



Owner: Chief Operating Officer
Version number: Version 2
Date of approval: July 2023
Approved by: UET
Effective date: July 2023
Date of last review: July 2023
Due for review: July 2025

STUDENT MATERNITY, ADOPTION , FOSTERING AND PARENTAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 Bournemouth University (BU) is committed to advancing equality; one of our values is inclusivity and we want all students to have the opportunity to reach their potential regardless of their personal situation
- 1.2 This policy outlines how the University supports student parents, students who may become pregnant (or whose partners may become pregnant) or who may be planning to adopt children. It also outlines how BU meets the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) [referred to as 'the Act' throughout this document] in providing this support.
- 1.3 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 depending on the demands of the course.
- 1.4 The health and safety of a pregnant student is of paramount importance at all times. The university will support 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. EQUALITY ACT

- 2.1 Pregnancy and maternity is one of nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010). 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.
- 2.2 Unfavourable or unfair treatment resulting in someone suffering disadvantage because of pregnancy, having recently given birth or breastfeeding could constitute 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 they are breastfeeding and the child is less than 26 weeks old this could constitute discrimination under the Act.

3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The Chief Operating Officer has executive responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity matters at BU.
- 3.3 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee has overall responsibility for developing and embedding BU's strategic commitment to Dignity, Diversity and Equality.
- 3.4 The Director of Student Services has overall responsibility for the daily operation of this policy and for the wellbeing and welfare of students at BU.
- 3.5 All staff have responsibility to follow the general approach set out in this document.
- 3.6 This policy and its appendices apply to all students at BU.

4. LINKS TO OTHER UNIVERSITY DOCUMENTS

[Equality and Diversity policy](#)

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

[Potentially Vulnerable groups](#)

[Safeguarding Policy](#)

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

[11J: Support to Study Policy and Procedure](#)

5. PREGNANCY

- 5.1 BU can only make provision for the student if they inform BU they are pregnant. A student who believes they are pregnant should see their GP to have the pregnancy confirmed.
- 5.2 The student should let the university know that they are pregnant as early in the pregnancy as possible by informing their Programme Support Team. The information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to support the student.
- 5.3 Students who are on a Student Visa are not permitted to stay in the UK for a period of interruption lasting 60 days or more, regardless of reason. Therefore a longer interruption for these students will not be permitted unless the student returns to their home country. Students in this situation should seek advice from AskBU
- 5.4 The student will be invited to meet with an appropriate member of the programme team to undertake a risk assessment and to discuss any impact the pregnancy may have on their studies. Things to be considered include:
 - Any risk to the baby or student from course activities, eg heavy lifting, exposure to chemicals,
 - What time off is likely to be needed for ante-natal appointments (first time parents are generally offered 10 appointments) and what reasonable adjustments can be put in place to mitigate for any missed learning, field trips or assessment time
 - Any foreseeable impact that the pregnancy may have on the student's engagement due to underlying medical conditions
 - Whether the student would prefer to interrupt their studies during the pregnancy and if so what the arrangements would need to be for returning at an appropriate time in the following year(s)
 - The student should also be made aware that there may be financial implications if they are not able to engage with their studies due to pregnancy or maternity leave. Specialist advice can be obtained from AskBU. 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.

- Pregnant students living in BU accommodation may find that this is no longer suitable for health and safety reasons. Although the student will be permitted to remain in the accommodation until the baby is born, BU will release without penalty if the student decides they want to move out. Pregnant students are encouraged to discuss their circumstances with Residential Services as soon as possible.

- 5.5 All students are expected 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 pregnancy this must be discussed with their Programme Leader or Personal Tutor at the earliest opportunity
- 5.6 The university will always try to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate any risks and impacts of pregnancy, however on occasion this may not be possible. In this case it is likely to be in the student's best interest to interrupt for a period of time.
- 5.7 The student should be invited to meet regularly with a named Faculty contact throughout their pregnancy to assess the effectiveness of any adjustments put in place and to consider further adjustments if necessary.
- 5.8 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.

