

Guidance on Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave For University-funded Postgraduate Research Students

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New from academic year 2020-2021

The Guidance on Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave for Postgraduate Research Students will be reviewed annually. However, changes may be made throughout the year, so please refer to the [Graduate School website](#) for the latest version of this document.

Introduction

This guidance sets out leave arrangements for postgraduate research students wishing to take a period of maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

The guidance also sets out financial arrangements for University funded postgraduate research students taking maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

Students should refer to the University's [Pregnancy and Maternity Guidelines](#) for general guidance.

This document should be read alongside the other guidance documents available on the [Graduate School webpages](#).

These documents are available on the [Graduate School website](#).

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Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave Procedure

1. Leave Entitlements

1.1 Maternity and Adoption Leave

All postgraduate research students registered at Manchester Metropolitan University will be entitled to a period of up to 52 weeks of leave following the birth of a child. There is no qualifying period for the leave.

Adoption leave is available to individuals who adopt a child, or one member of a couple where a couple adopt a child jointly (the couple may choose which partner takes the adoption leave) and follows the same policy and procedures as maternity leave (please see above). The partner of an individual who adopts, or the other member of a couple who are adopting jointly, may be entitled to paternity leave.

1.2 Paternity Leave

Ordinary paternity leave refers to a period of up to ten days leave and is granted to students whose relationship with the mother and the child is one of the following:

- They are the baby's biological father
- They are married to the mother
- They are the mother's partner (a partner is someone who lives with the mother of the baby in an enduring family relationship but is not an immediate relative). This includes someone of any gender, including partners in a same sex or non-binary couple.

1.3 Shared Parental Leave

Mothers, fathers, partners (including same-sex partners) of mothers of children due on or after 5 April 2015, or adoptive parents who are notified of having being matched with a child on or after 5 April 2015 have the right to opt to take Shared Parental Leave.

The earliest that Shared Parental Leave can commence is 2 weeks after the date on which the child is born, or the day after the date of placement of the child for adoption, and it must end no later than 12 months after that date.

The minimum amount of leave that can be shared is one continuous week; the maximum is 50 weeks (52 weeks for adopters).

2. Interruption of Study

2.1 Making an application for leave

To apply for maternity, adoption leave or shared parental leave, requests for an interruption of study should be made on the Interruption of Registration form in SkillsForge and should be submitted with supporting evidence which will either be a MATB1 form, or evidence of placement of a child for adoption. This will then be signed by the Principal Supervisor and submitted for approval. Once approved, the student's submission date will be revised and students will be notified of the new date by the Graduate School.

The student should also complete and submit the Student Pregnancy and Maternity Support form to the Graduate School. The form is available in Appendix 1 of the [Pregnancy and Maternity Guidelines](#). In cases of adoptions applications, the certificate provided by the adoption agency to confirm

adoption arrangements must be submitted with this form. The form should be submitted to the Graduate School within seven days of the student being notified by the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child for adoption.

Paternity leave should be taken as “Special Leave” and will not be recorded as an interruption. There should be only one period of paternity leave per pregnancy or adoption.

International students must speak to the [Immigration Compliance Team](#) before applying for an interruption of study.

There is no limit to the number of times a postgraduate research student can interrupt for the purpose of maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave throughout the duration of their study. Supervisors and students should consider the fitness to study and health and safety of the student both during their period of pregnancy (if relevant), and after their return to study.

2.2 Miscarriage or Still Birth

In the unfortunate event of either a miscarriage or stillbirth at, or after, the start of the 16th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC), it will be treated as childbirth and the entitlement to maternity leave and pay will be the same as for a normal birth. When a miscarriage or stillbirth occurs before this date, the policy relating to sickness absence will apply.

2.3 Return to Study

The first two weeks from the date of childbirth are classed as compulsory maternity leave and students cannot return during this period.

Students wishing to return to study earlier than had been agreed as part of the Application for Interruption must advise their Principal Supervisor and the Graduate School in writing, giving at least 8 weeks’ notice of the intended date of return. If the return to study is approved, the Graduate School will amend the duration of the interruption period and thesis submission deadline.

Students wishing to return to their studies later than had previously been agreed should discuss this with their Principal Supervisor and are required to submit a further request for a period of interruption to studies (the maximum leave entitlement of 12 months).

Students who have been studying full-time and wish to return to their studies on a part-time basis following their period of maternity leave should submit a completed Change of Mode of Study form to the Graduate School. Students must check with their funder or sponsor whether there are any conditions which limit change of study mode. International students must speak to the [Immigration Compliance](#) team before submitting a request to change to part-time study to investigate any visa implications.

Principal Supervisors should discuss the support needs of a student returning from maternity, adoption or shared parental leave in order for them to progress with their programme of study, ensuring that they signpost students to the appropriate Manchester Metropolitan student support service.

3. Funding

3.1 Students funded by Manchester Met

Students in receipt of maintenance payments (stipend) from the University (Manchester Met) will be entitled to stipend payments for maternity, paternity, and adoption leave as outlined in this policy.

Students who are part-time will receive pro-rated payments in line with the percentage of maintenance funding received.

3.1.1 Maternity and adoption leave

For Postgraduate Research students who are in receipt of maintenance payments (stipend) from a University funded studentship, the entitlement is as follows:

- First 26 weeks of leave – full stipend rate.
- A further 13 weeks of leave – current statutory maternity pay rate
- A further 13 weeks of leave – unpaid

3.1.2 Paternity leave

Paid paternity leave for University funded students in receipt of maintenance payments (stipend) for 10 working days at the full stipend rate may be taken at any time during a partner's pregnancy or within three months following the birth. There is no qualifying period for the leave.

Full Stipend payments will continue to be paid during paternity leave, and the end date of the funding will be extended to cover the period of leave taken.

3.2 UKRI funded students

Students receiving funding from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will be entitled to stipend payments for maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave as outlined in the [Training Grant Terms and Conditions](#).

3.3 Students in receipt of external funding and self-funded students

Students in receipt of external funding must consult with their funding provider to establish whether payments can be made.

Students who are self-funded and those who receive fees only awards are entitled to the periods of leave detailed within this policy but are not eligible for maintenance payments (stipend) from the University.

3.4 International Students

In addition to speaking to their Principal Supervisor, all international students should contact the Visa and Compliance team before submitting an Interruption of Registration form to determine if there are implications to their visa status. The university is required to report any tier 4-Registered Student who suspends to UKVI. Such students may be required to leave the UK during their absence.

4. Advice and Guidance

4.1 Student Hubs

For information and advice on Manchester Met pregnancy and maternity guidelines, plus options regarding study i.e. exceptional factors, Interruption, rest facilities, withdrawal etc. students can contact the [Student Hubs](#).

4.2 Student Union

For personalised forecasting of benefits, finance, funding, childcare and accommodation related advice, students can contact or visit a [Student Union Advice Centre](#): 0161 247 6533.