

## Student Pregnancy and Maternity Policy

### Introduction

1. The Equality Act 2010 extended the protection from discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity to women outside the workplace and now includes students.
2. Under the Act it is unlawful to discriminate against applicants and students in relation to admissions; the provision of education; access to benefits, facility or service; and disciplinary proceedings 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; (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

### Scope

3. This policy covers any student who is or becomes pregnant, or takes maternity absence during her studies, and students who are about to become parents. It also covers any student who is the partner (including same sex partner) of someone who is pregnant and expects to be responsible for the child, and any person becoming a parent of a child e.g. adoption.
4. This policy focuses on study related matters with sources of help and advice on pregnancy related issues included in Appendix 1. Information about support that is available for students is provided in the Student Services web site [www.bolton.ac.uk/Students](http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Students).

### Policy statement

5. The University believes that becoming pregnant or caring for a child should not prevent any student from succeeding in their studies. We are committed to showing as much flexibility, wherever possible, in making sure that the student is not disadvantaged whilst ensuring academic standards are not compromised.
6. The health and safety of a pregnant student is paramount and Academic Schools should deal with all students covered by this policy in a sensitive,

non-judgemental and confidential manner. Information concerning a student's pregnancy will be treated sensitively and be passed on only with the student's consent. However, the student should be aware that there are times when it is in the best interest of the student that the Heads of School may need to contact other people on the student's behalf.

7. In a situation where a student's pregnancy is unplanned and she seeks advice from a member of staff on whether or not she should continue her pregnancy, members of staff who are not qualified to counsel women during pregnancy should refer the student to a qualified professional, such as the Nurse Advisor or Student Counsellor, and must not attempt to advise her themselves. A list of support is available in Appendix 1.

## **For students who become pregnant during their studies**

### **Confirming the Pregnancy**

8. A student who suspects she is pregnant should see her GP to have the pregnancy confirmed as soon as possible. If she decides to terminate the pregnancy or miscarries there is no need to disclose this to the University if she does not wish to. If the student is subsequently unable to complete or attend assessments due to her termination or miscarriage and makes an application for mitigating circumstances, she will have to submit written evidence that she was pregnant which could be either a letter from a GP or from a doctor based in a pregnancy counselling organisation.

### **Contacting the Faculty**

9. If the student plans to continue with her pregnancy she should let her Academic School know as soon as possible. Heads of School should be informed in writing as in the event of an examination or assessment being missed and the student is unable/unwilling to provide evidence, the Head of Schools can confirm that they have seen evidence to cover the absence.
10. If the student subsequently miscarries after notifying the University that she is pregnant, it may be advisable for the student to disclose that she has had a miscarriage (see paragraph 49 and Appendix 1 for available support).

### **Implications for study**

11. The University does not require proof when the student declares that she is pregnant, however the student should be aware that any mitigating circumstances requests related to her maternity will require the student to submit support evidence of her pregnancy or maternity. Evidence required to support a mitigating circumstance could be either letter from the GP or midwife or a maternity certificate (MATB1 form which is issued after 20 weeks).

12. A student with a baby due near an examination period might require confirmation from her GP that she is fit to sit exams.
13. Time off might be needed for medical appointments. If an Academic School needs to take into consideration the impact of the student pregnancy or maternity on her course attendance or attainment, the Academic School can ask for evidence of appointments and letters from the student's GP, midwife or health worker.
14. A student should be allowed to decide when they start their maternity-related absence in agreement with the Academic School. If a student wishes to, she should not be prevented from studying up to her due date, or from starting her maternity-related absence either a full term or semester before her due date, unless it is impractical for her to do so.
15. Where a student is close to her due date and unable to study as planned, the Academic School in consultation with the student may agree to allow her to start her maternity-related absence earlier than planned. If appropriate other alternative methods can be explored in order the student can meet their course requirements.

### **Allowing time off**

16. 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. These include:
  - Allowing time out of study for the birth and a period of time after, prior to and after the birth
  - Giving permission for periods of absence for medical appointments
  - Making arrangements for the student to catch up on missed classes
  - Showing a degree of flexibility regarding assignments for the student's circumstances where it is difficult for deadlines to be met
  - Allowing resit examinations to be counted as first attempts where the pregnancy or birth prevents the student from taking them at the usual first attempt
  - Consideration of any requests to transfer to part time study or distance learning, where this is possible, although the student should consider the financial implications (see useful contacts in Appendix 1)
  - Offering support to help the student reintegrate to the studies after any period of prolonged absence
  - A balance should be achieved between ensuring the student is not disadvantaged and giving undue special treatment
17. The University are not required to grant every request made, although efforts should be made to meet reasonable requests. If any request is refused, the reason for the refusal should be provided in writing for the student.