6. MATERNITY LEAVE AND RETURN TO STUDY

- 6.1 Students should provide a copy of the medical certificate MATB1, issued by their GP or 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
- 6.2 The faculty and student will agree what time off (if any) is likely to be needed to accommodate the later stages of 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.
- 6.3 Arrangements should be made for the student to be able to keep in touch with their programme during any period of maternity leave
- 6.4 Compulsory maternity leave applies to students, meaning that any student who has given birth must not return to university within two weeks of the birth for health and safety reasons
- 6.5 Students are entitled to a period of up to 52 weeks maternity leave. Students should contact their Programme Support Team when they have a potential return to study date. Depending on the academic structure of the programme it may not be possible for students to return on their preferred date and the return date will need to be agreed between the faculty and the students, taking into account the course structure and delivery pattern.

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

- 7.1 Any student who is the partner of a pregnant person, (including same sex partners), and who expects 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 support leave immediately following the birth

- 7.2 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

8. ADOPTION

- 8.1 Students planning to become parents through adoption should discuss their circumstances with Faculty staff in order that adjustments can be put in place where possible.

9. CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

- 9.1 Students who have caring responsibilities for children, whether in their capacity as a parent, guardian or foster carer, and whose responsibilities may impact upon their studies, should contact their Programme Support team at the earliest opportunity. Where possible, and in line with course requirements, reasonable adjustments will be made to allow students to continue to engage with their studies. Where this is not possible an interruption of studies may be appropriate.

10. CHILDREN ON CAMPUS

- 10.1 Students are not permitted to bring their children onto campus for any reason connected with their studies, eg attending classes, meetings with their tutors or any organised event related to their course unless it is specifically designed for student parents. Children must at no time be left unattended on campus and students are expected to make suitable childcare arrangements.
- 10.2 Where concerns are raised about a risk to children that raises a potentially safeguarding concern, these will be escalated in line with BU's safeguarding Policy
- 10.3 For further guidance on children on campus please refer to the [Potentially Vulnerable Groups Policy](#)

11. SUPPORT AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO STUDENT PARENTS

- 11.1 [Talbot Woods Day Nursery and Preschool](#) is operated by Bright Horizons and is open to staff, students and members of the local community.
- 11.2 SUBU manage a [Student Parent Community](#) for students who, in addition to their studies, are looking after children
- 11.3 Baby changing facilities are available at:
- Talbot House Disabled WC, ground floor
 - The Sir Michael Cobham library 1st floor disabled WC
 - Dorset House Parenting Room D227
 - Bournemouth Gateway Building Disabled WC, ground floor
 - Bournemouth Gateway Building Parenting Room BG214
- 11.4 Breastfeeding facilities are available on university campuses at:
- Bournemouth Gateway Building Parenting Room BG214
 - Dorset House - Room DG35 (Keypad access control - please contact Health, Safety & Wellbeing x62713 for access)
 - St Mary's Hospital Portsmouth - Birthing Centre (For Staff & Students operating from the hospital)
- 11.5 Information about local schools and how to apply for a school place is available on the [Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole website](#)

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
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.	
<p>Discuss implications for the student's programme of study to include:</p> <p>Any risk to the baby or student from course activities, eg heavy lifting, exposure to chemicals,</p> <p>What time off is likely to be needed for ante-natal appointments and what reasonable adjustments can be put in place to mitigate for any missed learning, field trips or assessment time</p> <p>Any foreseeable impact that the pregnancy may have on the student's engagement due to underlying medical conditions</p>	
If the student is living in BU accommodation, advise them to discuss their circumstances with Residential Services as soon as possible. (NB If the student is living in private accommodation advise them to check their contract and speak to their landlord about their specific situation)	
<p>Consider any requests to interrupt or transfer to part-time study, (either on a temporary or permanent basis).</p> <p>Part-time study is only available for courses where this option is already validated</p> <p>Part time study and interruptions of 60 days or more are not an option available to students on a Student Visa unless they return to their home country</p>	
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 those who need to know	

Student ID:

Staff Name:

Student Name:

Signed:

Signed:

Date: