

**St George’s University of London**

**Student Pregnancy and Maternity Policy**

**Overview**

As a result of the Equality Act 2010, the legislation on pregnancy and maternity now includes students. Therefore the University will ensure that pregnancy and maternity are not in themselves a barrier to starting or continuing on programmes of study awarded by SGUL.

This policy will be aligned to staff pregnancy and maternity and Partner’s leave related to Maternity Policy and is part of SGUL’s Single Equality Scheme.

This policy has been developed with the student union, the Student Parents Society, HR , the Health & Safety Office, Registry and the Equality and Diversity Committee and approved by SSWC and Senate.

This policy will be included on the Equality & Diversity web pages and be linked to from the SGSU web pages, Student Parent Society section and the Student Life/ Student Parents section of the SGUL website.

Contents:

* General policy statement
* Responsibilities of staff and students
* Maternity Support Plan
* Pregnancy risk assessment

**Scope of the Policy**

The policy covers any student who accepts an offer of a place, registered students who become pregnant during her studies and registered students whose partners are pregnant. It also covers any registered student becoming a parent (e.g. through adoption).

**Policy Statement**

Measures introduced in The Equality Act 2010 apply to students in Higher Education meaning that the University has an obligation to provide appropriate support to pregnant students. Moreover the University believes that becoming a parent or caring for a child should not, in itself, prevent any student from succeeding in their studies. The University is committed to being as flexible as possible to ensure that no student is disadvantaged due to pregnancy or maternity, whilst ensuring academic standards are not compromised.

The health and safety of a pregnant student is of paramount importance at all times, and all students covered by this policy should be treated in a sensitive, non-judgemental and confidential manner. Only members of staff who need to be informed for valid reasons will be notified of a student’s circumstances and this should be done only with the student’s prior consent. A risk assessment of all pregnant students is required as a health and safety measure and so academic staff and staff involved in the risk assessment will need to know in order for this assessment and any following adjustments to take place.

Further sources of help and advice can be found on the University’s Student Parents’ web pages

**Responsibilities of students and staff**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Student** | **Staff** |
| **Confirms pregnancy** | **Personal Tutor/Admin Lead informs Course Director** |
| **Informs personal tutor/admin lead and confirms via email consent to share information** | **Course Director ensures that appropriate staff can complete RISK ASSESSMENT with student** |
| **Completes RISK ASSESSMENT with relevant staff** |  |
| **Completes and review STUDY PLAN with relevant staff** | **Personal Tutor/Admin Lead works with student and other staff to ensure recommendations in RISK ASSESSMENT and STUDY PLAN are implemented** |
| **Applies for MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES for any examinations is applicable** |  |
| **Completes INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES form to cover absence described in STUDY PLAN** | **Admin Lead processes IOS Form and ensures Student Records update SITS** |
| **Leaves for maternity absence** |  |
| **Contacts SGUL 2 weeks before due to return** | **Personal Tutor/Admin Lead arranges to meet with student to update the RISK ASSESSMENT and STUDY PLAN and makes arrangements to update regularly or as changes take place** |
| **Updates RISK ASSESSMENT and STUDY PLAN with Personal tutor/Admin Lead and resumes study** | **Provides data and feedback to Equality & Diversity Manager to support policy review and enhancement** |

**Details of the Policy**

The details outlined below are broadly the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 legislation – these apply to any UG, PGT and PGR students

**Maternity Leave**

Students are entitled to take up to 52 weeks Statutory Maternity Leave. The leave will be unpaid unless they are entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay. The University recommends that students meet with the Student Finance Advisor in the Student Centre to discuss what support is available to them. Statutory Maternity Leave can begin at any time from the start of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth up to the day the childbirth occurs.

Students are required to take two weeks compulsory leave of absence immediately following childbirth.

Research Students who are funded by a research council are entitled to 6 months paid maternity leave and up to a further 6 months unpaid leave.

If required leave is within term time, an interruption of studies should be arranged so that leave can be aligned with academic requirements of the programme and progress from leaving to have a baby and returning to study is arranged to suit the student and their continued learning and success.

