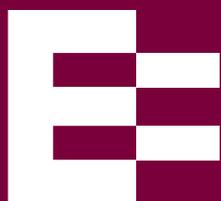


# Student pregnancy and maternity: implications for higher education institutions



Written and compiled by Ellen Pugh

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# Equality Challenge Unit

## Student pregnancy and maternity: implications for higher education institutions

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# Foreword

Higher education institutions have effectively led the way in developing policies, procedures and support for pregnant staff and those with childcare commitments. It is therefore surprising that the majority of these same organisations do not have specific policies for supporting pregnant students. In addition to the business and reputational imperative of ensuring a positive experience for all students on our campuses, there are several equally pressing reasons why this situation needs to be addressed.

Demographic changes in the student population (an expected increase in mature and part-time students) mean that more students are likely to become pregnant or have a child during their studies. At the same time, the Equality Act 2010 significantly strengthens the legal responsibility of all higher education institutions to protect students from pregnancy- and maternity-related discrimination.

It is vital, therefore, that institutions assess, and improve, their approach to students who are pregnant or who have just given birth. This will include developing support mechanisms and making sure facilities meet students' requirements, as well as addressing issues such as dealing with pregnancy-related absence, when students can return to studies, and the practicalities of sitting exams.

With this publication, ECU has produced the first guidance on supporting students throughout their pregnancy and maternity. It is timely in helping all institutions comply with the requirements of the Equality Act to ensure that students do not face discrimination or feel they cannot continue their studies because of pregnancy and maternity.

Within a handful of institutions, including my own, work is already taking place to support students during pregnancy and maternity. For example, the University of Birmingham is now monitoring the number of students who are pregnant, have recently given birth or have dependents to ensure that we can effectively meet their needs. This guidance provides other examples of where institutions are getting it right.

I would advise institutions to use this guidance as a starting point to ensuring that pregnant students, and students who are parents, are able to achieve their potential in their chosen higher education institution.

**Professor David Eastwood**

Vice-chancellor and principal, University of Birmingham

# Introduction

Research by the National Union of Students (NUS) into the experience of students with children in further and higher education in the UK found that 59 per cent of respondents who had been pregnant while studying did not feel supported by their college or university (NUS, 2009). Pregnant students have faced issues including being forced to withdraw from their course, taking longer out of their course after giving birth than they would like, and being prevented from sitting examinations.

The exact number of students who become pregnant during their course is unknown. The NUS interviewed 2167 students in higher and further education with children, and found that 29 per cent became pregnant during their studies (NUS, 2009).

The number of students who become pregnant during their studies is likely to increase as data from Scotland and other European countries show a positive correlation between the increasing age profile of students and the likelihood of their having a child (Orr et al, 2008). In the UK in 2008/09, 35 per cent of all female first-year students are aged 30 or over (sourced from the heidi information system). Given the predicted demographic change of an increased number of older students in higher education, the number of students becoming pregnant during their studies is likely to increase (Universities UK, 2008).

Information is available on the number of students who are parents and, while it is also not exact, it can help higher education institutions (HEIs) gain a picture of the number of students who have children and are consequently likely to benefit from services and facilities that have been developed with student parents in mind. According to the student income and expenditure survey, eight per cent of full-time and 36 per cent of part-time English-domiciled students, and eight per cent of full-time and 33 per cent of part-time Welsh-domiciled students, are parents (Johnson et al, 2009a,b). The Scottish income and expenditure survey found that eight per cent of all undergraduate students were parents (Callender et al, 2005).

This guidance outlines the practical considerations that HEIs need to take when supporting students during pregnancy and maternity, and covers the policy implications in light of changing equality law in England, Scotland and Wales. It is also of relevance to HEIs in Northern Ireland. It will be of interest to policy-makers in higher education, equality and diversity practitioners, and staff in student services and students' unions.

## Use of language

Staff will need to be mindful of the language that they use to refer to a pregnancy depending on the circumstances of the student concerned.

### *Embryo and foetus*

If a student chooses not to proceed with their pregnancy, using the terms embryo and foetus may be most appropriate.

These are scientific terms used to describe process of development of the fertilised egg. During the first eight weeks the cells are referred to as an embryo. The term foetus refers to developments from nine weeks onwards. Scientifically, a foetus is not considered to be a baby until birth.

### *Baby*

If a student chooses to proceed with their pregnancy, using the term baby is likely to be more appropriate. This is also the case if a women miscarries, has a still birth or terminates their pregnancy for reasons relating to their health or the health of the baby. Using the term embryo or foetus may cause offence in these circumstances.

For the purposes of this guidance, ECU has chosen to use the term baby throughout.

## **Legal protection for students during pregnancy and maternity**

The Equality Act 2010 significantly strengthens legal protection for students (including applicants to higher education) during pregnancy and maternity in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act considers pregnancy and maternity to be a protected characteristic and prohibits discrimination on these grounds.

Section 17 of the Act expands the protection from discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity, which already exists for women in the workplace and vocational training, to women outside the workplace. In doing so, the Act specifically mentions the higher education sector. Under the Act, discrimination can occur against a student because of her pregnancy or because she has given birth if:

- = the student is treated unfavourably because of her pregnancy
- = within 26 weeks of the day of giving birth the student is treated unfavourably because she has given birth; this also applies in cases of miscarriage, still birth and neonatal death provided more than 24 weeks of the pregnancy has elapsed
- = the student is treated unfavourably because she is breastfeeding and the child is less than 26 weeks old; if the child is more than 26 weeks old, unfavourable treatment because of breastfeeding is likely to constitute sex discrimination

The protection afforded due to pregnancy and maternity is narrower than other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Consequently there is no protection afforded for discrimination that occurs by being associated with someone

who is pregnant or in a period of maternity, or being perceived to be pregnant or in a period of maternity. However, if a woman's partner is treated unfavourably because of her pregnancy or because she has given birth, this may constitute sex discrimination.

Under the Act, it is unlawful for HEIs to discriminate against applicants and students in relation to admissions; the provision of education; access to any benefit, facility or service; and disciplinary proceedings. The protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity is included in the public sector equality duty (PSED) of the Equality Act. The PSED requires HEIs to have due regard to the need to:

- = eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- = advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- = foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Section 17 of the Equality Act 2010 commenced on 1 October 2010 and the PSED is expected to commence in April 2011. In the meantime, the gender equality duty continues to apply to HEIs in England, Scotland and Wales.

