



Student Maternity and Family Leave Policy

Purpose of Policy

To provide flexibility for students to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in their studies due to pregnancy, and the birth or adoption of a child.

Overview

The policy provides guidance on matters relating to all applicants or students who become pregnant, have partners who are pregnant, or are to become parents, including through the adoption of a child

Scope: Mandatory Policy

The policy applies to:

- Any student who becomes pregnant during her studies;
- Any student who is to become a parent during their studies, including through adoption of a child;
- Any student who has a partner who is pregnant
- Any applicant who is pregnant at the time of application; and
- Any applicant who has a partner who is pregnant

Contact Officer

Academic Services

Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk

Document control

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Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Services				
Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	N/A				
UK Quality Code	N/A				
Policies superseded by this policy	Maternity Leave policy for Postgraduate Students 2005				
Alternative format	If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 650 2138.				
Keywords	Student pregnancy, student maternity leave, adoption				



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- 1 The University is committed to providing adjustments to students to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in their studies due to pregnancy or adoption of a child.

Students or applicants to become parents

- 2 Any student or applicant who has their pregnancy confirmed by a GP or midwife, is to become a parent or guardian, or is to adopt a child, is encouraged to report this to their Student Adviser, Postgraduate Director, Research Supervisor, School Student Support Office or person nominated by their School so that they can provide appropriate academic advice.
- 3 Please note: a student who is undertaking a programme of postgraduate study via a Postgraduate Sponsor has the sole responsibility to inform their Postgraduate Sponsor of any change of circumstance.
- 4 Where an applicant notifies the University of their pregnancy, they are encouraged to discuss any possible implications for commencing their studies with Student Recruitment and Admissions. Applicants are entitled to request deferred entry; however deferral may not be possible in all cases, depending on the programme of study.

Implications for programme of study

- 5 The student will meet with their Student Adviser, Postgraduate Director, Research Supervisor or person nominated by their School where the following issues should be addressed:
 - Whether an authorised interruption of studies will be required and, if so, for how long (an interruption would not normally exceed one academic year);
 - If assessments are pending, whether the student is fit to attempt the assessments, and;
 - Any time off or possible modifications to attendance that might be required so that the student can attend medical appointments or antenatal classes;
 - Any relevant health and safety issues (see section 11)
6. Students whose partner is pregnant, or who are to adopt a child, are entitled to request adjustments. These may include permissible absence for medical and antenatal appointments prior to and after the birth, and a period of absence at the time of birth or adoption. If such appointments conflict unavoidably with lectures, tutorials or supervisory sessions, students will be entitled to ask for flexibility in respect of this.
- 7 A written record of the agreed adjustments should be produced and retained by the Student Adviser or Research Supervisor, student and the relevant administrator with responsibility for the student's programme of study.
- 8 Please note – Student Advisers or Research Supervisors would not be responsible for granting interruption of studies to Postgraduate Students. In these instances, the normal interruption of studies procedure for Postgraduate Students should be followed.
- 9 Where a student intends to take an interruption of studies, the Student Adviser, Postgraduate Director, or Research supervisor will discuss with the student any steps which may be taken to support a smooth return to study following the period of interruption. This may include offering advice on self-guided study where the student requests this, and discussing what academic support will be offered on the student's return to study.



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Study abroad

- 10 Where a student has their pregnancy confirmed whilst studying abroad, they are encouraged to contact their Student Adviser, Postgraduate Director, Research Supervisor or person nominated by their School to ensure that adequate steps are taken to make necessary adjustments.

Health and Safety

- 11 Where a student informs the University of their pregnancy, there are health and safety issues that the University must take into consideration in order to protect the mother and unborn baby:
 - The Student Adviser, Postgraduate Director, Research Supervisor or person nominated by the School must ensure that the relevant health and safety staff within the School/College are informed so that, where necessary, a risk assessment can be carried out; the risk assessment will take account of the requirements for the student's programme of study and determine whether any adjustments need to be made;
 - If the student is resident in University accommodation whilst pregnant, in order for appropriate adjustments to be made, informing Accommodation Services of their pregnancy can ensure that the accommodation provided to the student is appropriate;
 - Accommodation Services consider a student who has given birth to a child to have 'Exceptional Circumstances', and as such would seek to re-house a student staying in unsuitable University accommodation to a more suitable arrangement. Should this prove impossible, the student will be released from their lease and will not incur any penalties for non-fulfilment of the term of the lease, in order that the student may move to or seek other more suitable accommodation.
 - If the student requires, the Student Adviser, Postgraduate Supervisor or person nominated by their School will advise on appropriate adjustments and provisions to allow the student to breastfeed or express milk. The University must provide space to accommodate breastfeeding.