**Notifying the University**

Students are encouraged to notify the University as soon as possible about their pregnancy through their Personal Tutor or Supervisor (or other designated member of staff) in their Academic Department. (Students entitled to Partners’ Leave should do likewise).

If a student is uneasy about talking to a member of staff in their department they are advised to seek support and advice from Student Services (Student Centre) or from the VP Education & Welfare in the Students’ Union. Once this has happened a written ‘Pregnancy risk assessment’ and ‘Pregnancy and Maternity Support Plan’ (downloadable from the Student Parents’ web pages) should be developed jointly by the student and her Programme Administrator, Personal Tutor or Supervisor. It should detail risk and mitigate this by any special arrangements required during the student’s pregnancy. This document should be signed by the student and member of staff.

**Terminations**

If a student decides not to continue with their pregnancy there is no need for any staff and students in the Academic Department to be made aware of this. However, if a student is absent from classes they are advised to inform their Programme Administrator, Personal Tutor or Supervisor that they will be away for ‘medical reasons’. Support for students who choose not to continue with their pregnancy is available from Occupational Health and University Counselling Service as well as from external specialist services. Links to these services will be available to staff and students via the University website.

**Risk Assessment (Appendix A)**

Health and Safety measures may need to be put in place in order to protect the student and her unborn child. This will be particularly relevant in certain departments, for example where a student might be exposed to harmful chemicals or radiation, or be expected to lift heavy objects or undertake other strenuous activity. Once a student has informed her Department of her pregnancy, a Risk Assessment must be carried out by the Department within 10 days of notification.

This will identify any risks that may be present which could harm the student or her baby, and detail any steps that need to be put in place to alleviate or minimise these risks. It should also include any risks that may arise from any placement period or fieldwork due to be undertaken. Advice on carrying out a risk assessment can be sought from the Health and Safety Office.

The student can be referred to Occupational Health Services if additional advice is required.

**Study Arrangements & Planning (Appendix B)**

The student’s Programme Administrator, Personal Tutor or Supervisor should 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.

The student should discuss with their Programme Administrator, Personal Tutor or Supervisor their intentions regarding Maternity Leave and discuss the possible implications of this on the academic requirements of the student’s course. A student whose baby is due near to the examination period might require confirmation from her doctor that she is able and well enough to sit exams. Time off might also be needed for medical appointments.

The student should meet regularly with her Personal Tutor or Supervisor during the pregnancy to ensure that any special arrangements that have been put in place are working effectively and making any adjustments where necessary. This will be needed at different stages of the pregnancy:

* At key stages of the pregnancy e.g. 12-16 weeks pregnant, 17-24 weeks pregnant, and when the student returns to study.
* At key points of the academic year e.g. prior to examinations, placements or study abroad.
* If the student’s circumstances change, they have any worries or there has been an incident.
* If there has been any specific change e.g. a new module started, a different building used or different process involved.

Once the details of Maternity Leave have been agreed an ‘Interruption of Studies’ (IOS **– Appendix C**)) form may need to be completed, and returned to Student Records.

A student may wish to submit mitigating circumstances for any examinations during her pregnancy (**Appendix D**)

**Resuming Studies**

All taught students on an IOS are contacted prior to their scheduled return to study date by a member of Student Support. The student will have the opportunity to discuss any concerns they have about returning to study. Students will be contacted 10 days prior to her return date noted on her study plan and IOs form so that support arrangements can be put in place.

**Maternity Pay and Financial Support**

Undergraduate students should note that funding may stop when a leave of absence begins, however in some circumstances discretion may be exercised to allow funding to continue. Students should seek advice from their funding body (for example Student Finance England) or from the Student Centre in the Students’ Union.

International students with financial sponsors must contact their sponsors and agree a plan of action (such as deferring study/ when to resume study etc).

A home student may be eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Maternity Allowance (MA). The rules surrounding eligibility for these are complicated and are based on a student’s employment record. Students should contact [Direct Gov](https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave):

**…or seek advice from the Student Centre or the Students’ Union. The benefit rules are different for** EU students and International students, and further advice should be sought from International Student Support in Student Services or from the Student Advice Centre in the Students’ Union.

