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STUDENT MATERNITY, ADOPTION AND PARENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 Bournemouth University (BU) is strongly committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination in any form. It also focusses on advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between all students, staff and visitors to BU.
- 1.2 Furthermore BU aims to create a work and study environment for students, staff and visitors to BU where different values and beliefs can be freely expressed and openly discussed and will do what it can to encourage open and respectful debate around Equality and Diversity issues.
- 1.3 This policy aims to provide a framework for the University community in meeting the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) [referred to as ‘the Act’ throughout this document]. It is also intended to provide guidance for any individual who becomes pregnant, adopts or is a partner in one of these situations.
- 1.4 The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as one of the nine protected characteristics and expands the protection from discrimination on these grounds to women outside the workplace. In doing so, the Act specifically mentions the further and higher education sector.
- 1.5 Under the Act the protection afforded due to pregnancy and maternity is narrower than other protected characteristics in that 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.
- 1.6 Unfavourable or unfair treatment resulting in a female suffering disadvantage because of pregnancy, recently given birth or breastfeeding could constitute discrimination. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination is therefore, when a female is treated less favourably because she is pregnant has recently given birth or is breastfeeding. However, if a woman’s partner is treated unfavourably because of her pregnancy or because she has given birth, this may constitute sex discrimination. Specifically:
 - When a student has given birth they are protected under the Act against discrimination for 26 weeks. This also applies in cases of miscarriage, still birth and neonatal death provided more than 24 weeks of the pregnancy has elapsed.
 - If a student is treated unfavourably because she is breastfeeding and the child is less than 26 weeks old this could constitute discrimination under the Act. If the child is more than 26 weeks old, unfavourable treatment because of breastfeeding is likely to constitute direct sex discrimination.
- 1.7 The University believes that becoming pregnant or caring for a child should not in itself prevent any student from succeeding in their studies. BU is committed to showing as much flexibility as possible to facilitate students’ success whilst ensuring academic standards are not compromised. The degree of flexibility that can be offered will vary between disciplines.

- 1.8 The health and safety of a pregnant student will be of paramount importance at all times. Staff will deal with all students covered by this policy in a sensitive, non-judgemental and confidential manner. Only members of staff who need to know about a student's circumstances for valid reasons will be informed and this will normally be done with the student's prior consent.

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 Everyone in the BU community, (students, staff, board members, contractors and visitors), has the responsibility for complying with BU's Equality and Diversity policies and procedures.
- 2.2 The Chief Operating Officer has executive responsibility for Equality and Diversity matters at BU.
- 2.3 The Equality and Diversity Steering Group has overall responsibility for developing and embedding BU's strategic commitment to Dignity, Diversity and Equality.
- 2.4 The Equality and Diversity Adviser has overall responsibility for the daily operation of this policy, as well as ensuring that the university is complying with statutory duties under existing equality legislation and relevant codes of practice.
- 2.5 The Head of Student Services has overall responsibility for the wellbeing and welfare of students at BU.
- 2.6 All staff have responsibility to follow the general approach set out in this document.
- 2.7 This policy and its appendices apply to all students at BU.

3. LINKS TO OTHER UNIVERSITY DOCUMENTS

[Equality and Diversity policy](#)

[Dignity and Respect \(Harassment\) Policy and Procedures](#)

[Data Protection and privacy policies](#)

[Equality Analysis policy and procedure](#)

[Potentially Vulnerable groups](#)

[6J: Exceptional Circumstances Policy and Procedure](#)

[11J: Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Procedure](#)

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDY

- 4.1 When students become pregnant there are three key areas that need to be considered which are:

- Confirming pregnancy
- Programme activities
- Maternity leave and return to study

4.1.1 Confirming pregnancy

- 4.1.1.1 A student who believes they are pregnant should see their GP to have the pregnancy confirmed. BU can only make provision for the student if they inform BU they are pregnant.

- 4.1.1.2 The student can choose to speak to any member of staff with whom they feel more comfortable; this could include their Programme Leader, Academic Advisor or a member of the Programme Support team. The information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to support the student.
- 4.1.1.3 If a student decides to terminate the pregnancy, or miscarries before informing the university of their pregnancy, this need not be disclosed. If the student requires a medical certificate to cover any absence due to these reasons this will be handled in strictest confidence by the University. Students are advised to seek support through their GP or other healthcare professional. Student Wellbeing and Chaplaincy are also available for personal support.

