

# Pregnancy, Maternity Support Guidelines

## STUDENT MATERNITY LEAVE, MATERNITY SUPPORT AND ADOPTION LEAVE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to ensure that if you become pregnant or are breastfeeding your baby while you are a student at the University of Warwick you know where to seek advice about your health, the health of your child and the management of your course of study. It is also important for you to know what support is available to you.

### 2.0 NOTIFICATION OF PREGNANCY

- 2.1 It is your responsibility to obtain sound advice **as soon as you know you are pregnant**.

### 3.0 FUTURE PLANS AND ACTION

- 3.1 If you are unsure the options you have and wish to talk through your decision about the future, you can seek support and help. See [http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/student-support-services/mental\\_health/wellbeing/pregnancy/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/student-support-services/mental_health/wellbeing/pregnancy/) You can access the university counselling service <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/tutors/counselling>
- 3.2 Whilst students are not under any obligation to inform their Department if they become pregnant, have a child, or decide to terminate a pregnancy, it is important to note that the Department will not be able to take a suitable flexible approach to your course of study, unless it knows about the situation. It is therefore recommended that you let your Personal Tutor/Head of Department know that you are pregnant **as soon as possible**. The reasons for doing this are to enable your Department to support you by making the best plans for your course of study and examinations and also ensure any special measures needed for your safety and the safety of your child are put in place as soon as possible.
- 3.3 If you make the decision to terminate your pregnancy there is no need for any staff or students at the University to know about this but if you are away from classes you may wish to let your Personal Tutor know that you will be away for 'medical reasons'. A note from a doctor should be provided to cover your absence but this does not have to specify the exact reason. You may also want to seek support to help you cope with this, from University services or other specialist services.

### 4.0 INFORMING YOUR DEPARTMENT(S)

- 4.1 You are responsible for letting your Personal Tutor or Supervisor know as soon as possible. The reasons for doing this are to make the best plans for your course of study and examinations and also to ensure any special measures needed for your safety and the safety of your child may be put in place as soon as possible.

- 4.2 You will also need to plan with your Department the impact of your pregnancy on your course of study. You are entitled to interrupt your course of study (be temporarily withdrawn – TWD) because of pregnancy and it is important to make a plan to take account both of the academic requirements of your course and your needs as a pregnant mother. If you are funded by a sponsor or Research Council, it is important that you let them know as soon as possible (see section 7 for more information if you are a sponsored UG student and section 8 if you are a sponsored PG student) and it is possible that they may stipulate a maximum length of maternity leave. The **maximum** period of temporary withdrawal allowed throughout any student's course of study by the University is **two years**.
- 4.3 It may be useful for students to discuss with their department a pregnancy support plan, which will help to coordinate support and ensure your needs are met during your pregnancy, following the birth, and on your return to study.
- 4.4 You should also arrange with your Department any absences needed for attendance at antenatal clinics. Students whose partners are pregnant may similarly talk to their Personal Tutor to discuss interruptions to their study to cover the birth of their partner's child and also to make any arrangements for attendance at antenatal clinics with their partner.

## **5.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 5.1 It is important that you consider your own health, the health of your child, any benefits and services available, and other practicalities involved in studying during pregnancy and with a young child.
- 5.2 You should seek advice about your health from your General Practitioner or Midwife.
- 5.3 General university health and safety instruction and guidance is available at (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/healthsafetywellbeing>) for those persons wishing to conceive, who are pregnant or who are wanting to breastfeed their baby so that they can continue to work or study at the University without putting themselves or their baby at risk. This guidance contains advice for the person concerned and information for supervisors and personal tutors. It contains general guidance plus additional guidance on specific risks.
- 5.4 If there are any issues of particular concern then the Head of Department can seek advice from the University's Health and Safety Department and its Occupational Health Service.

## **6.0 STUDYING WHILST PREGNANT: THINGS TO CONSIDER**

- 6.1 **Health and safety: see Section 5.0.**
- 6.2 **Temporary withdrawal from course of study:** If it is agreed that your course of study should be suspended, then you must let your Department know when you wish to return (subject to the University's general rules on the length of any suspension) and plan with your Tutor the optimum timetable for your re-integration into your programme of study, including the examination schedule.
- 6.3 **Year Abroad:** Students who become pregnant whilst on a year abroad should contact their academic department at Warwick to make appropriate plans to

ensure that their health is safeguarded and their academic progress is properly managed. Academic departments should be able to advise such students on their entitlement to access suitable services whilst abroad.

- 6.4 **Examinations and assessments:** If you believe your pregnancy will affect your ability to meet coursework deadlines or sit examinations, you should speak with your Personal Tutor/Head of Department as soon as possible.

## 7.0 SUPPORT FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS – HOME / EU

- 7.1 Your student loan can continue for up to 60 days from the beginning of any interruption of study (period of temporary withdrawal), owing to pregnancy. You will need to inform the Student Loan Company of your circumstances. You will also need to apply for maternity benefit and information about this can be obtained through your antenatal clinic or the Student Advice Centre in the Students' Union, who will also help you with your approach to the Student Loan Company.