**Students whose partner is pregnant or adopting**

Any student whose partner is pregnant will be entitled to request a leave of absence. This is likely to include time off for medical appointments prior to and after the birth, as well as a period of paternity leave/ maternity support leave following the birth. A student in this situation should contact their Programme Administrator, Personal Tutor or Supervisor to discuss this – basic paternity leave/ maternity support leave is two consecutive weeks, however if a student would like to take an extended period of leave this should be discussed. For more details on paternity rights, please refer to the Equality Challenge Unit guidance document (downloadable from the University web pages).

For students receiving research funding, it may be possible for a period of paternity leave/ maternity support leave to be allowed.

**Adoption**

Students who have been matched for adoption should inform their Programme Administrator, Personal Tutor or Supervisor as soon as possible. Only one member of a couple jointly adopting may take adoption leave. This applies regardless of whether one or both members of the couple are students. The other member of the couple may be entitled to take Statutory Paternity Leave / Maternity Support Leave.

Students taking Adoption Leave have the same entitlements as students taking Maternity Leave – see above.

**Miscarriage, Still Births and Neonatal Death**

If a student miscarries, she is likely to need time off study for tests and to recover. Consideration should be given to the impact of a miscarriage on a student’s ability to meet deadlines and sit exams.

There will be no distinction between live births, still births (past the 24th week of pregnancy) or the death of a baby shortly after birth in the granting of leave.

**Breastfeeding and Rest Facilities**

The Equality Act 2010 explicitly protects students from less favourable treatment because of breastfeeding. Students should not be declined access to University facilities because they are breastfeeding or have a baby under 26 weeks old with them. As long as babies are supervised at all times and any health and safety risks identified can be resolved, babies should be allowed on University premises and providing their presence does not disrupt other students’ learning. Babies and children should not be taken into seminars and lectures and other learning & teaching activities.

Rest facilities for pregnant and breast-feeding woman are provided on the 2nd floor of Hunter Wing where there is a breast feeding room. The key can be obtained from the Student Union offices on the same floor.

Students must ensure they have suitable childcare arrangements in place at times when they are expected to be at University. The University has a Nursery Adviser who can help advise students about childcare options. (See details this and other support departments - **Appendix D**)

**Managing Requests & Arrangements**

While 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 facilitate a pregnant student’s continuation of study. These include:

* Allowing time out of study.
* Absence for medical appointments prior to and after the birth.
* Flexibility regarding assignment deadlines if the student’s pregnancy make it difficult for them to be met.
* Additional support when sitting exams e.g. extra time for breaks, allowed to bring food and drink, being seated close to an exit.
* Allowing re-sit examinations to be counted as first attempts where the pregnancy or birth prevents the student from taking them at the usual time.
* Offering support to help the student continue their studies after any period of prolonged absence.