4.1.2 Programme activities

- 4.1.2.1 A member of Faculty staff will meet with the student to discuss how the pregnancy is likely to impact on their studies (see Appendix 1 – checklist). A risk assessment should be carried out, ideally in the first 13 weeks of pregnancy. This is particularly important where there may be health & safety implications that may affect the student or unborn child (e.g. where the student might be exposed to harmful chemicals or radiation, or be expected to lift heavy objects or undertake fieldwork or other strenuous activity). Faculty staff can seek advice from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team if required. The risk assessment should be reviewed at agreed periods during the pregnancy.
- 4.1.2.2 The risk assessment should consider both issues related to on and off campus activities, including placements and fieldwork if relevant. As a result of the risk assessment there may be a requirement for the student to consult their health care provider, (e.g. GP, midwife) before undertaking certain activities. Whilst every attempt will be made to allow the student to fully engage with their studies during pregnancy there may be certain activities which may be deemed too risky to the student or their unborn child. In this case alternative arrangements should be made to allow the student to continue with their programme as far as possible. This may require alternative teaching or assessment methods.
- 4.1.2.3 The student should also be made aware that there may be financial or visa implications if they are not able to engage with their studies due to pregnancy or maternity leave. Specialist advice can be obtained from AskBU.
- 4.1.2.4 The student should be invited to meet regularly with a named Faculty contact throughout their pregnancy to assess the effectiveness of any special arrangements put in place and consider further adjustments if necessary.
- 4.1.2.5 If a student become pregnant whilst on a study year abroad or a placement they must contact their Faculty to make appropriate plans to ensure that a risk assessment can be carried out and academic progress is properly managed.
- 4.1.2.6 The University will always allow time off for any medical appointments related to the pregnancy. However all students are also expected to be able to engage with their studies and if they are unable to do so, despite reasonable adjustments being made, the university may wish to consider whether the student is Fit to Study
- 4.1.2.7 Students should provide a copy of the medical certificate MATB1, issued by their midwife, to their Faculty contact confirming the date the baby is due. This should be done no later than 15 weeks before the baby is due if possible.

4.1.3 Maternity leave and return to study

- 4.1.3.1 The Faculty and student will agree what time off (if any) is likely to be needed to accommodate the pregnancy and birth. This decision will focus on the needs of the

students and their baby and will also take into account the academic requirements of the student's programme. It is accepted that the situation may change and the student may request a different leave and return to study date at a later stage.

- 4.1.3.2 Arrangements should be made for the student to be able to keep in touch with their programme during any period of maternity leave. This could be through continued membership of a course email/social media group or another mechanism.
- 4.1.3.3 Compulsory maternity leave applies to all employees and BU has also chosen to apply this policy to students. This means that any student who has given birth must not return to University within two weeks for health and safety reasons.
- 4.1.3.4 Students are entitled to a period of up to 52 weeks maternity leave. Depending on the academic structure of the programme it may not be possible for students to return on their preferred date. This may particularly impact on taught programmes with structured semester dates.
- 4.1.3.5 Students should contact their Faculty once they have decided on their preferred return to study date to agree arrangements for re-integrating into their programme of study. This may include a further risk assessment if appropriate.

5. ATTENDANCE

- 5.1 BU expects all students to attend all timetabled activities for their programme. Lectures, seminars and other learning sessions are timetabled between 9:00-19:00. If students are unable to attend any session due to childcare this must be discussed with their Programme Leader or Academic Advisor at the earliest opportunity.

6. SUPPORT FOR FATHERS AND PARTNERS (INCLUDING SAME-SEX PARTNERS)

- 6.1 Any student discovering they are to become a father, or any partner of a pregnant student, (including same sex partners), who expect to be responsible for raising the child with the mother, will be entitled to request time out of study. This is likely to include time off for medical appointments prior to, and after, the birth, as well as a period of maternity support leave immediately following the birth.
- 6.2 A student in this situation should contact staff within their Faculty to discuss this. Flexibility will be shown where possible although this may be more limited in some programmes/disciplines than others.