18. In order to ensure that arrangements are put in place, the student should notify the Academic School, 15 weeks before the expected birth of their child, as to when they would like their maternity absence to commence.
19. Where specific arrangements are required to be put in place for a student who already has special arrangements in place e.g. on grounds of disability, these should be kept separate to ensure that it is clear which arrangements are in place for the required amount of time.

### **Student Support Plan**

20. The Academic School representative, usually the Head of School or Personal (PT) Tutor will meet with the student to discuss how the pregnancy is likely to impact on her study which may include an interruption of study depending on when the baby is due. If an interruption of study is needed the time period needs to be agreed between the student and the Academic School. If the student continues to study during her pregnancy she should meet regularly with her Personal Tutor or Course Tutor to assess the effectiveness of any special arrangements with consideration for further adjustments as appropriate.
21. A plan should be devised detailing any special arrangements required by using the Student Support Form (Appendix 2)
22. If a student is required to undertake a placement as part of her course, the Academic School needs to liaise with the placement provider to ensure a health and safety assessment is conducted by the organisation to which the student is being placed.
23. 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.

### **Length of maternity-related absence**

24. 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 Head of School or Personal Tutor should take steps to ensure that she is kept up to speed with developments in the field i.e. she could be sent lists of key reading and new research, dates and transcripts of lectures, and steps that can be taken to ensure that she can access key journals.
25. In exceptional circumstances, students may need to extend the length of absence beyond the standard time allowed in cases of postnatal depression, serious illness or loss of a baby.
26. 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.

## **Resuming Studies**

27. Any student who has given birth **must** not return to University within two weeks of giving birth for health and safety reasons.
28. The student's study options and continued support should be discussed at the time of completing the Student Support Plan including varying the mode of study, any contact made during the absence and formal welcome back arrangements, with the option to review if the student's circumstances change.
29. The student must inform the Academic School in writing when she is ready to return and plan with her Personal Tutor an appropriate timescale for re-integration into her programme of study, including the examination schedule.
30. The student is required to re-enrol online back onto their course. Student Data Management will contact a student who has suspended study when they have been notified of a return date to request that the student re-enrols online.
31. 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.

## **Health and Safety**

32. 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.
33. The highest risk to the baby is during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy. Consequently students should be encouraged to notify the University as early as possible of their pregnancy so that a health and safety assessment can be conducted. This should be undertaken by a member of staff experienced in undertaking risk assessments. Further guidance and assistance can be provided by the Specialist Services and Safety Manager.
34. The level of risk to which a student is exposed will depend on the requirement 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; or where exposure to infectious disease is a possibility, including laboratory work, healthcare provision, and looking after animals or dealings with animal products.

## **Financial implications**

35. Undergraduate students should note that funding will usually stop when the suspension of study begins.
36. Postgraduate and Research students receiving funding from external bodies should follow the guidance for their particular scheme and contact their funding body or sponsor for further advice.

37. International students with financial sponsors must contact their sponsors and agree a plan of action such as deferring study/when to resume study. Those international students who are not entitled to any maternity benefits in the UK may prefer to return home for the duration of their pregnancy.
38. The benefit rules are different for EU students and International students and further advice should be sought from the Immigration and Welfare Officer (see Appendix 1).
39. For UK students, regulations on student financial support contain provisions for discretion when determining if all or part of a student grant or loan is payable when a student is absent from their course of study for reasons other than illness. Further information is available from the Student Centre (see Appendix 1).
40. A student may be entitled to government welfare benefits and grants and these should be explored in the first instance. Further information is available by contacting the Student Union Advice Unit Co-ordinator (see Appendix 1).
41. EU and International students should contact their home government and sponsors for information on pregnancy and maternity entitlements.

### **Travel**

42. Unless they are advised not to do so by their GP or midwife, students should be able to travel during pregnancy.

### **UK Student Visas**

43. If an International student sponsored by the University under Tier 4 of the Points Based System becomes pregnant during their studies, they should be referred to the Immigration and Welfare Officer to discuss their intention regarding leave and how this will impact on their visa.

