

## Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave Policy

### 1) Introduction

This policy provides advice and guidance to:

- Students who become pregnant during their studies, to their partners, and to those who have recently become parents (e.g. through adoption) on issues related to pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption leave.
- University staff who may have a role in advising students on these issues.

### 2) Scope of the Policy

The policy covers any student who becomes pregnant during her studies, and students who are about to become fathers. It also covers any student who is the partner (including same sex partner) of someone who is pregnant and expects to be responsible for the child, and any person becoming a parent (e.g. through adoption) of a child.

### 3) Policy Statement

The University of Wales Trinity Saint David is committed to promoting equality in all its activities and aims to provide a work, learning, teaching and research environment free from discrimination and unfair treatment. The University seeks to develop best practice in discharging its legal responsibility. The Equality Act (2010) places a duty to promote equality for a range of protected characteristics including pregnancy and maternity.

The University believes that becoming pregnant or caring for a child should not, in itself, prevent any student from succeeding in their studies. The University is committed to showing as much flexibility as possible to facilitate students' success, making sure no student is disadvantaged whilst ensuring academic standards are not compromised.

The health, safety and well-being of a pregnant student will be of paramount importance at all times, and Schools, Faculties and Professional Units will deal with all students covered by this policy in a sensitive, non-judgemental and confidential manner. Only members of staff who need to be informed for valid reasons will be informed of a student's circumstances and in the main, this will be done only with the student's prior consent. Some programmes, however, will require in the interests of the student's health, safety and well-being, for staff to be informed.

The policy focuses primarily on study-related matters, but sources of help and advice on related issues can be found at the end of the document.

Appendix SQ4 contains a support form which aims to guide discussions with students during pregnancy and maternity. This form should be completed by the Programme Director (or nominee) and agreed with the student.

### 4) Rights and Responsibilities

This section covers rights and responsibilities for students, staff and the University.

**5) For students who become pregnant during their studies**

**(i) Confirming the Pregnancy**

A student who suspects she is pregnant should see her GP to have the pregnancy confirmed as soon as she can. The student should then inform her School as soon as possible so that appropriate support can be arranged. If she decides to terminate the pregnancy, or miscarries, this need not be disclosed to the University. However, students should be aware that non-disclosure may affect the provision of support from the University, including support from academic staff and professional counsellors and/or mental health advisers. Details of the University's policy in relation to absence from study can be found in the University Regulations: Student Guides at:

<http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/university-regulations-student-guide/>

**(ii) Contacting the University**

If the student plans to continue with her pregnancy, she should let her School (usually the Head of School, Programme Director, Personal/Year Tutor or Supervisor) know as soon as possible. The University can only make provision for the student if she lets them know she is pregnant. Whilst the Programme Director, Personal/Year Tutor or Supervisor would normally be the first point of contact, the student can initially choose to speak to another member of staff with whom she feels more comfortable. However, students should note that the Programme Director or Supervisor will need to be informed.

**(iii) Implications for Study**

A member of staff from the School (normally the Programme Director) will meet with the student to discuss how the pregnancy is likely to impact on her study. There may need to be an interruption of studies depending on when the baby is due, and the student together with the School will decide (1) whether an interruption is needed and (2) if so, the time period this needs to cover. This decision also needs to take into account the academic requirements of the student's programme, and in particular the schedule for assessments. A student with a baby due near the examination period might require confirmation from her doctor that she is fit to sit exams. Time off might also be needed for medical appointments.

A plan should be devised (in writing) by the School, detailing any support arrangements required during the student's pregnancy, and the agreed timescale for her return to study. (See Appendix SQ4 for an example of a support form). The student should receive a copy of this, as should other appropriate member(s) of staff requiring this information (including, where required, Examination/Progression Boards). The student's permission should be established before passing on this information.

If the student continues to study during her pregnancy, she should meet regularly with a member of staff from her School (normally the Programme Director) to assess the effectiveness of any support arrangements put in place. Where necessary, further adjustments can be made.