7. STUDENTS WHO BECOME PARENTS THROUGH ADOPTION

- 7.1 Students about to become parents through adoption should discuss their circumstances with Faculty staff. Flexibility will be shown where possible although this may be more limited in some programmes than others

8. SUPPORT AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO STUDENT PARENTS

- 8.1 Talbot Woods Day Nursery and Preschool – The University offers a nursery and preschool at its Talbot Campus. Further information about childcare can be found at: <https://www1.bournemouth.ac.uk/students/services-campus/childcare>
- 8.2 Baby changing facilities are available at the Talbot and Lansdowne campuses. Table 1 provides details of the baby changing facilities at BU.

Table 1: Baby changing facilities at the University

Building	Floor	Room No
Talbot House, Talbot Campus	Ground floor	TGT1
Sir Michael Cobham Library, Talbot Campus	Ground floor	DLGT6
Fusion, Talbot Campus	Ground floor	FGT1
Bournemouth House, Lansdowne Campus	Ground floor	BGT1

- 8.3 The University does offer an accommodation guarantee to students but does not offer this to dependents.
- 8.4 Pregnant students living in BU accommodation may find that this is no longer suitable for health and safety reasons. In addition, their tenancy agreement may be for single occupancy only. The due date and student plans may influence accommodation options. Pregnant students are encouraged to discuss their circumstances with Residential Services as soon as possible.
- 8.5 Breastfeeding facilities are available on both campuses. Table 2 details the location of breastfeeding rooms at the Talbot and Lansdowne campuses. To access these facilities students should contact the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team on telephone 01202 9 62713 or via email HealthandSafetyMailbox@bournemouth.ac.uk

Table 2: Breastfeeding facilities at BU

Building	Floor	Room No
Dorset House	Floor 2	D227
Bournemouth House	Floor 2	B241

- 8.6 The Students' Union run a student parents group. This gives BU students and their partners/friends/family an opportunity to meet in an area that's safe for their children. Further information about what SUBU can offer can be found at: <http://www.subu.org.uk/main-menu/democracy-and-equality/democracy-and-diversity/student-parents>

9. CHILDREN¹ ON UNIVERSITY PREMISES²

- 9.1 There are a number of risks and concerns associated with students bringing children onto campus during their normal working hours and/or study time.
- 9.2 Members of the University are expected to make suitable child care arrangements during their normal, studying hours.

¹ The term 'Child' includes young persons i.e. 16 -18 year olds as well as those under the age of 16 – see section 'Young Persons' for arrangements specifically for 16-18 year olds.]

² This section of the policy has been taken from the Potentially Vulnerable Groups policy which covers staff and students.

- 9.3 For further guidance on children on campus please refer to the [Potentially Vulnerable Groups Policy](#)

10. FUNDING

- 10.1 The benefit rules are different for EU students and international students, and further advice should be sought from SUBU Advice or the Department for Work and Pensions.
- 10.2 In the event of an interruption being agreed, undergraduate student funding will usually stop. However, students may apply for discretionary funding from SFE or an equivalent organisation. The University will automatically inform the Student Loan Company and relevant national UK fee providers. Normally there is no tuition fee due to the University during an agreed interruption leave of absence.
- 10.3 Postgraduate and Research students receiving funding from external bodies should follow the guidance for their particular scheme, or contact their funding body or sponsor for further advice.
- 10.4 The University provides advice to students on funding sources and may be able to advise on implications for some funding on becoming a parent. Please refer to the AskBU Team or the SUBU Advice.

Appendix 1: Checklist for staff when discussing the needs of pregnant students or those becoming parents through adoption

Whilst it is recognised that each request must be dealt with on an individual basis, there are a number of measures that can be used in order to enable the student's continuation of study and to assess any impacts for health & safety. This checklist provides an outline of areas to be discussed.

