**Student Pregnancy and Family Leave Policy and Procedures**

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# Introduction

* 1. The University of Bradford values the diversity of its student community and is committed to providing an inclusive, supportive environment, in which all students, regardless of background, can achieve their full potential. The University is therefore committed to supporting all students who are or become pregnant; terminate ;a pregnancy; experience miscarriage, still birth or neo-natal death; or welcome new children to their families, to access, succeed in, and progress from, study at the University.
  2. Pregnancy and maternity have been protected characteristics since the introduction of the Equality Act, 2010. Since then, a student who is pregnant, or has given birth within the last 26 weeks, is explicitly protected from less favourable treatment. Additionally, a student who is breastfeeding is now explicitly protected from less favourable treatment in the areas of education and provision of services.
  3. The University is committed to ensuring that all students and applicants are treated fairly. The University is respectful of the diversity of its student community, and that responsibilities relating to pregnancy and familial relationships may manifest in a number of different ways. This policy seeks to be fully inclusive of any family relationships that students may have, and to ensure that all students affected by the birth of a child, the introduction of a child into their family, or the loss of child, have access to the same level of support and flexibility.
  4. This policy has been drawn up in line with the Equality Act, 2010, and guidance set out by the Equality Challenge Unit on ‘Student Pregnancy and Maternity’.

# Scope

* 1. This policy applies to all registered students of the University of Bradford, and applicants who will require support under the provisions of this policy at the time of joining the University.
  2. To ensure that this policy is fully inclusive, the provisions within it apply to students who fall into the following categories:
     + Students who are or become pregnant, have given birth within the last year, have had a termination or experienced miscarriage, still-birth, or neonatal death within the last year, become a parent through surrogacy, or are fostering or adopting a child (or applicants who will fall within this definition at the point of joining the University).
     + Students and applicants who are co-parents of a child born (including through surrogacy), fostered, or adopted, or who have been affected by termination or miscarriage, still-birth or neonatal death within the last year, whether or not they are in a relationship with the parent involved.
     + Students and applicants who have a partner who is pregnant, has given birth within the last year, has had a termination or experienced miscarriage, still-birth or neonatal death within the last year, has become a parent through surrogacy, or is fostering or adopting a child, whether or not the student is considered a parent of the child.
  3. The provisions within this policy also apply to applicants who will fall within the categories set out in section 2.2 above at the time of joining the University.
  4. The personal circumstances of students who fall within the remit of this policy should be treated with confidentiality. Students should feel assured that personal information will not be shared without their consent and that, where consent is given, sharing will be for the purposes of ensuring their safety and supporting them. All data will be managed in accordance with the University’s Data Protection arrangements and the specific Data Protection Impact Assessment undertaken for this Policy.
  5. Staff pregnancy, maternity, paternity, and parental leave is excluded from this policy. Policies relating to staff are available from the Directorate of People and Campus Services. However, where a member of staff is also a student at the University, this policy will apply to any support provided to the individual in relation to their studies.

# Glossary

* 1. For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:
     + **Applicant**: a person who has submitted an application for a programme of study to the University of Bradford and who will fall within the provisions of this policy, by falling within one of the categories set out in section 2.2 and 2.3 above at time of joining the University.
     + **Family Leave**: a period of leave, usually of up to 12 months, which may be taken by any student falling within the provisions of this policy (as set out in section 2.2 and 2.3 above)
     + **Pregnancy Risk Assessment**: a risk assessment undertaken to identify risks to a pregnant student or applicant and the unborn child, and to identify actions, modifications and reasonable adjustments to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of the student or applicant and the unborn child.
     + **Registered Student**: a student who has accepted an offer of a place on a programme of study, satisfied any conditions of that offer, and enrolled at least once with the University. A student remains registered until they have completed their programme of study, or have, or have been, withdrawn from the University.
     + **Student**: a registered student who falls within the provisions of this policy, by falling within one of the categories set out in section 2.2 and 2.3 above.
     + **Student Services**: the University’s centrally-provided student support services, including, but not limited to: Academic Skills Advice, Careers and Employability Services; Chaplaincy Services; Counselling and Mental Health Services; Disability Services; Language Centre, Student Life Services, Student Success Services, and UKVI Compliance and International Student Support Services.
     + **Student Support Plan**: a plan which sets out the Support Arrangements for an individual student.
     + **Support Arrangements**: particular arrangements made to support a student or applicant who falls within the provisions of this policy as set out in section 2.2 and 2.3 above. This might include arrangements for health-related absences, pregnancy appointments, examinations, assessments, leave of absence, risk assessments, reasonable adjustments, return to study, or adaptions to clinical practice uniforms.