In Northern Ireland, protection for students in higher education from discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity is limited. Under the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order (SDO) 1976, only students in vocational training are protected from discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity. Vocational training is not defined under the SDO (1976), with the exception of the provision that 'it is any training which would help fit ... [a person] for any employment' (SDO, 1976).

However, HEIs in Northern Ireland have obligations under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to promote sex equality. While pregnancy and maternity are not listed explicitly in the legislation, they are seen as being covered by the sex equality provisions.

## Implications for policy and practice

Fifty-nine per cent of student parent respondents to NUS research who had been pregnant while studying did not feel supported by their college or university (NUS, 2009).

This finding is not surprising given that the majority of HEIs do not have specific policies in place for supporting students during pregnancy and maternity. Without centralised policies and procedures to support students during pregnancy and

## Implications for policy and practice

maternity, the student experience will depend on the arrangements made by a student's department and the individual staff members they encounter, which may result in inconsistencies.

Consequently, Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) recommends that HEIs consider developing a policy and procedures on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity to ensure students are not discriminated against, and that they receive appropriate information on the support provided by their HEI in relation to pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption. Visible policies can also help to encourage early notification of pregnancy.

The majority of HEIs will not have considered the requirements of students during pregnancy and maternity in developing their existing policies, practices and procedures. For example:

- = what happens if an applicant states that they are pregnant?
- = how is pregnancy-related absence and illness considered?
- = what entitlements do existing students who become pregnant during their course have to family accommodation?
- = what type of arrangements can be made for pregnant students sitting examinations?

HEIs will need to review key student policies, practices and procedures to ensure they meet the requirements of students during pregnancy and maternity.

When HEIs review existing policies or develop new ones, ECU recommends that, where possible, the views of student parents are taken into account.

**University of Leeds** has a policy and associated guidance notes on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity, which is based on the following principles:

- = avoiding less favourable treatment
- = taking a flexible approach
- = demonstrating a non-judgmental and sensitive approach
- = enabling informed choices

The policy and notes are designed to encourage early notification of pregnancy, and clearly outline the responsibilities of the university, schools and faculties, individual staff members, students and applicants.

## Finding out about a student's pregnancy

When a student informs her HEI that she is pregnant, it is important that she receives consistent, unbiased support and advice to enable her to make informed choices. Not all advice relating to pregnancy and maternity can be provided by HEIs, and it is important that HEIs are aware of other sources of advice and support. Information on organisations to which students may be referred is at the end of this guidance.

When a student informs her HEI that she is pregnant, it is important that she is not judged negatively or asked inappropriate questions, such as:

- = will you have an abortion?
- = are you sure you're ready for this at your age?
- = isn't your degree or research more important to you at this point in your life?

If a student does not inform her HEI of her pregnancy, the HEI will be unable to provide individualised support until the student does so. Existing law does not prevent HEIs from directly approaching students who they believe to be pregnant. However, this is not advised unless the HEI is confident that the student is pregnant and there are genuine concerns about her health and safety. Approaching a student without good reason could cause offence, and there is a risk that she may perceive that she is receiving unfair treatment.

ECU recommends that HEIs take steps to ensure students are aware of the support available to them during pregnancy and maternity, and to create an environment where women feel able to talk about pregnancy. Students should also be given opportunities to disclose information about pregnancy (see **Data collection and monitoring**). For example, are students encouraged during key stages of the student cycle to inform staff if they are pregnant? Information about the support available to students could also be provided in the student handbook, in the HEI's policy on supporting students during pregnancy, or in publicity material about student support services.

## Establishing a student's pregnancy

If a student discloses her pregnancy, HEIs do not need to ask for proof. GPs seldom conduct pregnancy tests if a woman has already used a home pregnancy-testing kit, and she will simply be referred to a community midwife for a booking appointment at eight to ten weeks, and will be offered a dating (of pregnancy) scan at 12 to 14 weeks. At 20 weeks a student may be given a maternity certificate, but the purpose of the certificate is to enable her to claim statutory maternity pay or maternity allowance if she is employed or has recently been employed.

## Finding out about a student's pregnancy

If HEIs need to take into consideration the impact of the student's pregnancy or maternity on her course attendance or attainment, HEIs can of course ask for evidence of appointments and letters from the student's GP, midwife or health worker.

### **Who should a student inform about her pregnancy?**

Students should be encouraged to inform their HEI's health centre or their GP of their pregnancy, and will also need to know who they should notify within the HEI. This could be her programme director, personal tutor, supervisor or a member of the student services team. Students can be advised who to notify in the student handbook and in the HEI's policy on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity.

If the student proceeds with her pregnancy, subject to her permission it is likely that a relevant member of the student services team will need to be informed of the pregnancy. This may be necessary to enable the HEI to ensure the student is fully aware of the support available and to coordinate arrangements.

### **Informing staff and fellow students about pregnancy**

Not all students will want to continue with their pregnancy, and some may miscarry or have to terminate the pregnancy due to their health or the health of their baby. Consequently, information concerning a student's pregnancy should be treated sensitively and should be passed on only with the student's consent. When and who informs staff and fellow students about the pregnancy should be agreed in writing with the student. See annexe A.

### **Students' decisions**

Members of staff contacted by a student should not attempt to influence her decisions or assume that the pregnancy is unwanted or unplanned. While many students who become pregnant during their studies choose not to proceed with their pregnancy, there are many others who do so. Assumptions should not be made about whether the student intends to proceed with her pregnancy on the basis of her age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, or stage of study or research.

If a student's pregnancy is unplanned and she seeks advice from a member of staff on whether or not she should continue with her pregnancy, members of staff who are not suitably qualified to counsel women during pregnancy should refer the student to a qualified professional, and must not attempt to advise her themselves. Students can

be referred to the HEI's counselling services, the HEI's health centre, their GP or the Family Planning Association. Staff can also refer students to a booklet, *Pregnant and don't know what to do?* (FPA, 2009) for women whose pregnancy is unplanned.