Students under the scope of this policy are also eligible to apply to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel if their circumstances may adversely affect or may have adversely affected their performance in an assessment or assessments.

**(iv) Field work**

Where the student plans to take part in field work as part of their studies, the pregnancy should be risk assessed by the School responsible for organising the field work. There may be particular risks associated with the field work and the student should discuss this fully with the appropriate member of staff. Students will not normally be permitted to take part in field work after the 7th month of pregnancy.

**(v) Teaching practice / Professional Teaching Experiences**

Where the student is required to undertake a period of teaching practice / professional teaching experiences, the pregnancy should be risk assessed by the School responsible for organising the teaching practice / professional teaching experiences. The student should discuss these risks fully with the appropriate member of staff prior to the teaching practice / professional teaching experiences taking place. Students will not normally be permitted to take part in teaching practice / professional teaching experiences after the 7<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy.

**(vi) Work placement / study abroad**

If the student becomes pregnant in the period leading up to, or during a work placement or study year abroad, she must contact the School to make appropriate plans to ensure that health is safeguarded and academic progress is properly managed.

**(vii) Resuming studies**

The student must inform the School when she is ready to return and plan with her Programme Director or Supervisor an appropriate timetable for re-integration into her programme of study, including the examination and coursework assessment schedule. The student must also notify Registry to ensure that her University record is updated to indicate that she has returned to her programme of study.

**(viii) Health and Safety**

There may be health and safety measures that need to be put in place in order to protect the student and her unborn baby, and this will be particularly relevant in certain Schools, (e.g. where the student might be exposed to harmful chemicals or be expected to lift heavy objects or undertake other strenuous activity). Therefore, once the student has informed her School of her pregnancy, a Risk Assessment will be completed by the School. This will identify any risks that may be present which could harm the student or her baby, and detail steps that need to be put in place to alleviate or minimise these risks. It should also detail any risks that may arise from any placement period or fieldwork due to be undertaken.

The greatest risk to an unborn baby is during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy and so it is important that the student informs the University as early as possible.

Any student who has given birth must not return to University within 2 weeks of giving birth for health and safety reasons.

**(ix) Financial Considerations**

Undergraduate students should note that funding will usually stop when the interruption of study begins. Students are advised to seek advice from their funding body and/or Student Services.

The University refund policy covers refunds of tuition fees for self-funded or privately sponsored students who interrupt study. Students in this situation should approach the Finance Department for further information.

Postgraduate and research students receiving funding from external bodies should follow the guidance for their particular scheme, or contact their funding body or sponsor for further advice.

International students with financial sponsors must contact their sponsors and agree a plan of action (such as deferring study/ when to resume study etc). Those international students who are not entitled to any maternity benefits in the UK may prefer to return home for the duration of their pregnancy. It should be remembered that most airlines will not carry passengers who are 7 months pregnant or more, and this should be taken into account when planning a plan of action. International students should consult with the International Office to ensure compliance with University and UKVI requirements in relation to attendance monitoring.

The benefit rules are different for EU students and international students, and further advice should be sought from the International Office and/or Student Services or the Department for Work and Pensions.

**(x) Accommodation**

Students who become pregnant whilst living in University accommodation may find that this is no longer suitable for health and safety reasons. Contact should be made with the relevant Accommodation Officers for advice.

For further sources of help and support, please see the 'Sources of Information and Help' section at the end of this document.

**(xi) Babies/Children on Campus**

For health and safety reasons, as well as to avoid the disruption of classes or study, babies and children must not be brought into teaching or learning areas. Students must ensure they have suitable childcare arrangements in place at times when they are expected to be at University. Students can apply to the University crèches for a childcare place, although it should be noted that these places are limited in number.

Students must not bring babies or children to University with the expectation that any staff member will take responsibility for caring for the child whilst the student is in classes.

Students may of course bring babies and children into public areas of the University, but the University cannot accept any liability for the child in these circumstances.