Issue for discussion	Tick	Date discussed/ agreed
Make the student aware of University Policy and Guidance		
Discuss the due date/likely date of adoption and potential maternity/paternity/adoption leave period. What sort of time off does the student anticipate taking (bear in mind this may change as the pregnancy/adoption progresses). Does the student want to arrange for a formal interruption of studies?		
Reassure the student that they can take time off for medical/adoption appointments, and agree how they will catch up on missed classes.		
Discuss implications for the student's programme of study - e.g. assessment schedule, placements, field trips, repeat study requirements. In particular Discuss programme activities that require risk assessment, (e.g. field trips, lab or practical activities, lone working, travelling) and ensure the risk assessment is carried out		
Consider any requests to transfer to part-time study, (either on a temporary or permanent basis). Part-time study is not always possible and will depend on the course.		
Direct the student to AskBU to discuss the financial or visa implications that their pregnancy/adoption may have		
Provide an overview of the Exceptional Circumstances Policy and Procedures in case the pregnancy impacts significantly upon the student's assessment.		
Offer support to help the student reintegrate to their studies after any period of prolonged absence		
Ensure the University has up to date contact information, (including emergency contact details)		
Remind the student of the sources of advice within the University (see Student Services webpages)		
Explain to the student that you will need to share information with other members of staff but that will be limited to who need to know		

Equality Analysis template

Screening	Please provide explanatory comments
1. What activity is being analysed?	Policy that clarifies the support for students who are parents
2. Who likely to be affected by the activity?	Students/staff who have dependents and those who do not
3. Who led the analysis?	Equality and Diversity Adviser
4. Who contributed to the analysis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head of Student Services - SU VP Welfare - Democracy and Equality Coordinator - Equality and Diversity Steering Group members
5. What information has been used to inform the analysis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other HEI parent policies - ECU material on pregnancy and maternity which can be found at: http://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/student-recruitment-retention-attainment/student-retention/pregnant-students-student-parents/ - Takes into consideration the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences flowcharts that have been developed for Nursing and Midwifery students. - BU position concerning bringing children onto campus.
Analysis	Please provide explanatory comments
6. How does the activity promote good relations/equality/inclusion in relation to:	
6.1 Age	Yes as the policy shows how BU will support students who are parents whilst studying one of its programmes.
6.2 Disability	N/A
6.3 Gender Reassignment	N/A
6.4 Marriage and civil partnership ¹	N/A
6.5 Pregnancy and maternity (including paternity)	Yes as it shows how BU will support students who are parents whilst studying one of its programmes.
6.6 Race (colour, ethnic or national background)	N/A
6.7 Religion or belief (including non-belief)	N/A
6.8 Sex (Female/Male)	Yes as it shows how BU will support students who are parents whilst studying one of its programmes.

Screening	Please provide explanatory comments				
6.9 Sexual orientation	The policy confirms support for students who may have same sex partners.				
7. Does the activity have an actual or potential adverse impact in relation to?					
7.1 Age	The policy provides a position on bringing children onto campus and accommodation.				
7.2 Disability	N/A				
7.3 Gender Reassignment	N/A				
7.4 Marriage and civil partnership ²	N/A				
7.5 Pregnancy and maternity (including paternity)	The policy provides a position on bringing children onto campus and accommodation.				
7.6 Race (colour, ethnic or national background)	N/A				
7.7 Religion or belief (including non-belief)	N/A				
7.8 Sex (Female/Male)	The policy provides a position on bringing children onto campus and accommodation.				
8. Comment on the good practice identified					
The policy pulls together the current provision available for student parents at BU which should hopefully support students and staff. Development of this policy would support the institutional/departmental Athena SWAN work as it covers students as well as staff.					
9. Comment on the actions to mitigate actual or potential adverse impact					
To mitigate adverse impact BU has clarified its current position on the following areas:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timetabling (section 4) - Support and facilities (section 7) - Children on campus (section 8) 					
Appendix 1 and 2 provides guidance for students and staff to discuss any practical issues.					
Important to draw Faculties attention to this policy and ensure it is linked to any relevant policies within individual Faculties. This will reduce the potential for confusion and potential complaints.					
10. Decision/Feedback/Approval					
10.1 What is the analysis outcome? (See Table 1 to assist here)	Pleas e	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
10.2 Have you consulted with EDSG?	A copy of the policy/EA has been shared with EDSG members for comment.				
10.3 When will the analysis be reported to EDSG?	It will be reported to EDSG at its June meeting				
10.4 Which Committee will approve the analysis?	ULT				
10.5 Date of approval					
10.6 When and how will the analysis be reviewed?					

¹ Marriage and civil partnership are protected under the legislation but only for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination in employment.

² Please see footnote 1