# Responsibilities

## Students and Applicants

* 1. Students and applicants are responsible for:
     + Disclosing their circumstances to a trusted member of staff (this may be their Personal Academic Tutor, Supervisor, a member of Student Services staff, or a member of admissions or outreach staff), to enable discussion of support arrangements and adjustments. Where a student is pregnant (or where an applicant will be pregnant at the point of joining the University), early disclosure is encouraged so that a Pregnancy Risk Assessment is undertaken to ensure that the student’s studies do not pose risk to them or their unborn child. In particular, it is important that the University is notified about a pregnancy as early as possible if there are elements of the programme that may present a risk to the health and safety of the student and/or the child. This may be particularly relevant for students whose programmes include laboratory or practical work.
     + If the student is on a placement at the time the pregnancy is confirmed, or is due to start a placement during the pregnancy, the student should also inform the placement provider of the pregnancy. If a student is on an outbound exchange programme at the time the pregnancy is confirmed, or is due to start an outbound exchange programme during the pregnancy, the student should also inform the outbound exchange institution.
     + Students and applicants with a partner who is pregnant, has had a termination, has experienced miscarriage, still-birth or neonatal death, or is adopting or fostering a child, or who has a partner who is pregnant, has had a termination, has experienced miscarriage, still-birth or neonatal death, or is adopting or fostering a child, are also advised to notify a trusted member of staff as early as possible of their situation. This will enable the University to provide support to the student or applicant.
     + Where a student or applicant chooses not to disclose circumstances, to the University, the University will be unable to undertake to put in place support arrangements. Seeking support under this policy is entirely voluntary for students, who are not under obligation to seek support. Where a student has not sought support, and there are concerns that pregnancy-related health issues are impacting on their Fitness to Study, this should be managed under the [Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy](https://www.bradford.ac.uk/academic-misconduct-appeals-and-student-complaints/fitness-to-study/). Students should not be assumed to be pregnant unless they have informed the University that they are.

## Academic Staff

* 1. Academic staff are responsible for:
     + Undertaking a Pregnancy Risk Assessment, and agreeing specific support arrangements for students and applicants who are or become pregnant. This will normally be carried out by the Personal Academic Tutor, or Research Supervisor, of the student or applicant. However, in some circumstances (such as an applicant who has not yet been assigned a Personal Academic Tutor, or where another member of staff has more in-depth knowledge of relevant aspects of the programme), this may be carried out by another relevant member of academic staff, or, where required, a member of support services. Support will be available from Student Services and the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Team as required.
     + Agreeing a Student Support Plan for students and applicants, providing flexibility to the individual situation. This will normally be carried out by the Personal Academic Tutor, or Research Supervisor, of the student or applicant. However, in some circumstances (such as an applicant who has not yet been assigned a Personal Academic Tutor, or where another member of staff has more in-depth knowledge of relevant aspects of the programme), this may be carried out by another relevant member of academic staff, or, where required, a member of support services. Support will be available from Student Services and the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Team as required.

## Student Services Staff

* 1. Student Services staff are responsible for:
     + Liaising with relevant academic staff, where a student or applicant has disclosed their circumstances to a member of Student Services staff (this also applies to admissions/outreach staff). In usual circumstances, Pregnancy Risk Assessments and support arrangements will be led by academic staff who have detailed knowledge of the programme of study to inform arrangements. However, where the student or applicant specifically requests it, or where a student or applicant has complex support needs, the Pregnancy Risk Assessment and Student Support Plan may be undertaken by a relevant member of Student Services.
     + Providing advice and support to academic staff in relation the operation of this policy.
     + Providing advice and support to students and applicants in relation to the operation of this policy.

# Policy and Procedures

* 1. The University seeks to support any student or applicant who is pregnant, has given birth within the last year, has had a termination, has experienced miscarriage, still-birth or neonatal death, is adopting or fostering a child, or who has a partner who is pregnant, has given birth within the last year, has had a termination, has experienced miscarriage, still-birth or neonatal death, or is adopting or fostering a child. Support will be tailored to the individual needs of the student or applicant.