The University provides baby changing facilities on its campuses in the following locations:

**Carmarthen campus:**

Halliwell Centre (ground floor)  
Dewi Block – Basil Richards (ground floor)  
Y Gamfa Wen (Crèche)

**Lampeter campus:**

Students' Union  
1822  
Old Building (disabled toilet)

**(xii) Breastfeeding**

Nursing mothers should be aware that there are no specific facilities for expressing milk on campus and that alternative arrangements should be made.

**6) Support for fathers and partners (including same-sex partners) who have responsibility for bringing up the child**

Any student discovering he is to become a father, or any partner of a pregnant student (including same sex partners) who expects to be responsible for raising the child with the mother, will be entitled to request time out of study. This is likely to include time off for medical appointments prior to, and after, the birth, as well as a period of maternity support leave immediately following the birth. A student in this situation should contact his/her Programme Director or other staff member, to discuss this. It should be noted that the Programme Director will need to be informed, even if discussions involve a different staff member.

**7) For students about to become parents (e.g. through adoption)**

Students about to become parents (e.g. through adoption) should inform their School of their circumstances as soon as possible. Arrangements can be made to allow time out of study. This may vary depending on the age of the child, the programme of study being undertaken, and the point in the academic session at which the event takes place. Again, the Programme Director will be informed if discussions involve a different staff member.

**8) Complaints**

Any student who feels that the University has failed to live up to the standards of this policy may raise a complaint under the University's Complaints Procedure. This can be accessed at: <http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/procedures-for-academic-appeals-complaints-and-other-student-cases/>

This procedure suggests that problems are resolved as informally as possible in the first instance. Student Services can also provide impartial, confidential advice to students in this situation.

**9) Guidance for Staff**

This section provides guidance on the support of students coming under the scope of this policy, for use by any member of staff with a role in advising or supporting students. At all times, staff must ensure those students are not treated less favourably than any other student on the basis of their circumstances. In line with the University's legal obligations, flexibility should be shown where possible to ensure continued learning is facilitated. Information given by students should be treated confidentially (being passed on where necessary only with the student's consent) and with sensitivity. Staff should not attempt to influence any student's decision but should provide impartial advice.

When a student contacts a member of staff to discuss any circumstances covered by this policy, a response should be made within five working days and a meeting arranged as soon as possible thereafter (if required). If the member of staff being contacted by the student is not the student's Programme Director or Supervisor, the Programme Director or Supervisor should nonetheless be kept informed. Staff must inform the student of this intention.

Whilst it is recognised that each request must be dealt with on an individual basis, there are a number of measures that can be used in order to enable the student's continuation of study. These include:

- allowing time out of study (for a pre-determined amount of time) for the birth and a period of time thereafter;
- prior to and after the birth, giving permission for periods of absence for medical appointments, and making arrangements for the student to catch up on missed classes;
- the University recognises that pregnancy and birth may make it difficult for a student to meet deadlines and/or attend examinations and in such cases the student should apply to have the circumstances taken into account by the University through the University's extenuating circumstances procedures;
- use of the University's interruption of studies policy and procedures as required;
- consideration of any requests to transfer to part-time study, where this is possible (although the student should bear in mind the financial implications of this course of action);
- offering support to help the student reintegrate to their studies after any period of prolonged absence.

It is important to take the views and wishes of the student into account, rather than applying a standard set of arrangements. All decisions taken should be based on discussion with the student.

Whilst an appropriate degree of flexibility should be exercised, care must be taken to ensure that academic standards are not compromised. A balance must be achieved between ensuring the student is not disadvantaged, and giving undue special treatment.

It is not necessary for the University to grant every request made, although efforts should be made to meet reasonable requests. Requests should not be refused solely on the basis of being too costly to implement, although this will necessarily be considered when assessing the overall 'reasonableness' of a request. If any request is refused, the reasons for the refusal should be provided in writing for the student.

Where specific arrangements are required to be put in place for a student who is already granted additional arrangements (e.g. on the grounds of disability), these should be kept separate in order that it remains clear which arrangements relate to which particular circumstance. This ensures that these arrangements are in place for the required amount of time and also clarifies adherence to the relevant pieces of legislation.