Students who are unsure about continuing with their pregnancy for reasons relating to their course or support in higher education, students who are considering leaving their course because of their pregnancy, and students who plan to continue with their pregnancy should also be referred to a member of staff within the HEI who has knowledge of the support available to pregnant students and student parents in higher education. This may be a welfare officer, a member of the student services team or a member of staff within the students' union. A staff member with knowledge of the student's course may also need to be involved in this meeting. Where possible, information should be provided on:

- = financial implications and entitlements, including student loans, benefits and maternity pay, if any
- = implications for course completion, including arrangements that could be made for assessments, catching up on missed seminars and lectures, course placements, time to attend healthcare appointments, maternity-related absence, etc
- = childcare facilities on campus or in the local community

### **Health and safety**

Pregnancy should not be equated with poor health. However, there are health and safety considerations that arise during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and the risks to which students could be exposed need to be assessed.

The highest risk of damage to the baby is during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy. Consequently, students should be encouraged to notify their institution as early as possible of their pregnancy so that a health and safety assessment can be conducted. Where a student is unsure whether she will proceed with her pregnancy, it may still be appropriate to conduct a risk assessment.

The level of risk to which a student is exposed will depend on the requirements and nature of her course. For many courses the risks will be low; courses that involve the following are more likely to present greater risks:

- = physical activity, including lifting and carrying
- = the use of chemicals, including paints and pesticides
- = exposure to radiation
- = working in compressed air environments, such as underwater diving
- = where exposure to infectious disease is a possibility, including laboratory work, healthcare provision, and looking after animals or dealing with animal products

## Finding out about a student's pregnancy

If a student is required to undertake a placement as part of her course, the HEI will need to liaise with the placement provider to ensure a health and safety assessment is conducted. If fieldwork is a requirement of the course, this will need to be considered within a health and safety assessment. Consideration should also be given to the risks that may arise during examinations (see **Assessments and examinations**).

Where risks are identified during a health and safety assessment, the student and, if necessary, her midwife or GP should be consulted on ways to alleviate or minimise the identified risk.

Further information on health and safety considerations during pregnancy and breastfeeding is provided in *New and expectant mothers at work: a guide for employers* (HSE, 2004) (see **Breastfeeding and resting facilities**).

The **University of Glasgow's** policy on student maternity makes clear the student's responsibility to inform their department or faculty of their pregnancy. The student's department or faculty is then responsible for organising and completing a health and safety assessment. The assessment covers the student's course as well as any placement or fieldwork that is due to be undertaken. It also details the steps needed to alleviate or minimise any risks that are identified to the student or her baby.

The policy also raises awareness of the fact that an unborn baby is at greatest risk during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy.

## Student support plan

For students who proceed with their pregnancy, a student pregnancy support plan can help HEIs coordinate support and ensure students' needs are met during pregnancy, following the birth, and on the student's return to her course. Support plans should be developed and agreed with the student, and can cover the following issues.

- = **Communication about the student's pregnancy** – Which members of staff will need to be informed about the student's pregnancy, and does she also want fellow students to know? When is the student happy for members of staff and fellow students to be informed? Who will be responsible for informing members of staff and fellow students?

- = **Communication with the student during pregnancy** – What information will need to be communicated to the student? What is her preferred method of communication, and who should she contact if she has any concerns or her circumstances change?
- = **Health and safety** – Has a risk assessment been conducted? (see above)
- = **Antenatal care** – When are the student's antenatal appointments? What arrangements will be made to enable her to catch up if any appointments coincide with seminars and lectures?
- = **Examinations and assessments** – Will the student's pregnancy affect her ability to meet coursework deadlines or sit examinations? If so, what measures can be taken to ensure the student meets the requirements of her course? For example, would alternative methods of assessment be appropriate?
- = **Placements and fieldwork** – Is the student required to undertake a placement or fieldwork as part of her course? If so, will her pregnancy affect her ability to complete the required placement or fieldwork? If yes, what measures can be taken to ensure she can fulfil these requirements? For example, could the student undertake the placement or fieldwork at an earlier stage of her pregnancy, or on her return from maternity-related absence?
- = **Study and placements abroad** – If the student is already abroad, does she wish – and will she be able – to complete her programme of study or placement? If she returns home, what arrangements will be made for her to resume her programme of study placement? If the student is required to undertake a programme of study or a placement abroad that she has not started, what arrangements will need to be made with the host institution?
- = **Maternity-related absence** – The student may wish to interrupt her study for a year, or she may wish to return as soon as possible after giving birth. When is the student likely to start her maternity-related absence, and when is she likely to return? To ensure arrangements can be made, students could be asked to notify their HEI 15 weeks before the expected birth of their child as to when they would like their maternity-related absence to commence.
- = **Communication with the student during maternity-related absence** – What information will need to be communicated to the student? What is her preferred method of communication during maternity-related absence, and when will she confirm her return date from maternity-related absence?

Support plans will need to be reviewed at key stages, such as when the student is 20 weeks pregnant, 30 weeks pregnant, and prior to her return to study, or at key points of the academic year, such as prior to examinations and field trips. Support plans will also need to be reviewed prior to the student's return to study. Regular review is important as some decisions cannot be made at the start of a student's pregnancy, for example the length of maternity-related absence that she will take. ECU recommends that key dates agreed with the student in the development of the support plan are communicated to her in writing.

See annexe A for an example of a student support plan.

## Maternity-related absence

Students' entitlements to maternity leave and pay are outlined below. However, very few students are entitled to such leave and pay as these are entitlements that only exist under employment law. For this reason, this guidance refers primarily to maternity-related absence, but it draws upon employment law, as many protocols established by employment law will assist HEIs in ensuring consistent student support.

HEIs' arrangements for maternity-related absence should apply equally to live births and still births after 24 weeks.

### Notification of maternity-related absence

Policies on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity should state clearly who the student should notify of:

- = the date on which she intends to start maternity-related absence
- = the length of maternity-related absence that she intends to take and the date on which she intends to return

ECU recommends that students are advised to inform their HEI of the above in writing at least 15 weeks before the baby is due. This is in line with employment law and will allow sufficient time for the HEI to liaise with the student, review the student support plan, make any necessary arrangements, and ensure information is communicated as required. Students may find it helpful, when deciding how much maternity-related absence they would like to take, to be put in touch with other students who have become parents.