**Sources of Support and Information**

A wide range of student support information is available on the [student portal](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/services?ticket=ST-143555-uIzf7k7bblHGGvRt1SAo-cas) and in person via the Student Centre:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Department** | **Contact** |
| [Accommodation](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/lis/reg/student-centre/accommodation-pages/accommodation-homepage) | [**accommodation@sgul.ac.uk**](mailto:accommodation@sgul.ac.uk) **/ x** |
| [Equality & Diversity](http://www.sgul.ac.uk/about-st-georges/planning-secretariat-office/secretariat-office/equality-and-diversity) |  |
| Student Parents’ Society |  |
| [St George’s Student Union](http://www.sgsu.org.uk/) | [**vpeducation@su.sgul.ac.uk**](mailto:vpeducation@su.sgul.ac.uk) **/ x 0451** |
| [Student Finance Advice](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/lis/reg/student-centre/student-finance-pages) | [**studentfinance@sgul.ac.uk**](mailto:studentfinance@sgul.ac.uk) **/** |
| Child care Adviser |  |
| [Counselling](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/students/sgsu/counselling-service) | [**counselling@sgul.ac.uk**](mailto:counselling@sgul.ac.uk) **/ x 3628** |
| [Occupational Health](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/lis/reg/student-centre/health/staff-student-occupational-health-service) |  |
| [Mitigation](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/lis/reg/student-centre/student-affairs-and-compliance-pages/student-affairs-and-compliance) | [**studentaffairs@sgul.ac.uk**](mailto:studentaffairs@sgul.ac.uk) **/ x 5225** |
| [Exam Arrangements](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/lis/reg/examinations-pages/examinations-homepage-1) | [**exams@sgul.ac.uk**](mailto:exams@sgul.ac.uk) **/ x 2912** |
| [Student Complaints](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/lis/reg/student-centre/student-affairs-and-compliance-pages/student-affairs-and-compliance) | [**studentaffairs@sgul.ac.uk**](mailto:studentaffairs@sgul.ac.uk) **/ x 5225** |
| [Programme Team](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/lis/reg/student-centre/grounded) | [**studentcentre@sgul.ac.uk**](mailto:studentcentre@sgul.ac.uk) **/ x 6334** |
| [Chaplaincy](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/lis/reg/student-centre/health/Chaplaincy/chaplaincy) | [**studentcentre@sgul.ac.uk**](mailto:studentcentre@sgul.ac.uk) **/ x 6334** |
| [International Student Support](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/lis/reg/student-centre/international-students/visa-advice) | [**visaadvice@sgul.ac.uk**](mailto:visaadvice@sgul.ac.uk) **/ 1981** |

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| **Pregnancy & Maternity Study Plan** | | | | | |
| 1. **Contact Details** | | | | | |
| **Student :** |  | | | | |
| Name |  | | | | |
| Address |  | | | | |
| Email |  | | | | |
| Student Number |  | | | | |
| **Emergency contact:** |  | | | | |
| Name |  | | | | |
| Address |  | | | | |
| Email |  | | | | |
| 1. **Programme Details** | | | | | |
| Programme |  | | | | |
| School/Faculty |  | | | | |
| School/Faculty contact |  | | | | |
| Year |  | | | | |
| 1. **Member of staff responsible for making arrangements** | | | | | |
| Name |  | | | | |
| Office location |  | | | | |
| Extension |  | | | | |
| email |  | | | | |
| 1. **Key dates ( to be reviewed over pregnancy/maternity)** | | | | | |
| Student’s due date |  | | | | |
| Date of notification |  | | | | |
| Weeks pregnant at notification date |  | | | | |
| 1. **Communication with student** | | | | | |
| Student communication |  | | | | |
| Phone |  | | | | |
| email |  | | | | |
| Confirmed on SITS? | **YES/NO** | | | | |
| 1. **Informing other staff/students** | | | | | |
| **Name** | | | | | **Date** |
| Course Director (must be notified) | | | | |  |
|  | | | | |  |
|  | | | | |  |
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|  | | | | |  |
|  | | | | |  |
| 1. **Risk Assessment and other Processes** | | | | | |
| Risk assessment form completed: YES/NO | | | Date: | | |
| Return to study arranged via Interruption of Studies: YES/NO | | | Return Date (at least 2 weeks after birth): | | |
| Time off for appointments: YES/NO | | | Dates: | | |
| Catch up arrangements made? YES/NO | | | Details: | | |
| 1. **Academic Assessment Arrangments** | | | | | |
| Missed assessments due to YES/NO pregnancy/maternity? | | | Details: | | |
| Alternative arrangements made? YES/NO | | | **Exceptional Circumstances** submitted? YES/NO YES/NO | | |
| 1. **Student Support Arrangements** | | | | | |
| **Has the student visited:** | |  | | | |
| Student Finance | | Date: | | | |
| The breastfeeding/rest room | | Date: | | | |
| The childcare Adviser | | Date: | | | |
| International Student Adviser | | Date: | | | |
| Placement co-ordinator | | Date: | | | |
| Accommodation Adviser | | Date: | | | |
| Student Parents’ Society/SGSU? | | Date: | | | |
| 1. **Return to Study Arrangements** | | | | | |
|  | | | | | |
| **Return to study contact (by SGUL)** | | **Date:** | | | |
| **Return to study arrangements** | | **Date:** | | | |
|  | | **Details:** | | | |
| **Agreed by Staff member** | | | | **Agreed by Student** | |
| **Name:** | | | | **Name:** | |
| **Signature:** | | | | **Signature:** | |
| **Date:** | | | | **Date:** | |
| **Review date(s)**  **1.**  **2.**  **3.** | | | | | |
| **Agreed by Course Director** | | | | | |
| **Name:** | | | | | |
| **Date:** | | | | | |