## 10) Sources of information and help

### *University of Wales Trinity Saint David:*

#### **Accommodation:**

Carmarthen campus	01267 676819	<a href="mailto:jean.thomas@uwtsd.ac.uk">jean.thomas@uwtsd.ac.uk</a>
Lampeter campus	01570 424995	<a href="mailto:a.harris@uwtsd.ac.uk">a.harris@uwtsd.ac.uk</a>
Swansea campus	01792 482086	<a href="mailto:jonathan.bradley@uwtsd.ac.uk">jonathan.bradley@uwtsd.ac.uk</a>

**Childcare:**

University Crèches:

Carmarthen campus: Y Gamfa Wen

[YGamfaWen@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:YGamfaWen@uwtsd.ac.uk) 01267 676645

Lampeter campus: Seren Day Nursery

[help@serendaynursery.com](mailto:help@serendaynursery.com) 01570 423426

**Counselling Service:**

Carmarthen campus 01267 676830

Lampeter campus 01570 424876

Swansea campus 01792 481206

(all other enquiries and non-campus based students) 01267 676830

[studentservices@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:studentservices@uwtsd.ac.uk)

**Student Services:**

Carmarthen campus: 01267 676830

Lampeter campus: 01570 424876

Swansea campus: 01792 481206

London campus: 020 7566 7600

(all other enquiries and non-campus based students) 01267 676830

[studentservices@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:studentservices@uwtsd.ac.uk)

**Students' Union:**

Carmarthen campus: 01267 237794

Lampeter campus: 01570 422619

Swansea campus: 01792 655400

[www.tsdsu.co.uk](http://www.tsdsu.co.uk)

**General organisations:**

**Gov.UK**

The UK government's website provides information on health, care and benefits during pregnancy, benefits for parents and information on childcare providers in your area.

[www.gov.uk/](http://www.gov.uk/)

**Family Planning Association**

Aims to establish a society in which everyone can make informed choices about sex, relationships and reproduction. Its website contains impartial advice on pregnancy, abortion and adoption, and also contains a list of useful organisations.

[www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)

Helpline: 0845 122 8690

**National Health Service**

Provides information relating to pregnancy, abortion, health in pregnancy and maternity and services provided by the NHS

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



### **National Union of Students**

Provides information and advice to students and students' unions about student finance, rights and welfare. Information for student parents is available on its website, along with research and publications about students with dependant children.

[www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk)

(See also Students' Union offices on Carmarthen, Lampeter and Swansea campuses)

### **Specific organisations:**

#### **Adoption UK**

A national charity run by and for adopters, providing self-help information, advice, support, training on all aspects of adoption and adoptive parenting.

[www.adoptionuk.org.uk](http://www.adoptionuk.org.uk)

Helpline (Wales): 02920 230319 (Mon-Fri 10.00am – 2.30pm)

#### **Antenatal Results and Choices**

The only national charity that provides non-directive support and information to expectant and bereaved parents throughout and after the antenatal screening and testing process.

[www.arc-uk.org](http://www.arc-uk.org)

#### **British Pregnancy Advisory Service**

Supports reproductive choice and health by advocating and providing high-quality affordable services to prevent or end unwanted pregnancies with contraception or by abortion. Also offers a range of other reproductive health services.

[www.bpas.org.uk](http://www.bpas.org.uk)

Tel: 03457 30 40 30

#### **Family and Childcare Trust**

Provides support to parents in bringing up their children, and has a range of resources for parents.

[www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/)

#### **The Miscarriage Association**

Offers support and information to anyone affected by the loss of a baby in pregnancy

[www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

#### **SANDS**

The still birth and neonatal death charity – provides support to anyone affected by the loss of a baby and conducts research into the causes of still and neonatal death.

[www.sands.org.uk/](http://www.sands.org.uk/)

The list of useful contacts is correct at the time of publication. Please note the University of Wales Trinity Saint David does not endorse or take responsibility for the information provided by external organisations.