- 7.2 Students needing to take maternity or paternity leave should complete the temporary withdrawal form which can be found at:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/studentrecords/twd>. The completed form must be submitted to the Director of Undergraduate Studies within your department. If (s) he supports your request this form will be forwarded to the Student Records Team for approval (subject to the University's general rules with regard to temporary withdrawal).

- 7.3 If you have a part-time job whilst you are studying, you might be entitled to claim a financial benefit, see:

**Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)** <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-maternity-pay/overview>

**Maternity Allowance** <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance/overview>

## 8.0 SUPPORT FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS – HOME/EU

- 8.1 All taught postgraduate students (those enrolled on a Taught Masters course) should request to be temporarily withdrawn from their course when they wish to go on maternity leave by completing the temporary withdrawal form which can be found at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/studentrecords/twd>. The completed form must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies within your department. If (s)he supports your request this form will be forwarded to the Student Records Team for approval (subject to the University's general rules with regard to temporary withdrawal).

- 8.2 All PhD students should request to be temporarily withdrawn from their course of study when they wish to go on maternity leave. Students can be withdrawn for up to a maximum of two years. You should complete a Temporary Withdrawal Request by completing the temporary withdrawal form which can be found at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/studentrecords/twd> and submit this to the Director of Graduate Studies in your department. If this is approved, your Department will forward the form on your behalf to the Graduate School

If you require any advice on temporary withdrawal, please contact the Graduate School (+44 (0)24 7657 5533) or by emailing [graduateschool@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:graduateschool@warwick.ac.uk) who

will be able to help. Note that postgraduate taught students should contact Student Records by emailing [studentrecords@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:studentrecords@warwick.ac.uk).

- 8.3 Research Council Funded Students - PhD students receiving a stipend from a Research Council should notify the Graduate School immediately. The Graduate School will contact your sponsoring body on your behalf so that appropriate adjustments can be made. All Research Council-funded students are entitled to take 6 months of maternity leave, or up to 6 months of additional paternity leave on full stipend and a further 6 months of unpaid maternity or up to 6 months of additional paternity leave. For further information you should check the relevant Research Council terms and conditions of funding.
- 8.4 Normally PhD students receiving a stipend are entitled to receive a stipend during maternity leave in line with statutory maternity provision. You should also have the total length of your period of registration and your studentship extended by a corresponding length of time. It is important that you contact the Graduate School who will be able to advise you on the terms and conditions of your Research Council award.
- 8.5 Funded students - If you are in receipt of a stipend or scholarship from another funding body or sponsor, you should contact the Graduate School immediately to clarify your entitlements and enable you to put in hand any adjustments for your maternity leave and return to Warwick.
- 8.6 Self-funded Students - If you have a part-time job whilst you are studying, you might be entitled to claim one of the following:

**Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)** <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-maternity-pay/overview>

**Maternity Allowance** <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance/overview>

## 9.0 SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- 9.1 It is **absolutely essential** that any international student who becomes pregnant contacts the International Office by emailing [int.office@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:int.office@warwick.ac.uk) as early on in the pregnancy as possible, so that immigration advice and support can be provided. At present students who require a visa to study in the UK cannot extend their visa for reasons relating to pregnancy or maternity. All visas allow for a short period of stay in the UK in addition to the time spent on a course. For information on student visas, check the Home Office website: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/student-visas>
- 9.2 Overseas students are unlikely to be entitled to maternity benefit and Warwick recommends that you seek the advice of an Immigration Advisor, as being temporarily withdrawn would affect your visa. You can book an appointment to see an Immigration Advisor through the International Office Reception in University House (on the first floor), or online  
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international/immigration/connect/meet/appt/>  
International students who have financial sponsors **must** inform the sponsors of their circumstances and agree an appropriate plan of action.
- 9.3 Overseas students who return home for the birth of their child should note that most airlines will not carry passengers who are 7 months pregnant or more. Students returning home should also arrange for continuing antenatal care in their home

country and take with them details of any care they have received in the UK. You should also note that if you give birth you and your baby will not be allowed to travel on an aeroplane within at least 48 hours of the birth. Babies between 2 and 7 days old can fly if you have a letter from your GP. If you have given birth by caesarean section you must wait 10 days before you can fly. In general it is best to wait until the baby is over two weeks old.

- 9.4 Students should contact the International Office via the International Office Reception in University House (on the first floor) for advice on suspending your studies and returning home. The team can give you comprehensive immigration advice and support you with any concerns you may have.
- 9.5 If you are an International student and your visa states that you have 'no recourse to public funds' then you may be able to claim Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance as these are not counted as 'public funds'. Please contact the Student Funding team via Student Reception in University to find out more.

