

Student Pregnancy and Maternity Policy

Document Control Table	
Version Number	3.0
Owner	Directorate of Student Life
Source location	GCU Wellbeing Student-Life Policies
Approved by APPC	1 February 2017
Approved by Senate	24 February 2017
Review Date	July 2024
Related documents	Dignity at Work and Study Policy

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1. Introduction

Glasgow Caledonian University is committed to providing a culture and environment which is inclusive of all sections of society and responsive to the needs of individuals. All staff, students and other stakeholders of the University have a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and the University is committed to ensuring that students receive appropriate support during pregnancy and maternity.

This Policy applies to students who are pregnant during their studies at Glasgow Caledonian University, and is also for staff that may be supporting or advising students on issues related to pregnancy and maternity.

2. Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects students in Higher Education from discrimination because of their pregnancy or maternity status. Discrimination occurs if:

- The student is treated unfavourable because of their pregnancy
- The student is treated unfavourably within 26 weeks of the day of childbirth because they have given birth; this also applies in cases of miscarriage, still birth and neonatal death (if 24 weeks or more 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.

This policy considers the University's statutory obligations as outlined in the draft Code of Practice: Further and Higher Education, issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

3. Policy Statement

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Students are not unlawfully discriminated against and disadvantaged because of pregnancy and maternity, in all aspects of University life, including admissions, provision of education, and access to services or facilities.
- Students are aware of the support available to them during pregnancy and maternity.
- The University provides the most appropriate advice and support to students during pregnancy and maternity.
- Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities during student pregnancy and maternity.

4. Student Responsibilities

Students are not under any obligation to disclose that they are pregnant to the University. However, students are encouraged to disclose so that they can get appropriate support from the University. Due to the nature of some programmes, a risk assessment may be required, e.g. for placements or lab work. In these cases, the student should advise their department as soon as possible.

5. Staff Responsibilities

Pregnancy is a normal life event and not an illness. When a student informs the university that they are pregnant, a meeting should be set up between the student and relevant staff (e.g. Programme Leader) to discuss the impact on learning, including attending lectures and tutorials, placements, and participating in assessments and examinations. Staff should also recommend that the student seeks advice from their midwife, or other qualified professionals if they have not done so already. The discussion should identify the support required and a Support Plan should be formed as an outcome. The form provided in Appendix A should be used to record this information.

6. International Students

International students who become pregnant during their studies should contact the Visa Immigration Support and Advice (VISA) team as soon as possible to get the latest guidance at: [International Study](#)

It is important that international students who become pregnant contact VISA as soon as possible because their individual circumstances may affect their student visa status. If an international student requires a visa to remain in the UK during their period of study and their pregnancy is likely to result in the need to remain in the UK longer than planned, immigration advice should be sought from VISA by the student. Students will be advised and supported on a case by case basis as each student will have different circumstances.

Financially sponsored international students must notify their sponsor of any change of status. As international students have no recourse to public funds, they are not entitled to any financial maternity benefits.

If a spouse or partner of a student becomes pregnant during their studies, and this is likely to have an impact on the learning experience, the student should contact VISA as soon as possible.

7. Post Graduate Research Students

Post Graduate Research Students who become pregnant during their studies should contact their Director of Studies to get agreement to suspend study time. Further details can be found in the PGR student 'Supporting Families Policy', which can be found on the [Graduate School's Regulations and Guidelines webpage](#).

8. Assessments and Examinations

If a student is due to give birth near to or during assessment deadlines or the examination period, and wishes to complete their assessed work or sit their examinations, they will not be prevented from doing so. However, this would depend on individual circumstances and students will be advised on a case by case basis, as generally a student would not be encouraged to undertake assessments or examinations if they are due to give birth.

Appropriate arrangements will be agreed in the Support Plan to take account of specific needs such as toilet breaks, comfort of chairs etc.

If a student is concerned about sitting examinations or meeting assessed work deadlines, or if they have a pregnancy-related health condition that is exacerbated by stress, they should be advised to seek advice from their midwife or doctor. If the student's midwife or doctor advises against sitting an examination or trying to meet the assessed work deadline, an alternative timing and method of assessment should be explored. The student may be able to take an alternative method of assessment if all learning outcomes of the module are met.

