



Hull York Medical School

Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy

Approval Process:	
Committee	Outcome/Date of approval
Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Committee	October 2022
Student Staff Committee	November 2022
Board of Studies	December 2022
Joint Senate Committee	January 2023
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Responsibility to update:	Chair of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

To obtain this Policy in an alternative format, please contact governance@hyms.ac.uk

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1. Policy statement

- 1.1. The Hull York Medical School aims to provide an environment where students are supported and treated fairly and with dignity and respect, including during pregnancy, maternity, paternity, the process of adoption and whilst breastfeeding.
- 1.2. The Hull York Medical School believes that becoming pregnant or having a young child should not, in itself, be a barrier to study and aims to balance flexibility with provision of consistent, non-judgemental, accurate and high-quality information, guidance and support.

2. Scope of the policy

- 2.1. This Policy covers any applicant who is pregnant or who has recently become a parent, registered students who become pregnant during their studies and registered students whose partners are pregnant. In addition, any registered student who becomes a parent (for example, through adoption) is also covered by this policy. The policy is intended to be supportive of students and as far as possible should be interpreted in this way if a student's specific circumstances do not match those set out in this policy.
- 2.2. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Medical School's [Policy on Leave of Absence](#).
- 2.3. Any request for pregnancy, maternity, or paternity leave will require approvals by the relevant academic governance bodies as set out in the Policy on Leave of Absence.

3. Overview

- 3.1. The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new protection from discrimination for students during pregnancy and maternity. From 1 October 2010, a student who is pregnant or has given birth within the last 26 weeks, is now explicitly protected from unfavourable treatment.
- 3.2. This Policy was developed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee using guidance provided by the [University of York](#) and the [University of Hull](#).

4. Disclosing a pregnancy

- 4.1. Following a consultation with their General Practitioner (GP) and/or other appropriate services, applicants and students are encouraged to notify the School about their pregnancy through an appropriate member of staff such as Programme Director, Phase Lead, Thesis Supervisor, Personal Tutor, or a member of the Student Support Team.
- 4.2. For Postgraduate Research students receiving funding, they should check with the funders regarding disclosure and terms of funding.
- 4.3. If a student is uneasy about discussing their pregnancy with the School, they could seek advice and support from the Student Advisers in their Parent University:

- University of York: [Student Hub](#), [University of York Students' Union](#) or [Graduate Student Association](#)
 - University of Hull: [Student Life Team](#), [Hull University Students' Union](#)
- 4.4. It is important that the School is notified about a pregnancy as soon as possible, if there are elements of the programme that may present a risk to the health and safety of the student and/or the child.
 - 4.5. If a student decides not to notify the School about their pregnancy, it will not be possible to put special arrangements or reasonable adjustments in place for health-related absences, examinations, leave of absence, risk assessments, reasonable adjustments, return to study or adaptations to clinical practice.
 - 4.6. If an overseas student requires a Student Visa to remain in the UK during their period of study, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations must be taken into consideration. Students should contact the Immigration Advisers at their Parent University for advice about visa regulations.
 - 4.7. When a student has disclosed a pregnancy, it is recommended that they meet with an appropriate member of staff such as Programme Director, Phase Lead, Thesis Supervisor, Personal Tutor, or a member of the Student Support Team and start completing a copy of the Support Plan and, if necessary, a risk assessment form. The support plan should be held by the School and shared with the student.
 - 4.8. For clarity, students undergoing an early stage termination of pregnancy are not required to disclose their pregnancy and should be supported appropriately through the existing School and parent university policies.

5. Maternity leave

- 5.1. The School uses the term 'maternity leave' to recognise that any student who is the birthing parent is entitled to apply for leave under this policy.
- 5.2. The law states a new parent must take a two-week break following the birth of a child. The School strongly encourages new parents entitled to maternity leave to consider taking a longer leave of absence as appropriate to their personal circumstances.
- 5.3. The School will support a leave of absence as set out in the Policy on Leave of Absence (normally up to 52 weeks in total).

6. Paternity leave

- 6.1. The School uses the term 'paternity leave' to recognise that any student who is the biological father or the partner (including same sex partner or civil partner) of the person who is pregnant or postnatal who shares responsibility for the child's upbringing is entitled to apply for leave under this policy.
- 6.2. The School policy is to allow students to take up to three weeks of paternity-related absence following the birth. Partners subsequently becoming main carers during the first 52 weeks following the birth can apply for a leave of absence (supporting evidence will be required as set out in the Policy on Leave of Absence).

7. Adoption leave

- 7.1. The School uses the term 'adoption leave' to recognise that any student who is the main carer (or equivalent term) of the child should be supported in the same way as any other new parent.
- 7.2. The School policy is to allow students to take up to three weeks of adoption-related absence following the adoption. Partners subsequently becoming main carers during the first 52 weeks following the adoption can apply for a leave of absence (supporting evidence will be required as set out in the Policy on Leave of Absence).
- 7.3. The above adoption leave period applies to the main carer (and partners subsequently becoming main carers during the first 52 weeks following the adoption) for adoptions that fall through.

8. Still births and miscarriages

- 8.1. If a student miscarries, has a late stage termination of pregnancy, has a still birth or neonatal death they are entitled to take time off (medical leave) or apply for a leave of absence.
- 8.2. The School recognises the difficulties students would face and strongly encourage students to contact Student Support Team (studentsupport@hyms.ac.uk) which can signpost students to specialist support provided by the University of Hull and the University of York.
- 8.3. A student who has a still birth or whose baby dies shortly after birth should be entitled to the same length of maternity-related absence and financial and wellbeing support as a student whose baby is not stillborn.