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**New and Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment Checklist (SHEP 19/Appendix B)**

This checklist is designed to be used with the general, COSHH, fieldwork and Manual handling risk assessment forms. It covers specific issues which are known to affect new and expectant mothers. If any issue is identified steps should be taken to either remove the person from the hazard or minimise their exposure as far as is reasonably practicable.

Being pregnant or a new mother (someone who has given birth in the last six months) does not prevent a person from studying, working and developing her career. Many women work or study while they are pregnant and return to work or studies while they are breastfeeding. Pregnancy is covered both by the Equality Act 2010 and by certain health and safety legislation such as the Management of health and safety at Work regulations and the Manual Handling regulations.

It is important to note that pregnancy may cause individuals (both students and staff) to feel tired, suffer from morning sickness and / or nausea, backache, heartburn and a variety of other [symptoms](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/pregnancy-and-baby-care.aspx#close) which can potentially interfere either with their work or studies.

Managers and / or tutors should handle any requests for time off or to rest during the day in a sensitive manner and if necessary make study materials available for students so that they can continue with their studies at their own pace. It may be necessary for students to interrupt their studies should their pregnancy occur during specific periods of the course.

Information on pregnancy is available from several sources such as [NHS Choices](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/pregnancy-and-baby-care.aspx#close), and G.P’s. Information on working while pregnant is available from the [Health and Safety Executive](http://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/).

In some workplaces, there are risks that may affect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers and that of their child and employers are required to protect the health and safety of new and expectant mothers (HSE publication INDG373). Some courses may put new and expectant mothers at added risk due to the materials the students may be exposed too such as chemicals, human tissues, biological agents and equipment that could emit electromagnetic fields or high-frequency sound. These hazards will also apply to staff members working in laboratories.

Due to the diverse nature of the environment that staff and students may be exposed to the form covers the following.

* Working environment and conditions
* Physical agents
* Biological agents
* Chemical agents

If the individual is not exposed to the hazard the section will not need to be completed. This form is not an exhaustive listing of the hazards that could affect a new or expectant mother, her foetus or her baby.

Pregnancy Risk Assessment

Name of the person to whom this assessment applies

Category of individual

Staff Under-graduate Student Post-graduate Student

Office or Laboratory where the assessed individual works / studies

Work or programme of study that the pregnant individual is engaged in

Work or programme of study that the new mother is engaged in

Has the staff member informed their line manager that they are pregnant? Yes No

For the assessment to be effective it is recommended that the staff member does so.

Has the student informed their course director and registry that they are pregnant? Yes No

For the assessment to be effective it is recommended that the staff member does so.

Working environments and conditions

1 Is your working/study environment adequate? Yes No

2. Do you have to adopt awkward postures to get to your desk / bench?

Yes No

3. Is the temperature of your work/study area comfortable? Yes No

4. Do you have access to a rest room (not toilet)? Yes No

5a. Do your current hours leave you feeling fatigued? Yes No

5b. Are you able to change you working hours to reduce your fatigue levels?

Yes No

6a. Do you feel unable to cope with the normal demands of your role?

Yes No

6b. Have you communicated this to your line manager so changes can be discussed and made?

Yes No

6c Have you communicated this to your tutor or the appropriate person in Registry so changes can be discussed and made?

Yes No

7a. Are you able to use the keyboard / monitor without adopting an awkward posture?

