contact will normally be their Supervisor(s) and/or the Academic School. The Postgraduate Supervisor(s) and Academic School will work together with the student to consider the impact of the pregnancy and any resulting suspension of study. This will include a risk assessment. Postgraduate students who are paid by the University will have employment status and the University's Maternity Leave regulations will apply.

The Postgraduate Supervisor may request permission from the Graduate School, on behalf of the student, for a period of suspended study for reasons of maternity leave.

**The student is responsible for checking the implications of a suspension of study with their scholarship awarding body or provider at an early stage.**