## Pregnancy

* 1. Where a student or applicant has disclosed that they are pregnant, the following steps should be undertaken:
     + A Pregnancy Risk Assessment should be undertaken to identify any risk to the student or applicant, and the unborn child, to modify any procedures or activities relating to the student or applicant, and to set out any reasonable adjustments required to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of student or applicant and unborn child. Guidance and a template for the Pregnancy Risk Assessment are available at Appendix A.
     + A Student Support Plan should be undertaken to put in place support arrangements for the period of pregnancy, such as support to cover learning and teaching missed as a result of attending medical appointments or health-related absences, adjusted assessment dates etc. Guidance and a template for the Student Support Plan are available at Appendix B.
     + Discussions should be undertaken with the student or applicant in relation to their plans for leave and / or study following the birth of the child. An initial plan for this may be developed, in line with the section below on family leave. However, the student or applicant may wish to change their plans following the birth of a child, and the University should respond flexibly in this situation.
     + Students who are not giving birth personally but fall under the remit of this policy may require periods of leave or flexibility in advance of the birth, fostering or adoption of a child. The University will respond favourably to requests of this nature. A Student Support Plan should be undertaken to put in place support arrangements during the relevant period. For example, this may cover time off to attend medical appoints, legal hearings or proceedings, time to make arrangements to welcome a child into a home, or adjusted assessment deadlines. Guidance and a template for the Student Support Plan are available at Appendix B.
     + Where a student has not disclosed pregnancy, staff should not make assumptions that they are, and should not ask students if they are pregnant. Where a student has disclosed pregnancy but declines a Pregnancy Risk Assessment or support under this process, any concerns about the student’s fitness to study should be managed under the Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy. If a student subsequently discloses pregnancy or agrees to be supported under the policy, the provisions in section 5.2 should be followed at this point.

## Family Leave

* 1. The University recommends that all students take a minimum of two weeks leave after giving birth, subject to medical advice. In addition to this provision, family leave is available to all students who:
     + have given birth (or had a child through surrogacy), fostered or adopted a child;
     + are the co-parent of a child born (including through surrogacy), fostered, or adopted; or
     + have a partner who has given birth (or had a child through surrogacy), fostered, or adopted a child.
     + Students may choose to take a period of family leave following the birth, fostering or adoption of a child. Students will not be required to suspend their studies for a period of leave of two weeks, and longer periods of absence without requirement for suspension of studies may be agreed on an individual basis between a student and their Personal Academic Tutor or Research Supervisor where this is practical. Advice must be sought from the International Student Support and UKVI Compliance Team when considering a longer period of absence without suspension for a student studying on a Student Visa.
     + Students will be able to suspend their studies if they choose to. This will usually be for a period of up to one year, in line with the University’s Policy on Suspension of Studies. However, the University will consider any requests for a longer period of suspension carefully, on a case by case basis, and will show flexibility where a student makes such a request and where continuity of study without disadvantage can be assured. Where a student wishes to keep in touch with their studies during a period of suspension for family leave-related purposes, continued access to the University’s Virtual Learning Environment, library and other learning facilities will be permitted, although the student will not normally be permitted to attend scheduled learning and teaching activities or submit assessments during the period of suspension (some exceptions may be made where assessments are due early in the period of suspension for modules studies prior to the period of suspension).
     + Where a student does not wish to take a longer period of suspension, the University will seek to show flexibility in accommodating the student’s preferred pattern of engagement. This will be considered on a case by case basis, and set out in a Student Support Plan, taking into account the needs of the student and the programme of study, and may include studying a reduced diet of modules and spreading study over a longer period; supporting a period of online learning; adjusted assessment deadlines; adjusting patterns of research; support for breastfeeding. A student will not need to request extensions or submit a claim for [Extenuating Circumstances](https://www.bradford.ac.uk/media-v8/site/about-us/Extenuating-Circumstances-Policy---2019.pdf) in relation to deferred assessments where such arrangements are set out in a Student Support Plan. Guidance and a template for the Student Support Plan are available at Appendix B.
     + On return from any period of Family Leave, students should be offered a meeting with their Personal Academic Tutor or Research Supervisor to support their return to study.
     + Students should be advised to seek advice on the financial implications of suspending their studies or extending their period of study from the University’s Student Life Team ([money@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:money@bradford.ac.uk)). Students studying on a Student Visa should be advised to seek advice on any visa implications from the International Student Support and UKVI Compliance Team.