## Length of maternity-related absence

All students should be allowed to take maternity-related absence following the birth of their child. How long a student will take will be determined by her personal circumstances and the structure and content of her course. HEIs should not automatically require students to interrupt for a year, but should work with the student to establish a suitable return-to-study date.

Where course structure or content indicates the need for a student to return to study sooner than she would like to, the reason given will need to be justified in writing to the student. As students will be protected under the Equality Act 2010 from discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity, HEIs should also consider the need to justify their reasoning to a third party.

While the length of maternity-related absence students prefer to take will vary, ECU recommends that, at a minimum, students are required to take two weeks' compulsory maternity-related absence, or four weeks if they are on placement in a factory. This is in line with employment law, and is to ensure the health and safety of the mother following birth. NHS Student Bursaries recommends a minimum of 12 weeks' maternity absence, but allows students to return earlier if they have approval from their GP or health worker.

If an HEI is concerned about a student's health in relation to her proposed return date or her course requirements, the student should be asked for their GP's or health worker's confirmation of their fitness to return to study.

At a minimum, students should be allowed to take one year out of study. Where there is concern about her knowledge of the field being affected by the length of time that she takes, the student's department should take steps to ensure she is kept up to speed with developments in the field. For example, she could be sent lists of key reading and new research, and dates and transcripts of departmental lectures, and steps can be taken to ensure she can access key journals.

In exceptional circumstances, students may need to extend the length of maternity leave that they take beyond the standard time allowed, for example in cases of postnatal depression, serious illness or loss of a baby, or where there is no available childcare.

HEIs should take steps to enable students to complete the requirements of their course or module before they take maternity-related absence. In some cases, the student may want to sit examinations or submit alternative forms of assessment during her maternity-related absence. Where a student is unable to complete her course or module before taking maternity-related absence, if possible she should be allowed to complete the course or module on her return.

### **Starting maternity-related absence**

Students should be allowed to decide when they start their maternity-related absence in agreement with their HEI. If students wish to, they should not be prevented from studying up to their due date, or from starting their maternity-related absence a full term or semester before their due date, where practicable.

Where a student is close to her due date and unable to study as planned, the HEI may, in consultation with the student, start her maternity-related absence earlier than planned or, if appropriate, explore alternative methods through which she can meet the course requirements.

### **Returning from maternity-related absence**

The date when a student intends to return from maternity-related absence should be discussed and agreed with the student prior to commencing the period of absence (see above). However, this date may change during the course of the absence, and students should be encouraged to notify their HEI as soon as possible of any change in their expected return date. The HEI will need to review the student support plan and agree a new return date with the student in writing.

Before a student returns from a period of maternity-related absence, consideration should be given to her requirements on return. The student's study options and the continued support provided by the HEI should be discussed with the student in developing her support plan, and can be confirmed with the student prior to her return; examples include the following.

- = Varying the mode of study – Students should be made aware of any options that exist to resume their course on a part-time or distance-learning basis. If a student requests to study part-time rather than full-time, the request should not be declined unless it can be justified, and the justification should be provided in writing.
- = Ensure a smooth return – Formal welcome-back meetings can be organised with key staff, for example the personal tutor, head of department, placement staff or a member of student services.
- = Continued contact – The student's key contact if they encounter any difficulties should be made clear.
- = Other parents – The option could be provided of putting the student in contact with other student parents on her return to study.

The **University of Birmingham** has set up a student parent support group to improve the services for, and to celebrate the achievements of, students with children of any age at the university. The group is open to anyone to attend as long as they are a student parent, and they can bring their children along. As well as enabling student parents to influence university services, the group acts as a social and support function.

## Maternity leave and maternity pay

If a student is employed or has recently left employment, she may be entitled to statutory maternity pay, additional maternity pay or a maternity allowance. Further information can be found at [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk).

Students who receive a stipend, NHS bursary or research council funding are often entitled to maternity leave and maternity pay from their sponsor. Students who are entitled to a stipend or grant will need to discuss with the appropriate HEI contact whether the HEI needs to inform the sponsor of their pregnancy, and should familiarise themselves with their sponsor's maternity leave and pay policy.

### HEI studentships

Students in receipt of a stipend paid through a studentship awarded by their HEI may be entitled to maternity leave and maternity pay. HEIs can continue stipend payments when a student takes maternity leave. The level and length of payment is usually based on the current rate of statutory maternity pay, the level of the student's stipend payment, and the length of time they have been registered. If students do not return to their studentship after taking maternity leave, they may have to pay back the stipend payments received during their maternity leave.

If studentships are contractual, ECU recommends that HEIs take independent legal advice on the continuation of any contractual entitlements during maternity leave.

### NHS Bursary Scheme Maternity Award

Students enrolled on NHS pre-registration courses who are in receipt of the maintenance grant element of the NHS Bursary will receive their normal monthly bursary payments, including any dependant's allowances, during their maternity leave/absence. For further information see [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1667.aspx](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1667.aspx).

## Research council-funded postgraduate students

Research council-funded students are entitled to maternity leave and pay. From 1 April 2010, all research councils introduced harmonised maternity leave and pay entitlements for students funded from training grants. Students funded from training grants are entitled to take six months' maternity leave on full stipend and a further six months' unpaid maternity leave. For further information see research council terms and conditions of funding:

[www.rcuk.ac.uk/aboutrcuk/efficiency/resgrantsterms.htm](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/aboutrcuk/efficiency/resgrantsterms.htm).

## Sources of financial support for students during pregnancy and maternity

This section focuses on sources of support for UK home students. EU and international students should be advised to contact their home government and sponsor for information on pregnancy and maternity entitlements.

Regulations on student financial support in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland contain provisions for discretion when determining if all or part of a student's **grant or loan** is payable when a student is absent from their course for reasons other than illness. When deciding whether it would be appropriate to pay all or part of the grant or loan, consideration is given to:

- = the reasons for the student's absence
- = the length of the absence
- = the financial hardship caused by not paying all or part of the loan or grant

Students are likely to require support from their HEI if they want to continue receiving their grant or loan when they take maternity-related absence. Further information should be sought on the process for continuing payments from the grant or loan administrator.