### **Accommodation**

44. A student who becomes pregnant whilst living in Halls of Residence may find that this is no longer suitable due to health and safety reasons. Students may not be asked to leave their existing accommodation because they are pregnant.
45. The student should contact the Halls Team Leader or Deputy Student Services Manager in Student Services for advice. They will liaise with the student to conduct a risk assessment to identify any adjustments that may be possible. They will also advise them on appropriate alternative accommodation where applicable. As the University does not provide family accommodation support will be given to existing students to help them find suitable privately rented or local authority housing.

46. Every support in finding alternative accommodation prior to the arrival of their baby or prior to returning from maternity related absence will be given to the student if they do have to leave their accommodation. Any student who has to leave the Halls of Residence earlier due to pregnancy or maternity will not incur a financial penalty for early termination of their accommodation contract.

### **Babies/children in teaching or learning areas**

47. For health and safety reasons as well as to avoid the disruption of classes of study babies and children must not be brought into teaching or learning areas.

### **Breast feeding**

48. The University has facilities available for nursing mothers to express milk in Main Reception, Senate House. There are also facilities available at Queens Specialist Building.

### **Miscarriage, still births and neonatal death**

49. Miscarriage is most likely to occur in the first three months of pregnancy. If a student miscarries, she is most likely to need time off study for tests and to recover. Consideration should be given to the impact of a miscarriage on the student's ability to meet deadlines and sit examinations. Information on support for a student who miscarries is available in Appendix 1.

50. 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. Information on support for a student who has a still birth or who experiences a neonatal death is available in Appendix 1.

### **Support for fathers and partners (including same sex partners) who have responsibility for bringing up the child**

51. Any student discovering that 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.

52. A student may want to attend their partner's antenatal appointments or may need time off if their partner has complications with her pregnancy or a serious pregnancy related illness.

53. If a student wants to take paternity related absence they should inform their personal tutor at least 15 weeks before the baby is due, but a degree of flexibility may be needed. Flexibility will be shown wherever possible although this may be limited in some programmes.

54. Early notification to attend antenatal appointments is expected to allow flexibility in making special arrangements.

55. For students receiving research funding it may be possible for a period of maternity support leave to be allowed, and students should contact their sponsor or provider prior to arranging any leave.

**For students about to become parents through an adoption process**

56. Students about to become parents e.g. through adoption should inform their Faculty of their circumstances as soon as possible. Arrangements can be made to allow time out of study depending on the age of the child, programme of study and the time of the academic year that the adoption will take place.

**Equality Impact Assessment**

57. The University of Bolton is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and a supportive environment for all members of our community. Our commitment to equality and diversity means that this policy has been screened in relation to the use of plain English, the promotion of the positive duty in relation to the protected characteristics of race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

58. All University policies are subject to periodic review under the equality impact assessment process.

**Monitoring and Review**

59. This policy will be monitored annually to judge its effectiveness and updated in accordance with changes in the law by the Gender and Sexual Orientation Advisory Group who report to the Equality and Diversity Committee.

**Related Policies**

• Health and Safety Policy	• Equal Opportunities Policy
• Mental Health Policy	• Admissions Policy
• Student Harassment and Bullying Policy	• Student Complaints Procedure
• Data Protection Policy	• Confidentiality Policy
• Student Disciplinary Procedure	• Student Attendance Policy
• Fitness to Practice	• Exam Regulations and Procedures
• Student Appeals Policy	



## Dissemination of and Access to the Policy

60. This policy will be published on the University of Bolton's website to be available on [www.bolton.ac.uk/Students/PoliciesProceduresRegulations](http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Students/PoliciesProceduresRegulations).

61. The University will ensure that all appropriate staff including academic staff, academic related staff and those who provide a service to or support students are trained on this policy and any associated guidance.

<b>Policy on Student Pregnancy and Maternity Policy</b>	
Policy Ref	
Version Number	4
Version Date	<i>July 2011 (reviewed August 2015, December 2016)</i>
Name of Developer/Reviewer	Matt Dillon, Deputy Student Services Manager
Policy Owner (Faculty/Centre/Unit)	Student Services
Person responsible for implementation (postholder)	Student Services Manager
Approving Committee/Board	Corporate Management Group
Date approved	5 December 2012
Effective from	1 September 2011
Dissemination method (e.g. website)	Web pages
Review Frequency	Annually
Reviewing Committee	Organisational Development, Equality and Diversity Committee
Consultation History (individuals/groups consulted with dates)	Gender and Sexual Orientation Advisory Group & Student Union
Document History (e.g. rationale for and dates of previous amendments)	Equality Act 2010 Technical Updates and Nomenclature updates August 2015 Technical Updates December 2016

The Counselling Service offers a confidential, professional service to students. Students can make an appointment to see the University Counsellors by calling into Student Services or by ringing ext. 3733.

The Student Liaison Officers are available to provide confidential advice and support, offer opportunities to develop student study skills and coordinate a Peer Mentoring scheme.

**University of Bolton contacts:**

<p>Student Counsellor</p> <p><u>Tel:</u> contact student advisors to book an appointment on 01204 903733</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:studentadvisors@bolton.ac.uk">studentadvisors@bolton.ac.uk</a></p>	<p>Student Liaison Officers</p> <p><a href="http://www.bolton.ac.uk/SLO">www.bolton.ac.uk/SLO</a></p>
<p>Chaplaincy</p> <p>Chancellor's Mall</p> <p>Tel: 01204 903415</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:chaplain@bolton.ac.uk">chaplain@bolton.ac.uk</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.bolton.ac.uk/chaplaincy">www.bolton.ac.uk/chaplaincy</a></p>	<p>Nurse Advisor Clinic</p> <p>Student Centre</p> <p>Chancellor's Mall</p> <p>Wednesdays - 10 am to 12.30 pm</p> <p>No appointment required</p>
<p>Student Union Advice Unit Co-ordinator</p> <p>Student Union</p> <p>Chancellors Mall</p> <p>Tel: 01024 906850</p>	<p>Student Funding Advisor</p> <p>Student Centre</p> <p>Chancellors Mall</p> <p>Tel: 01204 903497</p>
<p>Immigration and Welfare Officers</p> <p>Student Centre</p> <p>Chancellors Mall</p> <p>Tel: 01204 903496</p>	<p>Student Accommodation</p> <p>Halls Team Leader – Tel: 01204 903233</p> <p>or 01204 903498</p> <p>Deputy Student Services Manager – Tel:01204 903498</p>
<p><b>General</b></p>	
<p>Department of Work and Pensions</p> <p><a href="http://www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/famchild">www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/famchild</a></p>	<p>Child Benefit Office</p> <p><a href="http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit/do-you-qualify.htm">www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit/do-you-qualify.htm</a></p>

Direct Gov <a href="http://www.direct.gov.uk">www.direct.gov.uk</a>	Family Planning Association <a href="http://www.fpa.org.uk">www.fpa.org.uk</a> Helpline: 0845 122 8690
National Health Service <a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a>	National Union of Students <a href="http://www.nus.org.uk">www.nus.org.uk</a>
<b>Specific Organisations</b>	
Sexual and Reproductive Health Team – Bolton <a href="http://www.sexualhealthbolton.co.uk">www.sexualhealthbolton.co.uk</a> Tel: 01204 332743	British Pregnancy Advisory Service <a href="http://www.bpas.org.uk">www.bpas.org.uk</a> Tel:08457 304030
Adoption UK <a href="http://www.adoptionuk.org.uk">www.adoptionuk.org.uk</a>	Antenatal Results and Choices <a href="http://www.arc-uk.org">www.arc-uk.org</a>
Family and Parenting Institute <a href="http://www.familyandparenting.org">www.familyandparenting.org</a>	The Miscarriage Association <a href="http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk">www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk</a>
Rainbow Pregnancy Advice Centre Tel: 01024 522002	Bolton Welfare Rights Service Tel: 01204 380460
SANDS <a href="http://www.uk-sands.org">www.uk-sands.org</a> (Still Birth and neonatal death charity)	Mother and Baby Unit (For single young mothers Tel: 01204 332397