A Fit to Sit form should be submitted if the student feels unable to submit work due to a difficult pregnancy or maternity period which has affected their academic performance and/or caused their absence from an assessment, i.e. coursework or exam.

The implications for international students will depend on each person's individual circumstances, so international students will be advised on a case by case basis.

9. Professional Requirements

Some programmes of study may have programme specific requirements that result in pregnant students not being able to fulfil programme/level/stage requirements within an academic session/period. For example, a programme that has fixed placement periods over several weeks as a part of the core requirement, or a programme that is based in a clinical area, which may be a health and safety risk for a pregnant student.

Students should consider taking sufficient time off before returning to their studies/placement depending on their birth experience. For example, a student who has a birthing intervention or caesarean section may not be fit to return to studies for up to six weeks. In these situations, students must discuss their circumstances with the School by seeking information and advice from the relevant staff member, e.g. programme lead or year lead. Students should refer to the [Regulations for Taught Student Registration, Suspension of Studies and Withdrawal](#) for further details on suspension of studies.

Students on the BSc/BSc (Hons) Nursing Studies programmes (all streams) who are in receipt of a bursary may be entitled to a maternity allowance if they wish to suspend studies from the programme due to pregnancy related issues and/or childbirth. Please refer to [SAAS](#) (Student Award Agency Scotland) for further details.

10. Student Partners

Student fathers/partners of a pregnant student will be entitled to request time off for medical appointments prior to the birth, and to request a reasonable period of parental support following the birth. However, students must be aware of the importance of meeting their own academic requirements, and the time off should not have a negative impact on their own learning experience. Students should check with their school regarding professional/ programme requirements.

If a spouse or partner of a student becomes pregnant during their studies, and this is likely to have an impact on the learning experience, the student should contact their personal tutor as soon as possible.

11. Facilities

There is a parent and baby room located at the back of the restaurant – Level 0 of the George Moore Building at the Glasgow Campus. This room contains a baby changing table, microwave and small fridge. At the London campus, please approach the Student Office to request a space or seek advice.

12. Complaints

When a student is dissatisfied with the arrangements offered in line with their pregnancy or maternity, they can access information regarding the [Complaints Handling Procedure](#).

Appendix 1: SUPPORT PLAN

This form should be used by staff to guide discussions with students during pregnancy and maternity. It should be completed and agreed with the student. It may not be possible to complete the whole form at the first meeting, but it should be reviewed at key stages of pregnancy or key points of the academic year.

Contact details		
	Name	
	Student ID	
	Programme	
	Departmental contact	
	Year of course	
Visa details (for international students)		
	Visa type/expiry date	
	Course end date	
	Any dependants?	
Key dates (to be reviewed and added to over the course of pregnancy and maternity)		
	What is the student's due date?	
	How many weeks pregnant was the student when they notified GCU?	
Communication with the student		
	What is the student's preferred method of communication:	
	during pregnancy?	
	during maternity-related absence?	
	on return to study?	

Health and safety assessment (attach copy to this form)

Has a health and safety assessment been conducted? If so give details, including risks identified and person(s) responsible for implementing

Pregnancy-related absence

Will the dates or times of antenatal appointments affect the student's study?

Have you discussed any pregnancy-related illness that has affected the student's ability to undertake their course?

If yes to either of the above questions, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to catch up?

Assessments

Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to their pregnancy or maternity?

If so, provide details:

What alternative arrangements have been made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments?

Maternity-related absence (students should provide information in writing at least 15 weeks before their due date)

How much maternity-related absence does the student intend to take?

What are the intended start and return dates for maternity-related absence?