## **10.0 RETURNING TO WARWICK**

- 10.1 You should plan with your Personal Tutor (if UG or PGT) or Supervisor (if PGR) the optimum timetable for your reintegration into your programme of study, including the examination schedule. It is important to let the Graduate School (PGR) know when you are ready to return. Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students will be contacted by Student Records 6-8 weeks prior to the agreed date of return to confirm arrangements.
- 10.2 If you return to study whilst breastfeeding, your discussions with your personal tutor or supervisor should take into account any health and safety issues (see 5.0) and ensure that appropriate facilities are made available to you.
- 10.3 If you are an international student, please liaise with the International Office or look on their website for further information.
- 10.4 It is crucial that you inform the Students Loan Company (UG) or your financial sponsor (PG) of your plans to return to study once these have been agreed with your Department and the University administration. Failure to do so may otherwise jeopardise your funding.
- 10.5 Arranging places for young children in good quality care can take time. It is advisable to begin to think about making arrangements early in your pregnancy.
- 10.6 The University operates a Day Nursery, but places are limited and there is a waiting list; you are advised to make contact with the Nursery Manager as soon as you decide that you wish to secure a place in the Nursery for your baby. Details on the University Nursery can be found here: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/nursery/>

## **11.0 BENEFITS AND TAX CREDITS**

- 11.1 There are a number of benefits and tax credits you might be eligible to claim if you are a UK/EU citizen if you fall pregnant whilst studying at University. Please call in to the Student Reception (Senate House) and make an appointment to see the Student Funding Officer who will be able to advise you or contact

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/student-support-services/student-funding>

11.2 A range of the benefits and tax credits include:

### **FREE Prescriptions and NHS Dental Treatment**

You are entitled to free NHS prescriptions and NHS dental treatment whilst you are pregnant and for 12 months after the birth of your baby. You should ask your doctor or midwife for form FW8 so that you can apply for your maternity exemption. For further information on Maternity Exemption Certificates see:

<http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1644.aspx>

11.3 If you are an International student and your visa states that you have 'no recourse to public funds' then you may still be able to claim free prescriptions and NHS dental treatment as this is not counted as 'public funds'.

### **11.4 Sure Start Maternity Grant**

You could get a one-off payment of £500 to help towards the costs of having a child.

This is known as a Sure Start Maternity Grant see: <https://www.gov.uk/sure-start-maternity-grant/overview>

### **11.5 Healthy Start Scheme**

If you're pregnant or have a child under 4, the Healthy Start scheme can help you buy basic foods like milk or fruit, see: <http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>.

### **11.6 Child Benefit**

This is a weekly or monthly benefit paid to you to help towards the upkeep of your child until they are 16 (or under 20 and in approved education or training) see:

<https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit/overview>.

You should apply as soon as possible after your child is born to avoid losing out on money available to you.

If you are an International student and your visa states that you have 'no recourse to public funds' then you **should not** claim Child Benefit as this could jeopardise your immigration permission.

### **11.7 Tax Credits**

#### **Child Tax Credits**

You could get Child Tax Credit for each child you're responsible for if they are:

- under 16
- under 20 and in approved education or training

You don't need to be working to claim Child Tax Credit.

You get money for each child that qualifies and Child Tax Credit won't affect your Child Benefit.

Further information can be found on benefits and tax credits on the DirectGov website: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/start/who-qualifies/children/index.htm>.

## 12.0 SUPPORT

12.1 The following University Departments/Services can offer support and guidance:

Student Support Services

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/student-support-services>

University Counselling Service

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/tutors/counselling/student>

Student Advice Centre

<http://www.warwicksu.com/advice/>

Student Funding Team

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/student-support-services/student-funding/>

University Nursery

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/nursery>

International Office (the specific section for students with families can be found here

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/international>

University Accommodation Office

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/accommodation>

The Student's Union

<http://www.warwicksu.com/advice/health/>

12.2 The Student Advice Centre runs a free, confidential and informal service to support students at Warwick. The Advice Centre is located on the top floor of Students' Union HQ, next to the lift. Three fully-trained advisors can help with issues related to housing, immigration, money, study, consumer rights and much more. The advisors will do their utmost to ensure that you make an informed decision about any difficulties you may face – and, if they can't help, they will direct you to someone who can.

During term-time, student volunteers staff the reception desk. They will welcome you and help book appointments – however, it will save you time to either phone ahead or e-mail.

*Contact Details*

[advice@warwicksu.com](mailto:advice@warwicksu.com); Level 2, SUHQ

Tel: 024 7657 2824

12.3 The following external agencies offer support and advice on pregnancy related issues:

Education for Choice  
<http://www.efc.org.uk/>

Family Planning Association  
<http://www.fpa.org.uk/help-and-advice/planning-pregnancy>

British Pregnancy Advisory Service  
<http://www.bpas.org/bpaswoman>

The Marie Stopes Foundation  
<http://www.mariestopes.org.uk/>

12.4 Other interesting websites to find out more about childcare are:

NHS pages on pregnancy  
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/pregnancy-and-baby-care.aspx>

Equality Challenge Unit  
<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/student-pregnancy-and-maternity>

Students' advice – by students for students  
<http://www.studento.com/student-life/health/pregnancy-at-university.htm>

Last updated Sept 2014.