Student support regulations also allow HEIs to use their **Access to Learning Fund** to support eligible students where they are absent from their course for reasons other than illness and would be unable to return due to hardship. However, the funds are increasingly being relied upon, and are limited.

Many students will be entitled to **government welfare benefits and grants**, and these should be explored in the first instance as, unlike student loans, they do not need to be repaid. However, it is important to be aware that the interaction between student support entitlements and benefits is very complex, and students need

tailored advice from their local benefits office or their HEI. Consequently, the NUS recommends that student services and student welfare officers establish strong links with their local benefit offices (NUS, 2009).

Student welfare officers should be able to provide information on the benefits and grants available. Information is also provided by antenatal clinics and on the government's website: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk).

## Impact of maternity-related absence on funding allocations

ECU is aware of students who have been made to interrupt their study for a year on commencement of maternity-related absence, due to their HEI's concern that its funding allocations could be affected. ECU has received assurances from the four funding councils that a student taking less than a year's maternity-related absence will not affect funding allocations.

- = **Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland** – the method used by the Higher Education Funding Council for England to calculate funding allocations for institutions in England (see below) is currently used to calculate funding allocations for institutions in Northern Ireland.
- = **Higher Education Funding Council for England** – HEFCE funds activities of institutions, not students, but it uses student numbers as a proxy measure for allocating funding for teaching. In 2009/10, HEFCE introduced the flexible study measure in recognition of the fact that student behaviour has changed and that many students study part-time and are now more likely to change their study intentions part way through a year. HEFCE now counts the modules completed by all HEFCE-fundable students who complete less than their initial study intentions for the year, as long as they have completed the equivalent of at least one-sixth of a full-time year of study (20 credits). For further information on the flexible study measure see [www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/circlets/2009/cl12\\_09](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/circlets/2009/cl12_09).
- = **Higher Education Funding Council for Wales** – HEFCW allocates funding on the basis of credit values, not courses or students. Allocations are based on number of credits associated with modules started in the academic year that are completed or expected to be completed. This means that, regardless of how much of a year a student studies, all modules they complete will be included in the calculation of funding. Further information on how HEFCW allocates its funds can be found at [www.hefcw.ac.uk/about\\_he\\_in\\_wales/funding\\_he\\_in\\_wales/funding\\_he\\_in\\_wales.aspx](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/about_he_in_wales/funding_he_in_wales/funding_he_in_wales.aspx).

= **Scottish Funding Council** – SFC funds activities of institutions, not students, but it uses full-time equivalent as a measure for allocating funding for teaching. When reporting full-time equivalent to the SFC, HEIs are able to include in their return students who have enrolled and started their course but are not in attendance on the date of their report to the SFC, and to return to SFC full-time equivalent data for the period over which a student is expected to attend their course. In addition, SFC has a forecast element, which is used for students expected to enrol after the report date. This will capture students who are expected to enrol later in the academic year. For further information on how SFC allocates its funding see [www.sfc.ac.uk/news\\_events\\_circulars/Circulars/2009/SFC3309.aspx](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/news_events_circulars/Circulars/2009/SFC3309.aspx) and [www.sfc.ac.uk/news\\_events\\_circulars/Circulars/2010/GeneralFundGrantLetter.aspx](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/news_events_circulars/Circulars/2010/GeneralFundGrantLetter.aspx).

## Assessments and examinations

If a student is due to give birth near to or during assessment deadlines or the examination period, and wishes to complete her assessed work or sit her examinations, she should not be prevented from doing so.

In examinations, pregnant students may require rest breaks and may need to visit the toilet more frequently than those who are not pregnant. They may also require a more comfortable and supportive chair. Consequently, the student may need to sit the examination in a location separate from other students. HEIs may wish to consider the types of standard adjustment they can make for pregnant students taking examinations, which can then be agreed with the student concerned.

If a student is concerned about sitting examinations or meeting assessed work deadlines, or if she has a pregnancy-related health condition that is exacerbated by stress, she should be advised to seek advice from her midwife or doctor. If the student's midwife or doctor advises against her sitting an examination or trying to meet the assessed work deadline, an alternative method of assessment should be explored.

If a student is unable to undertake an alternative method of assessment, or if she experiences significant pregnancy-related problems in the course of an examination or when undertaking assessed work, the HEI will need to make arrangements for her to resit the examination at the earliest possible opportunity or agree an extension for resubmitting coursework. Resits of examinations should be considered as the student's first attempt.

## Breastfeeding and resting facilities

Given the provisions of the gender equality duty of the Sex Discrimination Act 1976 (as amended) and those of the Equality Act 2010, HEIs should consider the breastfeeding facilities available for student use. The Equality Act 2010 explicitly protects students from less favourable treatment because of breastfeeding. There is no explicit protection from less favourable treatment for women who are breastfeeding in Northern Ireland, but similar protection may be afforded through the SDO (1976) and Northern Irish HEIs may want to consider the facilities they have available. In addition, HEIs may want to consider the provision of rest facilities, as students may experience fatigue during pregnancy, particularly in the later stages.

Equality law does not stipulate that breastfeeding and rest facilities have to be provided to students who are pregnant or breastfeeding. However, failure to provide breastfeeding facilities could result in students who are breastfeeding receiving less favourable treatment. Many HEIs will already have breastfeeding and rest facilities for staff, whether ad hoc or permanent, and consideration can be given to how these could be extended to students. Under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993, HEIs are required to provide suitable facilities for employees who are pregnant or breastfeeding to rest.

If HEIs do not already have breastfeeding facilities, their medical centre may have appropriate facilities, and rest rooms for disabled students may be suitable to use as long as disabled students can still access the rooms when required. If it is not feasible or appropriate to provide a specific room for breastfeeding and resting, ad hoc facilities could be provided in liaison with the student's department or faculty.

The size and geography of an HEI will need to be considered when determining the facilities required. For example, a single room will not be appropriate for an HEI with multiple campuses, whereas ad hoc arrangements that take into consideration where the student spends the most time may be a more effective form of provision.