## Student support form for a pregnant student or a student who has returned to study as a nursing mother

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

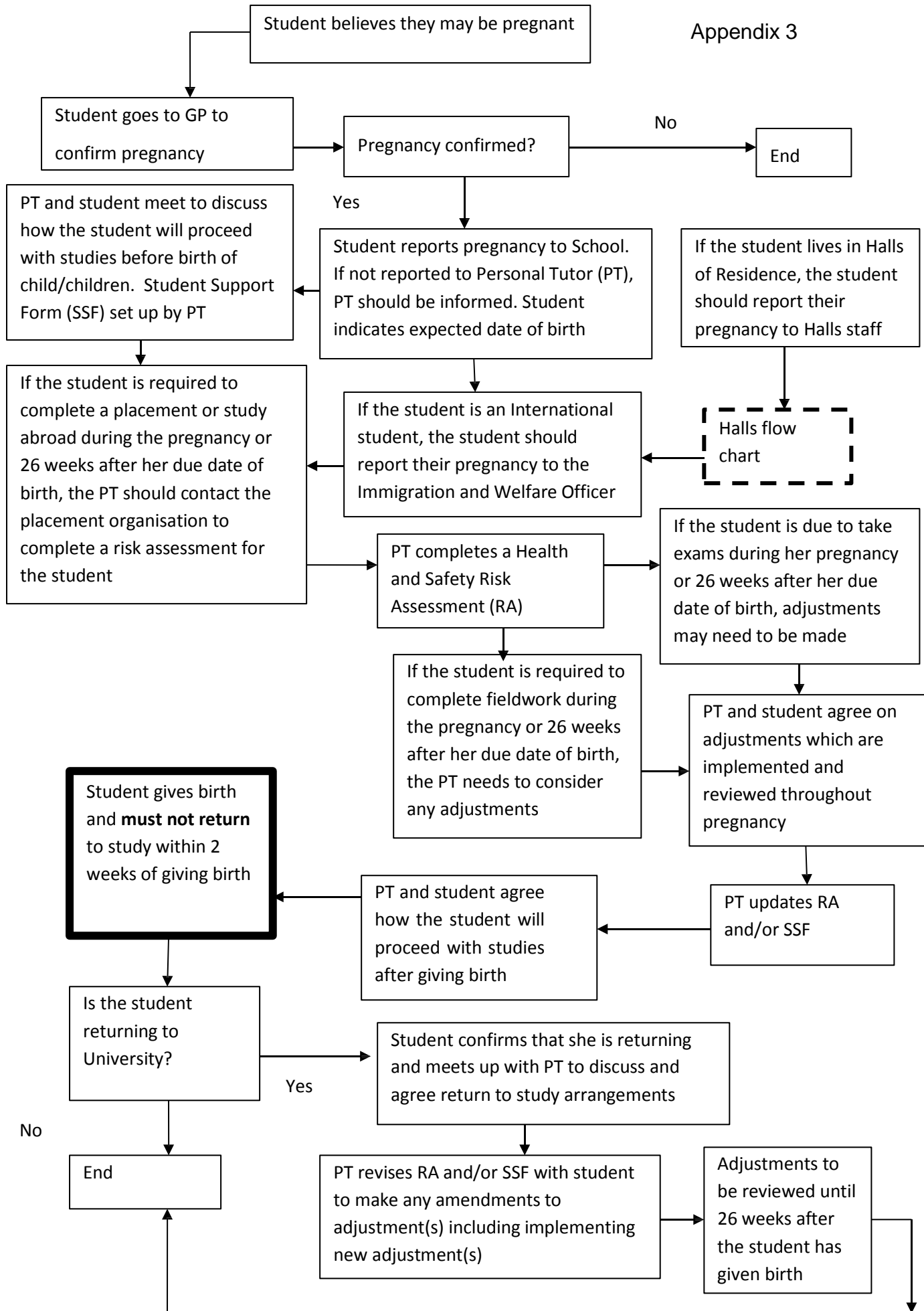
<b>Contact details</b>	
<b>1. Students details</b>	
Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Email address	
Student number	
<b>2. Emergency contact details</b>	
Relationship to student	
Telephone	
<b>3. Course details</b>	
Course title	
Faculty	
Faculty contact	
Year of course	
<b>4. Details of the student's first point of contact within University</b>	
Name	
Title	
Location	
Telephone	
Email	
<b>Key dates (to be reviewed and added to over the course of pregnancy and maternity)</b>	
5. What is the student's due date?	
6. How many weeks pregnant was the student when she notified University of pregnancy?	
<b>7. Communication with the student</b>	
What is the student's preferred method of communication:	
= during pregnancy?	
= during maternity-related absence?	
= on return to study?	