Yes No

7b. Can changes be made to ease your use of the keyboard and / or monitor

Yes No

8a. Are you able to work in a more comfortable area? Yes No

8b. Are you able to study in a more comfortable area? Yes No

9. Will you need to work alone? Yes No

10a. Do any of your activities involve manual handling? Yes No

10b. Can you limit the manual handling undertaken? Yes No

11a. Do any of your activities involve field studies? Yes No

11b. Can these activities be delayed / changed? Yes No

12. Do you have adequate rest breaks? Yes No

13. Does you Lab Coat (PPE) fit? Yes No

Physical agents

Individuals can be exposed to the following and other agents during their work. It is important to note that the embryo or foetus may be susceptible to damage by these agents than an adult.

Exposure to these agents should be considered in the project or activity risk assessment.

P1. Are you exposed to non-ionising radiation (UV, IR)? Yes No

P2. Are you exposed to ionising radiation? Yes No

P3. Are you exposed to electro-magnetic fields? Yes No

P4. Are you subject shocks and vibrations? Yes No

P5. Are you exposed to cryogenic liquids / Solid CO2? Yes No

P6. Will you be working with sonicators ? Yes No

P7. Will you be working in cold rooms +4c or lower? Yes No

P8. Will you be working in hot rooms +37c? Yes No

P9. Will you need to access -70c freezers? Yes No

Biological agents

Individuals could become exposed to these agents via handling human blood or contaminated human tissues. Vaccination is available with some agents. Before being vaccinated pregnant women should consult a doctor to ensure that the vaccination will not compromise the health or development of the foetus.

Exposure to biological agents should already be considered in the project COSHH assessment.

B1. Are you exposed to human blood? Yes No

B2. Could you be exposed to **Rubella**? Yes No

B3. Could you be exposed to **Cytomegalovirus (CMV)**? Yes No

B4. Could you be exposed to **HIV**? Yes No

B5. Could you be exposed to **Chickenpox**? Yes No

B6. Could you be exposed to **Mumps**? Yes No

B7. Could you be exposed to **Measles**? Yes No

B8. Could you be exposed to **HIV**? Yes No

B9. Could you be exposed to **Parvovirus** Yes No

B10. Could you be exposed to **HIV**? Yes No

B11. Could you be exposed to Cadaveric tissues Yes No

B12. Could you be exposed to fresh human tissues? Yes No

The above is not an exhaustive list of agents that could cause harm to an embryo or foetus. In addition to the agents listed above the exposure of the pregnant woman to zoonotic agents should be minimised or stopped.

Chemical agents

Individuals could become exposed to these agents during the preparation of gels, staining tissues or other laboratory procedures.

Exposure to chemicals should be considered in the project COSHH assessment.

C1. Are you exposed to Carbon Monoxide? Yes No

C2. Could you be exposed to Biocides? Yes No

C3. Could you be exposed to cytotoxic / cytostatic drugs? Yes No

C4. Could you be exposed to Lead or Lead compounds? Yes No

C5. Could you be exposed to Mercury? Yes No

C6. Could you be exposed to Organic Mercury compounds? Yes No

C7. Could you be exposed to toxic chemicals? Yes No

C8. Could you be exposed to Chemicals that carry code H360, H361, H362?

(suspected of harming the unborn child or breast-fed children) Yes No

C9. Could you be exposed to Chemicals that carry code H340, H341, H350, H351

(suspected cancer agents) Yes No

The above is not an exhaustive list of agents that could cause harm to an embryo or foetus

Other Hazards

If hazards have been identified following this assessment they should be listed below.

Communication and Implementation of the Risk Assessment

**Communication of the Assessment**

Date of completion of Assessment

Name of Assessor

Signature of the Assessor

Date the risk assessment was discussed with the new or expectant mother

Signature of new or expectant mother

**Risk Control**

Following this assessment, what measures have been put place to minimise the level of exposure to the hazards they have been identified. Please describe them below.

Will the risks to the new or expectant mother be adequately controlled Yes No

Please state your reason

If the risks are not adequately controlled you may need to consider excluding the individual from the work or field of study. The Safety Health and Environment office will be able to give advice on potential risk.