Observing guidance that has been written for employers will help HEIs to ensure the breastfeeding facilities available for students are appropriate. The Health and Safety Executive for England, Scotland and Wales states that 'it is good practice to provide a healthy and safe environment for nursing mothers to express and store milk' (HSE, 2004:9). A private space with comfortable seating, with a fridge in it or very close by, is likely to be suitable. It is not appropriate to expect mothers to use a toilet for breastfeeding, or for storing or expressing milk. If a student does express milk, she will need to store it in a fridge between 2 and 4°C, and will need to label her expressed milk. A student may also require access to a microwave to warm milk if her baby is

## Breastfeeding in public places

bottle-fed. Further information can be found at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk). The Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland does not provide specific advice on breastfeeding and resting facilities.

Collecting and monitoring data on students who are pregnant or have recently given birth will help HEIs to determine the likely demand for breastfeeding and rest facilities. In addition, students should be required to inform their HEI prior to their return if they intend to breastfeed. This will ensure the HEI has time to identify suitable facilities and that the student's initial health and safety assessment is reviewed to ensure she will not be exposed to risks that could have an impact on breastfeeding and therefore on the health of her baby.

**The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)** provides rest and breastfeeding facilities for staff and students. A specific room is provided in a central campus location for rest and breastfeeding – the room has a lockable door and contains comfortable chairs with footstools, a fridge, a microwave, handwashing facilities and lockers. LSE's policy on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity also emphasises that common rooms can be used for resting.

If a student needs to breastfeed during lectures or seminars, a risk assessment is conducted by the student's department to ensure the health and safety of the student and her baby, and any risks identified are managed by the LSE's health and safety team. Where it is possible for the student to take her baby into lectures and seminars, the student is asked to ensure her baby is supervised at all times and to be considerate of other students.

## Breastfeeding in public places

Some students may want to breastfeed in public places, particularly if these are areas within or close to buildings and services they use frequently. The Equality Act 2010 gives explicit protection to women who breastfeed in public places. It is also unlawful to ask students not to breastfeed in public places under the SDO (1976), though protection is not explicit. HEIs should be aware that tensions could arise if other students feel uncomfortable, for example for religious reasons, when women breastfeed in public. Where this occurs, the needs of breastfeeding women should take precedence.

# International students and those on placement or studying abroad

## Travel

Unless they are advised not to do so by their doctor or midwife, students should be able to travel during pregnancy. However, there are some considerations.

- = Airlines have different policies and may not allow travel beyond 36 weeks or, in the event that the pregnancy is complicated or multiple, beyond 32 weeks. Students will need to check individual airline policies before travelling, and be aware that airlines will ask students for proof that it is safe for them to travel.
- = UK students who are on placement or studying abroad will need to check their visa terms and conditions as they may need to extend their stay or return to the country at a later date.
- = As pregnancy is considered a pre-existing condition by insurance companies, students who are pregnant prior to commencing a field trip or their placement or study abroad will need to check whether their insurance covers them for pre-existing conditions.

## UK student visas

If an international student becomes pregnant during their studies, she will be likely to require a longer stay in the UK. However, 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. At the time of writing this guidance, the period allowed was as follows:

- = students on main and pre-sessional courses lasting 12 months or longer can remain in the UK for the length of their course plus four months
- = students on main and pre-sessional courses lasting more than six months but less than 12 months can remain in the UK for the length of their course plus two months
- = students on main and pre-sessional courses lasting six months or less can remain for the length of the course plus seven days
- = postgraduate doctors and dentists on a recognised foundation programme can stay a maximum of three years and one month

## Student accommodation

The additional time allowed may not be sufficient for some students to take maternity-related absence. Consequently, staff responsible for supporting international students should provide any international student who becomes pregnant while studying in the UK with the latest information on the visa implications of:

- = taking maternity-related absence
- = returning home to have the baby
- = having a dependant to support in the UK

Given visa restrictions, in exceptional circumstances and in consideration of health and safety, HEIs may need to be flexible when requesting that international students take a minimum of two weeks' maternity-related absence.

Further information on student visas can be found on the Home Office website: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/student-visitors](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/student-visitors).

## Liaison with study abroad or placement provider

If a student is studying or on a placement abroad during her pregnancy or maternity, the HEI will need to liaise with the host institution or placement provider to ensure, where possible, that her needs are met. In addition, HEIs may want to share with the host institution or placement provider their policy on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity.

## Student accommodation

Students should not be asked to leave their existing accommodation because they are pregnant, and should be supported in finding suitable accommodation prior to the arrival of their baby or prior to their return from maternity-related absence – whatever is most appropriate for the student. Given the demand for student accommodation, in particular accommodation that is suitable for families, students should be advised to consider their accommodation requirements in the early stages of pregnancy.

To support students during maternity and improve retention, HEIs should ensure their accommodation policies consider the needs of students who become pregnant during their course. Where possible, priority for family accommodation should be given to existing students who become parents during their course. If an HEI does not have family accommodation, support should be given to existing students to help them find suitable privately rented or local authority housing.

HEIs will need to ensure contracts for their own or contracted halls of residence allow students to end the contract early because of pregnancy or maternity without penalty. Where a student is in private accommodation, they may need support and advice on terminating their contract.

In addition, given the growing number of older students and the correlation between age and pregnancy, HEIs may also want to consider the amount of family accommodation provided when contracting accommodation providers or when developing new or redeveloping existing halls of residence.

Further information on accommodation for families is provided in *Meet the parents: student parents and family accommodation* (NUS, undated).

## Access to university services and facilities

Students who are breastfeeding should not be declined access to university facilities or services because they are breastfeeding, or have with them a baby under 26 weeks old. Under the Equality Act 2010, such treatment could constitute discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity or sex.

ECU is aware that some HEIs do not allow students to take their children onto university premises. Other HEIs may allow children onto university premises, but they are not permitted in seminars, lectures or the library. ECU recommends that HEIs review their policies to make sure they are suitably flexible to ensure students who are breastfeeding or have recently given birth, and consequently have their baby with them, are not prevented from attending their course or accessing university facilities.

As long as babies are supervised at all times and any health and safety risks identified can be resolved, babies should be allowed onto university premises and – provided their presence does not disrupt other students' learning – into seminars and lectures.

## **Paternity**

Entitlement to paternity leave and paternity pay exists within employment law, and consequently very few students are entitled to such leave or pay. ECU recommends that HEIs should allow students who are partners of new mothers to take paternity-related absence.