## Termination of Pregnancy

* 1. A student may decide to terminate a pregnancy for many reasons, such as personal circumstances, because of risks to their health, or because there is a high probability that the baby will have a serious medical condition. Where a student discloses that they have had or are considering having a termination, or that their partner or co-parent, or a surrogate, is considering or has had a termination, support is available from the University’s Counselling Service ([counselling@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@bradford.ac.uk)) and Chaplaincy Services.
  2. Students may need to time off from study for tests before, and to recover following a termination. Where a student discloses that they have had or are considering having a termination, or have been affected by one, a Student Support Plan should be drawn up to ensure that support and flexibility are provided in relation to time off from study, assessment deadlines etc. A student will not need to request extensions or submit a claim for [Extenuating Circumstances](https://www.bradford.ac.uk/media-v8/site/about-us/Extenuating-Circumstances-Policy---2019.pdf) in relation to deferred assessments where such arrangements are set out in a Student Support Plan.
  3. Every individual is different, and the impact of a termination will be felt differently by different individuals. Where requested, a student may take leave from the University to deal with the impact of a termination, whether they have had the termination personally, or where their partner or a co-parent or a surrogate has had a termination. Leave will be granted in line with Family Leave as set out in section 5.3 above. Students will not be required to suspend their studies for a period of leave of two weeks, and longer periods of absence without requirement for suspension of studies may be agreed on an individual basis between a student and their Personal Academic Tutor or Research Supervisor where this is practical. Advice must be sought from the International Student Support and UKVI Compliance Team when considering a longer period of absence without suspension for a student studying on a Student Visa.
  4. Students will be able to suspend their studies if they choose to. This will usually be for a period of up to one year, in line with the [University’s Policy on Suspension of Studies](https://www.bradford.ac.uk/media-v8/site/governance/policies-and-statements/Suspension-of-Study-Policy-for-UG--PG-(PDF,-213-KB)-.pdf). However, the University will consider any requests for a longer period of suspension carefully, on a case by case basis, and will show flexibility where a student makes such a request and where continuity of study without disadvantage can be assured. Where a student wishes to keep in touch with their studies during such a period of suspension, continued access to the University’s Virtual Learning Environment, library and other learning facilities will be permitted, although the student will not normally be permitted to attend scheduled learning and teaching activities or submit assessments during the period of suspension (some exceptions may be made where assessments are due early in the period of suspension for modules studies prior to the period of suspension).
  5. Where a student does not wish to take a longer period of suspension, the University will seek to show flexibility in accommodating the student’s preferred pattern of engagement. This will be considered on a case by case basis, and set out in a Student Support Plan, taking into account the needs of the student and the programme of study, and may include studying a reduced diet of modules and spreading study over a longer period; supporting a period of online learning; adjusted assessment deadlines; adjusting patterns of research. A student will not need to request extensions or submit a claim for [Extenuating Circumstances](https://www.bradford.ac.uk/media-v8/site/about-us/Extenuating-Circumstances-Policy---2019.pdf) in relation to deferred assessments where such arrangements are set out in a Student Support Plan. Guidance and a template for the Student Support Plan are available at Appendix B.
  6. On return from any period of leave, students should be offered a meeting with their Personal Academic Tutor or Research Supervisor to support their return to study.
  7. Students should be advised to seek advice on the financial implications of suspending their studies or extending their period of study from the University’s Student Life Team ([money@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:money@bradford.ac.uk)). Students studying on a Student Visa should be advised to seek advice on any visa implications from the International Student Support and UKVI Compliance Team ([visa-support@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:visa-support@bradford.ac.uk)).
  8. The charity Antenatal Results and Choices (<http://www.arc-uk.org>) provides specific advice to students who are considering a termination for reasons relating to antenatal test results.