	Will the dates of maternity-related absence affect the student's ability to complete any course module requirements?	
	If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to complete the module?	
	What information will the student require during maternity-related absence to keep up to date on course developments?	
	Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student?	
Financial support		
	Is the (UK) student aware of how any benefits they receive will affect their student support entitlements, and vice versa?	
Baby feeding and childcare		
	Has the student been informed about the facilities available on campus (e.g. breast-feeding room, rest facilities, childcare)?	
	Is the (UK) student aware that their mode of study will affect their childcare funding entitlements?	
International students/those on placement abroad		
	Have international students or students on placement abroad been informed about:	
	possible airline restrictions (these vary between airlines, so the student will need to contact the relevant airline)	
	the need to check visa implications of returning home or extending their stay due to pregnancy and maternity?	
Students on placement		

	Has the placement provider been notified of the pregnancy? (this is usually the responsibility of the student)	
	Has the placement provider conducted a health and safety assessment?	
	Is the placement provider aware of the GCU's Student Pregnancy and Maternity policy?	
	Will the student be able to complete their placement?	
	If not, what alternative arrangements will be made?	
	Who is responsible for liaising with the placement provider?	
Extenuating circumstances		
	Has the student been informed about GCU's Fit to Sit policy/process in the event that a difficult pregnancy or maternity period affects examinations and assessments?	
Return to study		
	What support will be provided to the student on their return to study? (e.g. meetings with key staff, put in contact with other student parents, etc)	
Further information		
	Any other information /comments	
Signatures		
Plan to be reviewed on		

Agreed by staff member:	Name/Title:	Signature:	Date:
Agreed by student:	Name:	Signature:	Date:

Appendix 2: GCU EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

1. DESCRIBE

1.1. Name of policy/strategy/decision

Student Pregnancy and Maternity Policy

1.2. Owner

Student Wellbeing

1.3. Date

02/12/2016

1.4. Aims of policy/strategy/decision

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students are not discriminated against and disadvantaged because of maternity and pregnancy. This is so that GCU can support students who are pregnant or on maternity leave.

1.5. Who does the policy/strategy/decision affect?

Students, staff, applicants, visitors

1.6. Could there be any potential implications for equality, or people with protected characteristics?

This policy aims to support the principles of equality and diversity and ensure that students are not discriminated against.

This policy applies to all students, females in particular, but discusses roles of partners also to ensure the full student population is accounted for.

2. ASSESS

What are the implications, positive or negative (and evidence for this) of the policy/strategy/decision in relation to GCU's duty to have due regard to the need to:

2.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

There is likely to be a positive impact on this duty as it will allow pregnant students to have a plan in place and be better supported by the university.

2.2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it?

There is likely to be a positive impact on this duty as it encourages student retention or application, regardless of their background or circumstances.

2.3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it?

There is likely to be a positive impact on this duty as this policy is in place to ensure that pregnant students are recognised within the student body and that necessary arrangements can be made.

3. ACTION

3.1. If a negative impact has been identified, how will this be addressed?

Until the Policy and guidance are implemented, it is not possible to gauge any negative impact. However, the implementation process will be monitored and data will be gathered in relation to the relevant protected characteristics that may be affected; any negative impact will inform the future review process of the Policy and guidance. Overall, there is no direct negative impact on the protected characteristics, as this applies to all students and the principles of the policy are to support all students. Although the policy itself is free from discrimination overall, ultimately it is the application and implementation of the policy that provides the scope for discrimination e.g. prejudices or attitudes of staff supporting their students. Therefore, there is potentially a development need for those involved in implementing the policy, and appropriate information will be provided to staff.

3.2. If changes have been made to the policy/strategy/decision as a result of this assessment, outline the changes

N/A

4. MONITOR AND REVIEW

4.1. How will the implementation of the policy/strategy/decision and its impact on equality be monitored and reviewed?

The policy will be reviewed annually alongside all Student Wellbeing policies.

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5. PUBLISH

Please email this completed form, along with the policy/strategy and any other relevant information¹ to equality@gcu.ac.uk for publishing on the Equality and Diversity website and annual reporting in line with Equality Act 2010 requirements.

6. SIGN OFF		
6.1. EIA Owner	Signature	Date
6.2. Equality and Diversity Advisor	Signature	Date
	Adrian Lui	02/12/2016

¹ Information or evidence may be removed if it is commercially sensitive or personal information