9. Return to study

- 9.1. Depending on the regulation of a specific programme, it may be possible for a student returning to study following parental leave to change their mode of study from full-time to part-time or vice versa. The student would need to check with the Programme Director or Thesis Supervisor in the first instance and then follow the procedures to change.

10. Student Pregnancy, Maternity and Paternity Support Plan

- 10.1. Any student with a request of leave of absence approved on the grounds set out in this Policy should have a Support Plan in place using the template in Appendix 1.
- 10.2. The Support Plan aims to guide discussions with students during pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption. It should be completed and agreed by the Academic Supervisor or other member of the School staff and the student.

11. Data protection

- 11.1. The School operates under the [Data Protection Act 2018](#). Personal information regarding a student obtained under this policy will only be shared with relevant, appropriate members of staff who require the information to support the student, or to implement the policy and procedures.

12. Complaints

- 12.1. If a student is not satisfied with their treatment under this policy they should refer to [Code of Practice on Investigation and Determination of Student Complaints](#) which sets out a two-stage process including informal and formal procedures.

Appendix 1: Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Support Plan

This support plan aims to guide members of staff in their discussions with students. It provides a list of items for discussion and a way to record key information to demonstrate that the student's needs are being met. **Note:** not all sections will apply to all students, so the plan should be used on a case by case basis.

It is important that someone in the School, who has knowledge of the student's programme of study and assessments, reviews the relevant sections of this support plan along with the student. It is not intended that this plan should be completed at a first meeting, as a student will be unable (and should not be expected) to respond to all the issues raised.

The plan should be reviewed at key stages (e.g. 16 weeks pregnancy, 24 weeks pregnancy, and prior to return to study) and/or at key points of the academic year (e.g. prior to examinations and placements). If the student's circumstances change, the plan will also need to be reviewed. This plan should not be shared without prior consent from the student and should be stored in accordance with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#).

The [Student Support Team](#) can provide advice and is the first port of call for queries.

Contact information
Student's details Name: Programme of study:
List the names of the following who have been involved in completing this support plan. Student Support Team representative: Programme Director/Phase Lead: Academic Supervisor: NHS Student Liaison Team: Health and Safety Officer: Other:

Item for discussion and/or to be considered	Notes and actions taken
Key dates to be reviewed over the course of the pregnancy: The student's/partner's due date The proposed return to study date	

<p>Informing others at the University/School/NHS site/funders about the pregnancy.</p> <p>Who needs to know? When should they be told?</p>	
<p>How and when would the student like to be contacted?</p> <p>During the pregnancy While on leave Before the return to study</p>	
<p>The Programme Director, Phase Lead, Thesis Supervisor, Personal Tutor, or a member of the Student Support Team should be consulted about any related absences and whether these will affect the student's programme of study:</p> <p>Dates of antenatal appointments Any pregnancy related illnesses Has the student been made aware of Leave of Absence procedures? The Student Support Team will advise on the procedures for taught and research students.</p> <p>Is the student planning to take leave, and for how long? Note: It is suggested that dates are recorded here.</p>	
<p>Assessments/exams/research projects to be discussed with the Academic Supervisor and the relevant Programme Director:</p> <p>Will the student be able to meet deadlines for these? Have individual arrangements for exams been requested? Are there any alternative arrangements that need to be made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments? Has the student been informed about the exceptional circumstances policy?</p>	
<p>Reasonable adjustments:</p> <p>Consider if any adjustments are required. Refer to the relevant Disability Support team (University of York, University of</p>	

<p>Hull) for advice and guidance on adding the adjustments.</p>	
<p>Discuss with the School's Student Support Team about completing a risk assessment form. If a risk assessment form is required it should be completed and saved with this support plan.</p> <p>Will the form need to be completed during the pregnancy, including placement, Anatomy unit, field trips, laboratory access?</p> <p>Will the risk assessment need to be revised on the student's return to study?</p>	
<p>Has the student discussed the following, if relevant, with a member of the Student Support Team?</p> <p>Accommodation - on campus/private sector</p> <p>Financial support including tuition fees, sources of funding and stipend, and (for UK students only) benefits</p> <p>Travel and visa restrictions for international students</p> <p>If the student is visiting on placement or study abroad, contacting their home institution</p>	
<p>Students who are on a placement, including NHS placements and study abroad, should contact their placement provider and their University Placement Supervisor, if this is different from their Academic Supervisor. Things to consider:</p> <p>Has the student contacted their placement provider?</p> <p>Does anyone at the School, other than the student, need to liaise with the student's placement provider or host institution?</p> <p>Has the student notified the placement provider/host institution about their pregnancy?</p> <p>Will the student be able complete their placement or period of study abroad?</p> <p>If the student is overseas, will there be any risks (for example, airline restrictions) that might prevent the student returning to the UK during their pregnancy?</p>	

Have alternative arrangements been made if the student has to end their placement or study abroad early?	
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<p>Return to study should be discussed with the Programme Director, Phase Lead, Thesis Supervisor, Personal Tutor, or a member of the Student Support Team</p> <p>What support will be provided to the student? Meetings arranged with key staff in the School Discussions about changing their mode of study. The Student Support Team will signpost to information about relevant campus facilities, childcare and financial support, exceptional circumstances, etc. If the student is returning with a baby that is under 26 weeks, have the student's lecturers been informed that they may request to bring their baby to lectures, seminars and supervisions?</p>	
Any other information:	

Staff Declaration	
I declare that this Support Plan has been made with the involvement of the student:	
Academic staff name:	
Job title:	
Signature	
Date	

Student Declaration
I declare that the information I provided in this Support Plan is accurate and I will be responsible for adhering to the expectations and commitments set out in this Support Plan.

Name:	
Signature	
Date	