Resumption of studies

- 12 Students who have given birth should not return to the University within two weeks of the birth of their child, as outlined in s.8(b) of the '*Maternity and Parental Leave (etc) Regulations 1999*'.
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/3312/contents/made
- 13 The student will be responsible for confirming that they are ready to resume their studies at the end of their agreed period of interruption. They should inform their Student Adviser, Postgraduate Director, or Research Supervisor that they are to return so that the appropriate arrangements can be made in terms of course enrolments, etc.
- 14 Directly before, or as soon as practical after their return, the student should meet with their Student Adviser, Postgraduate Director, or Research Supervisor to ensure that appropriate academic support is provided, and any necessary adjustments are made to facilitate a smooth return to their programme of study. Students are reminded that it is not permitted to bring children into classes.



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- 15 Details of childcare facilities available at the University are as follows: www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/facilities/childcare
- 16 There are also numerous council approved nurseries within the city of Edinburgh. Please consult www.scottishfamilies.gov.uk for more information.

Finance

- 17 Undergraduate students in receipt of funding should contact their funding body for advice on fee and loan related issues.
 - Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS): www.saas.gov.uk/
 - Student Loans Company (SLC): www.slc.co.uk/
 - The Advice Place can provide advice to students on a number of finance related issues: www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice/
 - For queries relating to impact on fee liability, student should contact fees@ed.ac.uk or see <http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/tuition-fees/undergraduate/fee-policy>
- 18 Postgraduate taught and research students who are in receipt of funding from external bodies should contact them for advice on funding related issues. The University will not be liable if an external funding body does not cover Maternity costs. Where a student is also an employee of the University, they should contact HR for advice on any entitlement to Maternity pay.
 - The Advice Place can provide advice to students on a number of finance related issues: www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice/
- 19 Information on sources of financial support for students with children can be found at: www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/financial-support/students-children:

Please note that Childcare fund awards are not available to postgraduate students, unless the student is in receipt of a Postgraduate tuition fee loan from the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS).
- 20 Lone Parents Grant - Undergraduate students from Scotland who are lone parents with at least one dependent child can apply to the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) for the Lone Parents' Grant. More information is available from www.saas.gov.uk/.
- 21 Lone Parents Childcare Grant - In addition to the Lone Parents Grant, undergraduate students can receive financial assistance for formal childcare costs such as child minders, after school clubs and providers of day care and pre-school education through the Lone Parents Childcare Grant. More information is available via email to studentfunding@ed.ac.uk
- 22 Childcare Fund – Means-tested Childcare funds are available for undergraduate students using registered childcare. More information is available via email to studentfunding@ed.ac.uk
- 23 It is recommended that any student taking an interruption of studies should contact Student Administration (www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration) about the possible effect on the fees to be charged when study resumes.



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Visa issues

- 24 Students studying at Edinburgh under University Student Visa sponsorship will need to consider the length of maternity/paternity/adoption leave depending upon:
- The timing of any interruption of studies;
 - The due date;
 - Academic programme type and semester dates;
- 25 Students on Student Visas who become pregnant during their studies must seek up-to-date immigration advice from the International Student Advisory Service at Edinburgh Global. Advisers will provide a confidential and supportive service, including written advice, to set out possible options for students and their academic supervisors. Under rules as of April 2017, students cannot extend their visa for reasons relating to pregnancy or maternity. There are no concessions within the Student Visa rules specifically allowing for maternity leave. The maximum period of approved authorised interruptions of studies will be considered on an individual basis but is similarly limited by Home Office regulations. Advisers can be contacted through visahelp@ed.ac.uk
- 26 The visa implications of a maternity/paternity/adoption leave should be considered at the earliest possible opportunity and it is vital therefore that the International Student Advisory Service are included in discussions relating to any absence due to pregnancy. They can be contacted at isas@ed.ac.uk
(<http://www.ed.ac.uk/global/student-advisory-service>)

Sources of advice for students

- 27 The following links may provide useful information.
- University Health Service - www.health-service.ed.ac.uk/
 - The Advice Place (Advice Places are located at the Students' Association in Bristo Square and KB House, Kings Buildings, West Mains Road): www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice/
- Edinburgh Global: <http://global.ed.ac.uk>
- International Student Centre: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/global/student-advisory-service/social-connections/isc>
 - Childcare Facilities at the University of Edinburgh: www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/facilities/childcare
 - Scholarships and Student Funding Services: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-funding/home
 - NHS (National Health Service) Scotland: www.nhsscotland.com/
 - NHS 24, a 24 hour contact and advisory service – 111

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