<b>Informing other staff and students</b>	
8. Who will need to be informed about the student's pregnancy and when would the student like them to be informed	
Name and title	Date
<b>Health and safety assessment (attach copy to this form)</b>	
<b>9. Has an assessment been conducted that covers (where relevant):</b>	
= 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?	
10. Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risk, who is responsible for ensuring they are implemented?	
<b>Rest facilities</b>	
11. Has the student been informed about rest facilities on campus for use by pregnant students?	
<b>Pregnancy related absence</b>	
12. Will the dates or times of antenatal appointments affect the student's ability to undertake their course?	
13. Have you discussed any pregnancy related illness that has affected the student's ability to undertake their course?	
14. If yes to either of the above questions, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to catch up?	
<b>Assessments</b>	
15. Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to her	

pregnancy or maternity?	
16. If so, provide details:	
17. What alternative arrangements have been made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments?	
<b>Maternity-related absence (students should provide information in writing at least 15 weeks before their due date)</b>	
18. How much maternity – related absence does the student intend to take?	
19. When does the student intend to start maternity related absence?	
20. When does the student intend to return from maternity related absence?	
21. Will the dates of maternity-related absence affect the student's ability to complete any course module requirements?	
22. If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to complete the module?	
23. What information will the student require during maternity-related absence to keep up to date on course development?	
24. Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student?	
<b>Financial support</b>	
25. Has the student been informed about sources of financial support or been referred to an external organisation that can do so?	
26. Is the UK student aware of how any benefits they receive will affect their student support entitlements, and vice versa?	
27. Specify any follow-up required:	
<b>Baby feeding</b>	
28. Does the student intend to feed their baby on university facilities on their return to study?	
29. Does the student intend to breastfeed? If so, see health and safety section above.	
30. Has the student been informed about the facilities available?	

<b>Childcare</b>	
31. Has the student been informed about childcare facilities on campus or in the local community	
32. Is the UK student aware that their mode of study will affect their childcare funding entitlement?	
<b>International students/those on placement abroad</b>	
33. Have international students or students on a 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	