HEIs should be aware that, under the Equality Act 2010, if a male student is treated less favourably because of his female partner's pregnancy, this may constitute discrimination by association on the grounds of sex. For example, if a male student is unable to meet a coursework deadline because of his female partner's pregnancy and is not given an extension, this may constitute sex discrimination.

If a partner of a new mother who is male can take paternity leave, but a female student in a same-sex relationship whose partner is expecting a child cannot take paternity leave, this may constitute discrimination because of sexual orientation.

At present, similar legal protection for students does not exist in Northern Ireland, but it may apply if the student wanting to take paternity-related absence is in vocational training.

### **Time off for antenatal appointments and in cases of pregnancy-related illness**

A student may want to attend their partner's antenatal appointments, and ECU recommends that HEIs are flexible in allowing students to attend. In addition, a student may need to take time off if their partner has complications with her pregnancy or a serious pregnancy-related illness.

### **Notification of paternity-related absence**

If a student wants to take paternity-related absence, they can be asked to inform their programme director, personal tutor, supervisor or a member of the student services team of their partner's pregnancy at least 15 weeks before the baby is due, but a degree of flexibility may be required. Early notification should be encouraged as partners may need to attend antenatal appointments.

### **Length of paternity-related absence**

HEIs should allow students paternity-related absence in line with entitlements that exist in employment law for paternity leave. This is currently a maximum of two consecutive weeks within 56 days of the child being born. In England, Scotland and

Wales, extended paternity rights for fathers or partners of new mothers which come into force on 6 April 2011, have been introduced under the Work and Families Act 2006. Under the new regulations, employed fathers or partners of new mothers will be entitled to take up to six months' additional statutory paternity leave in the second six months of their child's life as long as the mother has returned to work. This is in addition to the two weeks' statutory leave to which they are currently entitled following the birth of their child. Students may also have expectations surrounding the new entitlements and may wish to interrupt their study when their partner returns to study or work.

## **Support during, and on return from, paternity-related absence**

HEIs will need to ensure students on paternity-related absence are provided with materials from seminars and lectures missed. If students do want to take extended paternity-related absence in line with the new entitlements for employees, consideration will need to be given to the support provided to the student, and it may be appropriate to develop a student support plan in line with the plan recommended in annexe A. (For further information on the types of support to consider, see **Maternity-related absence**.)

## **Assessments and placements**

If a student chooses to sit an examination while their partner is in labour or during their paternity-related absence, they should be made aware of their HEI's extenuating circumstances policy. If a student is unable to sit an examination or submit coursework on time because of their partner's pregnancy or labour, they should be allowed to resit the examination at the earliest possible opportunity or should be given an extension. Such arrangements may also be appropriate if the student's partner has a serious pregnancy-related illness.

In other compulsory elements of courses, such as field trips or work placements, HEIs can consider the feasibility of students undertaking them at an alternative time. Where this is not possible, justification should be provided in writing.

## **Paternity pay**

If a student is working and is considered by the UK government to be in employment, they may be entitled to paternity leave pay from their employer. If a student has a stipend, NHS bursary or research council funding, they may be entitled to paid paternity leave. Students should be advised to familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of their award.

## Adoption

Students who have been matched for adoption should inform their programme director, personal tutor, supervisor or a member of the student services team. If the student is the primary adopter, a plan should be developed in line with the guidance under **Finding out about a student's pregnancy**. If the student's partner is the primary adopter, upon formal adoption of the child, the student should be allowed time off from studies in line with the advice in the sections above on paternity-related absence.

If a student has a stipend, NHS bursary or research council funding, they are likely to be allowed a period of paid adoption leave. Students should be advised to familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of their award.

## Data collection and monitoring

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) does not currently require HEIs to collect data on students who are pregnant or who are parents. However, ECU recommends that HEIs collect such data to ensure they are aware of the number of students who are pregnant or are parents. This information will enable HEIs to determine the scale of the facilities and services they need to provide to support students during pregnancy and maternity, and to support existing student parents.

ECU recommends that students are asked the following questions:

- 1 Are you pregnant?
- 2 Have you given birth within the past 26 weeks?
- 3 Do you have a dependant aged 16 or under?

If you have answered yes to question 1 or 2 and have not already informed [name of university], please provide your contact details so that a member of staff can contact you to discuss the support available. If you are pregnant, a health and safety assessment will need to be conducted to ensure that neither your health nor the health of your unborn child is at risk.

## Abortion or termination of pregnancy

A student may decide to have an abortion for many reasons – for example, because of personal circumstances, because of risks to their health, or because there is a high probability the baby will have a serious medical condition.

Students considering an abortion will be offered counselling by the NHS or a private abortion clinic. They will also be offered counselling following an abortion.

Students may need time off from study for tests before, and to recover after, an abortion. While this time should be treated in line with an institution's usual sickness absence policy, consideration should be given to the impact of an abortion on a student's ability to meet deadlines and sit examinations. If a student has an abortion for reasons relating to her health or the health of the baby, and if she becomes pregnant again, she is likely to require more tests and monitoring than women who have not had a problematic pregnancy.

The charity Antenatal Results and Choices ([www.arc-uk.org](http://www.arc-uk.org)) provides specific advice to students who are considering an abortion for reasons relating to antenatal test results.

## Miscarriage, still births and neonatal death

HEIs need to be mindful of the support students will need if they miscarry or have a still birth, or if their baby dies shortly after it is born. Students should be encouraged to inform their HEI if this happens, and a meeting should be organised with the student to establish the support they are receiving from their healthcare provider and the support available from the HEI. If a student does not inform their HEI of their situation, HEIs will be limited in the support they can provide, but if the student had informed the HEI of their pregnancy it would not be inappropriate to approach the student directly out of concern for their health.

If a student who has had a miscarriage, still birth or neonatal death becomes pregnant again, she is likely to require more tests and monitoring than other women.

### Miscarriage

Miscarriage is a common occurrence, and one in four pregnancies ends in miscarriage. Miscarriage is most likely to occur in the first three months of pregnancy. 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 examinations.

## Further information

The Miscarriage Association offers support and information to anyone affected by the loss of a baby in pregnancy, and publishes a leaflet on supporting people who have miscarried (Miscarriage Association, 2002).

### Still birth and neonatal death

Still births occur when a baby dies in the womb or is born dead after 24 weeks of pregnancy. Neonatal deaths occur shortly following birth. According to the still birth and neonatal death charity SANDS, up to 17 babies are stillborn or die shortly after birth every day in the UK.

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.

SANDS publishes a number of free booklets that can be ordered at

[www.uk-sands.org/Publications/Support-and-information-leaflets.html](http://www.uk-sands.org/Publications/Support-and-information-leaflets.html)

## Further information

### General organisations

#### = Direct Gov

The UK government's website provides information on health, care and benefits during pregnancy, benefits for parents, and information on childcare providers in your local area (at [www.childcarelink.gov.uk](http://www.childcarelink.gov.uk)).

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

## Specific organisations

= **Adoption UK**

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

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

= **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](http://www.bpas.org)

= **Family and Parenting Institute**

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

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

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## Annexe A: Sample support form

This form aims to guide discussions with students during pregnancy and maternity. It should be completed and agreed with the student. It is not intended that the form should be completed at a first meeting as initially a student will be unable – and should not be expected – to respond to all the issues raised.

The form should be reviewed at key stages (eg 16 weeks pregnant, 24 weeks pregnant, and prior to return to study); or at key points of the academic year (eg prior to examinations and field trips). If the student’s circumstances change, the plan will also need to be reviewed.

Contact details	
<b>1</b>	<b>Student’s details</b>
	Name
	Address
	Telephone
	Email address
	Student number
<b>2</b>	<b>Emergency contact’s details</b>
	Relationship to student
	Telephone
<b>3</b>	<b>Course details</b>
	Course title
	Department
	Departmental contact
	Year of course
<b>4</b>	<b>Details of the student’s first point of contact within the HEI</b>
	Name
	Title
	Location
	Telephone
	Email

Key dates (to be reviewed and added to over the course of pregnancy and maternity)	
<b>5</b>	What is the student's due date?
<b>6</b>	How many weeks pregnant was the student when she notified HEI of pregnancy?
Communication with the student	
<b>7</b>	What is the student's preferred method of communication:
	= during pregnancy?
	= during maternity-related absence?
	= on return to study?
Informing other staff and students	
<b>8</b>	Who will need to be informed about the student's pregnancy and when would the student like them to be informed?
	<b>Name and title</b>
	<b>Date</b>
Health and safety assessment (attach copy to this form)	
<b>9</b>	Has an assessment been conducted that covers (where relevant):
	= the student's course?
	= course placements or study abroad?
	= examinations or other assessments?
	= field trips?
	= return from maternity-related absence?
	= breastfeeding?
	= safety of baby if attending seminars and lectures with a parent?
<b>10</b>	Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risks, who is responsible for ensuring they are implemented?
Rest facilities	
<b>11</b>	Has the student been informed about rest facilities on campus for use by pregnant students?

## Annexe A: Sample support form

Pregnancy-related absence		
<b>12</b>	Will the dates or times of antenatal appointments affect the student's study?	
<b>13</b>	Have you discussed any pregnancy-related illness that has affected the student's ability to undertake their course?	
<b>14</b>	If yes to either of the above questions, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to catch up?	
Assessments		
<b>15</b>	Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to her pregnancy or maternity?	
<b>16</b>	If so, provide details:	
<b>17</b>	What alternative arrangements have been made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments?	
Maternity-related absence (students should provide information in writing at least 15 weeks before their due date)		
<b>18</b>	How much maternity-related absence does the student intend to take?	
<b>19</b>	When does the student intend to start maternity-related absence?	
<b>20</b>	When does the student intend to return from maternity-related absence?	
<b>21</b>	Will the dates of maternity-related absence affect the student's ability to complete any course module requirements?	
<b>22</b>	If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to complete the module?	
<b>23</b>	What information will the student require during maternity-related absence to keep up to date on course developments?	
<b>24</b>	Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student?	

Financial support		
<b>25</b>	Has the student been informed about sources of financial support or been referred to an external organisation that can do so?	
<b>26</b>	Is the (UK) student aware of how any benefits they receive will affect their student support entitlements, and vice versa?	
<b>27</b>	Specify any follow-up required:	
Baby feeding		
<b>28</b>	Does the student intend to feed their baby on university facilities on their return to study?	
<b>29</b>	Does the student intend to breastfeed? If so, see health and safety section above.	
<b>30</b>	Has the student been informed about the facilities available?	
Childcare		
<b>31</b>	Has the student been informed about childcare facilities on campus or in the local community?	
<b>32</b>	Is the (UK) student aware that their mode of study will affect their childcare funding entitlements?	
International students/those on placement abroad		
<b>33</b>	Have international students or students on placement abroad been informed about:	
	= possible airline restrictions?	
	= the need to check visa implications of returning home or extending their stay due to pregnancy and maternity?	

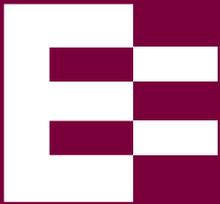
## Annexe A: Sample support form

Students on placement		
<b>34</b>	Has the placement provider been notified of the student's pregnancy?	
<b>35</b>	Has the placement provider conducted a health and safety assessment?	
<b>36</b>	Is the placement provider aware of the HEI's policy on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity?	
<b>37</b>	Will the student be able to complete her placement?	
<b>38</b>	If not, what alternative arrangements will be made?	
<b>39</b>	Who is responsible for liaising with the placement provider?	
Extenuating circumstances		
<b>40</b>	Have students been informed about the HEI's extenuating circumstances policy in the event that their pregnancy or maternity affects examinations and assessments?	
Accommodation		
<b>41</b>	Does the student intend to move to alternative accommodation?	
<b>42</b>	Has the student received advice on alternative accommodation and terminating existing accommodation contracts?	
<b>43</b>	At what point does the student want to move to alternative accommodation?	
<b>44</b>	Will the student require university accommodation?	
Return to study		
<b>45</b>	What support will be provided to the student on their return to study? (eg meetings with key staff, put in contact with other student parents, etc)	
Further information		
<b>46</b>	Any other information or comments	

Signatures	
Plan to be reviewed on	
<b>Agreed by staff member</b>	
Name	
Title	
Signature	
Date	
<b>Agreed by student</b>	
Name	
Signature	
Date	



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