## Miscarriages, Still Births and Neo-natal Death

* 1. The University seeks to support any student who experiences miscarriage, still birth, or neo-natal death. Where a student discloses that they have experienced miscarriage, still birth or neo-natal death, support is available from the University’s [Counselling and Mental Health Services](https://unibradfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/counselling-service-intranet) ([counselling@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@bradford.ac.uk)) and [Chaplaincy Services](https://unibradfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/chaplaincy-services-intranet).
  2. Where requested, a student may take leave from the University. Leave will be granted in line with the provisions for Family Leave set out in section 5.3. Students will not be required to suspend their studies for a period of leave of two weeks, and longer periods of absence without requirement for suspension of studies may be agreed on an individual basis between a student and their Personal Academic Tutor or Research Supervisor where this is practical. Advice must be sought from the International Student Support and UKVI Compliance Team ([visa-support@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:visa-support@bradford.ac.uk)) when considering a longer period of absence without suspension for a student studying on a Student Visa.
  3. Students will be able to suspend their studies if they choose to. This will usually be for a period of up to one year, in line with the University’s [Policy on Suspension of Studies](https://www.bradford.ac.uk/media-v8/site/governance/policies-and-statements/Suspension-of-Study-Policy-for-UG--PG-(PDF,-213-KB)-.pdf). However, the University will consider any requests for a longer period of suspension carefully, on a case by case basis, and will show flexibility where a student makes such a request and where continuity of study without disadvantage can be assured. Where a student wishes to keep in touch with their studies during such a period of suspension, continued access to the University’s Virtual Learning Environment, library and other learning facilities will be permitted, although the student will not normally be permitted to attend scheduled learning and teaching activities or submit assessments during the period of suspension (some exceptions may be made where assessments are due early in the period of suspension for modules studies prior to the period of suspension).
  4. Where a student does not wish to take a longer period of suspension, the University will seek to show flexibility in accommodating the student’s preferred pattern of engagement. This will be considered on a case by case basis, and set out in a Student Support Plan, taking into account the needs of the student and the programme of study, and may include studying a reduced diet of modules and spreading study over a longer period; supporting a period of online learning; adjusted assessment deadlines; adjusting patterns of research;. A student will not need to request extensions or submit a claim for [Extenuating Circumstances](https://www.bradford.ac.uk/media-v8/site/about-us/Extenuating-Circumstances-Policy---2019.pdf) in relation to deferred assessments where such arrangements are set out in a Student Support Plan. Guidance and a template for the Student Support Plan are available at Appendix B.
  5. On return from any period of leave, students should be offered a meeting with their Personal Academic Tutor or Research Supervisor to support their return to study.
  6. Students should be advised to seek advice on the financial implications of suspending their studies or extending their period of study from the University’s Student Life Team ([money@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:money@bradford.ac.uk)). Students studying on a Student Visa should be advised to seek advice on any visa implications from the International Student Support and UKVI Compliance Team ([visa-support@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:visa-support@bradford.ac.uk)).
  7. The Miscarriage Association can offer support (see [www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/)). SANDS publishes a number of free booklets that can be accessed at [www.uk-sands.org/](http://www.uk-sands.org/).

# Implementation

* 1. The University has had a Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave Policy in place for a number of years. This policy supersedes the previous version. The new policy will be notified to staff via staff newsletters, and email. The policy will be hosted on the University’s website. Students are notified of the Policy via the Student Handbook and student support information on the University’s web pages.

# Disputes and Complaints

* 1. If a disagreement arises between a student or partner and academic or support staff on how this policy should be implemented in respect of their circumstances, the Academic Registrar may be asked to advise or make the final decision.
  2. Students who are dissatisfied with the University’s handling of this policy in respect of their circumstances may complain using the [Student Complaints Procedures](https://www.bradford.ac.uk/academic-misconduct-appeals-and-student-complaints/student-complaints/).
  3. Applicants who are dissatisfied with the University’s handling of this policy in respect of their circumstances may complain using the [Regulations Governing Appeals and Complaints by Applicants against an aspect of their Admission Process](https://www.bradford.ac.uk/academic-misconduct-appeals-and-student-complaints/admission-appeals/).

# Monitoring and review

* 1. The implementation of the policy will be reviewed after one year to ensure its effectiveness. Thereafter, the policy will be reviewed on a three-yearly basis.

# Related policies and standards/documentation

* 1. Children on Campus Policy and Procedures (when approved)
  2. [Safeguarding Policy and Procedures](https://www.bradford.ac.uk/nursery/policies-and-procedures/safeguarding-policies/)

# Appendices

Appendix A: Pregnancy Risk Assessment Guidance and Template

Appendix B: Student Support Plan Guidance and Template