Appendix 3



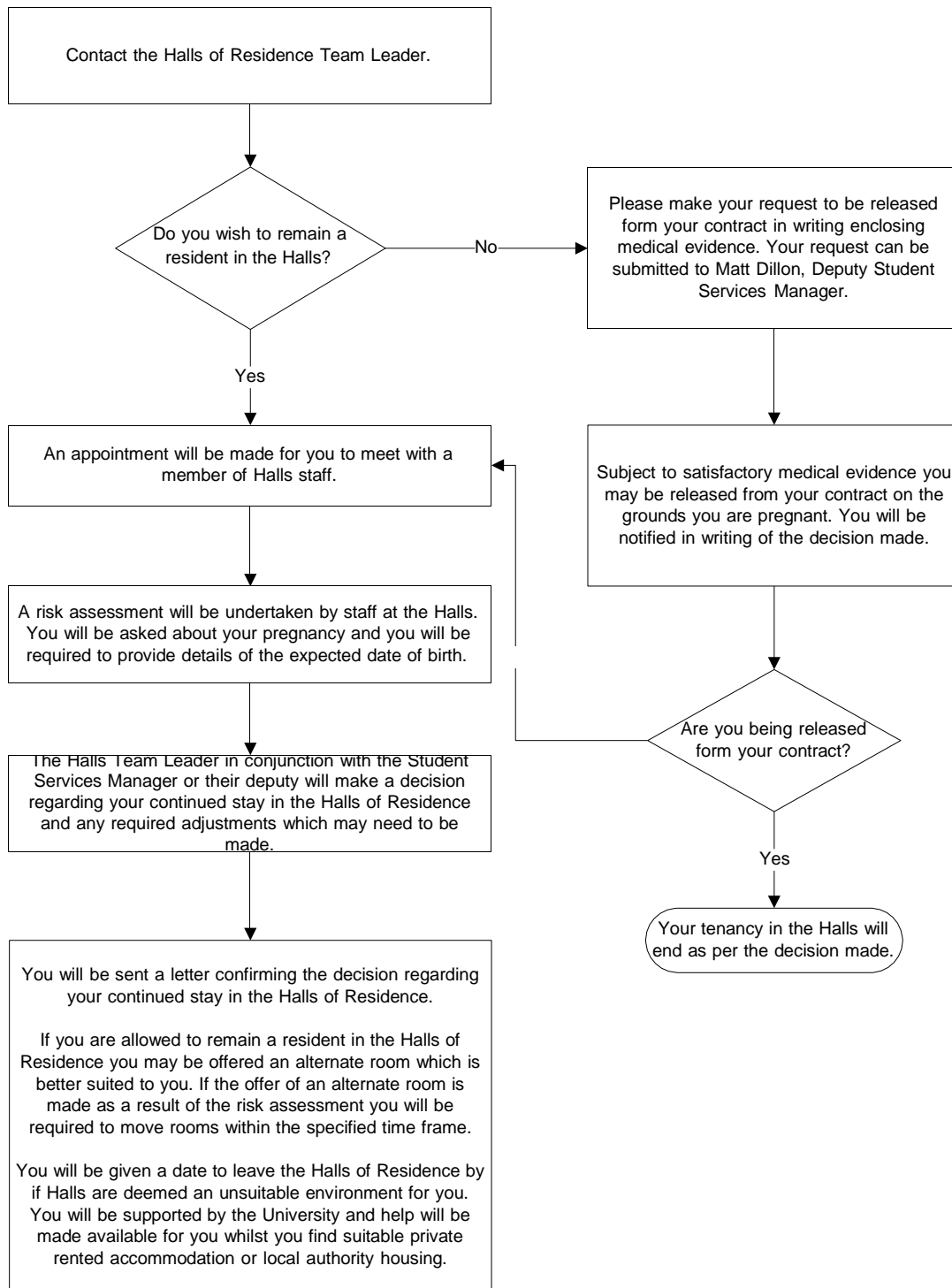


## **Halls of Residence and Pregnancy Reporting Procedure**

### Appendix 4

Pregnant students living in university accommodation should appreciate that their accommodation licence is for single occupancy only. Whilst the Halls of Residence may be suitable for a student in the early stage of their pregnancy it is unlikely that they will be suitable as the expected date of delivery nears due to Health and Safety reasons.

If you are pregnant and living in the Halls of Residence please follow the steps identified on the flow chart below. You are advised to discuss your pregnancy with family and friends and seek appropriate medical advice before making any decisions. Any student who has to leave the Halls of Residence earlier due to pregnancy or maternity will not incur a financial penalty for early termination of their accommodation contract.



## **Risk Assessment for Pregnant Students – Guidance Notes for completing the Risk Assessment for Pregnant Students Checklist**

The checklist should be completed whenever a student informs the Academic School that she is pregnant. If the member of staff is not a Programme Leader or Personal Tutor, the Personal Tutor should be informed of the pregnancy in order to complete the Risk Assessment for Pregnant Students Form. The level of risk to which a student is exposed will depend on the requirement 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; or where exposure to infectious disease is a possibility, including laboratory work, healthcare provision, and looking after animals or dealing with animal products.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

### **Step 1**

The purpose of the Risk Assessment for Pregnant Students Checklist form is to help you to identify any hazards that the pregnant student may encounter in the student's learning and studying environment e.g. classroom, other study areas, etc. Any student that is required to go on placement and/or undertake fieldwork should have a separate Risk Assessment for Pregnant Students Checklist completed. In some cases the student can take a Risk Assessment for Pregnant Students Checklist to be completed by the placement and/or fieldwork supervisor.

### **Step 2**

Identify if there are hazards including how often the risks will be present and any existing control measures in place e.g. comfort breaks, etc. It may be appropriate to put additional control measures in place as the pregnancy develops particularly during the third trimester. In some cases you may need to explore additional information with the student regarding any underlying medical conditions including hypertension or hypotension.

Enter all information onto the risk assessment pro forma.

You will then be able to put any control measures in place to eliminate the risk, or reduce it to an acceptable level for the pregnant student. This checklist is not exhaustive as there may be other issues with the pregnant student's learning and study environment, placement or fieldwork that may need to be considered. The following guidelines identify the sort of questions and areas that need to be

considered when assessing the risk(s) to your student and prompts on how to avoid the associated risk.

### **Step 3**

It is good practice to complete this form with the student who should sign it. The checklist and any actions required should be kept with the Student Support Form.

#### **1. Display Screen Equipment (DSE)**

Does the student use the computer for long periods of time?

Are they aware of Ideal Work Station to ensure that their furniture i.e. chair, is suitable and comfortable for the student?

Has a DSE risk assessment been completed for the student?

##### **Risk could be:**

Inappropriate size, layout, or space in relation to the computer or work area due to increasing size and reduced mobility, dexterity, balance during pregnancy.

##### **How to Avoid the Risk**

DSE assessments should be revised for new and expectant mothers to avoid problems caused by stress and anxiety and computer workstation size and set up.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

#### **2. Lone Working**

Does the student work alone in the building or out in the community?

Are control measures in place for lone working? Such as panic alarms, buddy systems?

##### **Risk could be:**

Pregnant women are more likely to need urgent medical attention

##### **How to Avoid the Risk**

Location, frequency and study/placement pattern of lone working should be reassessed as part of the new and expectant mother's risk assessment.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

### **3. Manual Handling**

Is the student expected to carry or move heavy loads?

Is the student expected to carry or move children?

Is the student aware of safe moving and handling techniques?

Has a moving and handling risk assessment been completed for the student?

Does the student experience backache associated with moving and handling activities and poor work postures?

#### **Risk could be:**

Pregnant students are especially at risk from moving and handling injuries. Hormonal changes can affect the ligaments, increasing susceptibility to injury, and postural problems may increase as the pregnancy progresses.

There can also be risks for those who have recently given birth. For example, after a caesarean section there is likely to be a temporary limitation on moving and handling capability.

#### **How to Avoid the Risk**

Alter the nature of the task to reduce risks from moving and handling. This could be for all students including new and expectant mothers, or you may just have to address the needs of the new and expectant mothers, specifically reducing the amount of physical work she undertakes, or providing mechanical aids to reduce the risks.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

### **4. Physical Agents**

Is the student exposed to whole body vibration? **(such as machinery)**

Is the student exposed to excessive noise? **(such as noisy machinery)**

Is the student expected to work in awkward/confined spaces?

Is the student exposed to excessive heat?

Is the student exposed to excessive cold?

Does the student have to sit or stand for long periods of time?

### **Risk could be:**

**Confined Spaces** - working in confined spaces, or at workstations which do not adjust sufficiently to take account of the increased abdominal size, particularly during the later stages of pregnancy. This may lead to sprain or strain injuries. Dexterity, agility, co-ordination, speed of movement, reach and balance may also be impaired and an increased risk of accidents may need to be considered.

**Sitting** - constant sitting during pregnancy poses a relatively high risk of thrombosis or embolism. In the later stages of pregnancy, women are likely to experience backache, which can be intensified for remaining in a specific position for a long period of time.

**Standing** - standing for a prolonged period of time may cause dizziness, faintness and fatigue.

**Extremes of heat and cold** - pregnant students that are exposed to prolonged periods in hot environments are at a far greater risk of suffering from heat stress. Working in extreme cold may pose a hazard for pregnant women and their unborn child. These risks are particularly increased if there are sudden changes in temperature. Also breastfeeding may be impaired by heat dehydration.

### **How to Avoid the Risk**

**Confined spaces** – introduce or adapt equipment. Redesign the workstation and/or work area. Redesign the job content.

**Sitting** – avoid sitting for long periods. Women should have the opportunity to alternate between standing and sitting and to exercise/move to maintain healthy circulation. Regular rest breaks should be provided.

**Standing** – avoid standing for long periods of time.

**Extremes of heat and cold** – adequate rest breaks and unrestricted access to drinking water should be provided. Also the provision of a desk fan may be necessary. Relocation if possible or adjustment to hours should be investigated. New and expectant mothers should drink water before they get thirsty, preferably in small and frequent volumes.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

## **5. Slips, trips and falls**

Is the student's learning and study area free from slips trips and fall hazards?

### **Risk could be:**

Trailing wires, uneven flooring, spilt substances

### **How to Avoid the Risk**

All electrical equipment should be checked to ensure that there are no trailing wires and floor services should be checked to ensure that they are even to avoid trip hazards.

Areas that are at risk of liquid being spilt e.g. areas near vending machines, tea/coffee making facilities in offices used for tutorials and seminars, etc to be assessed.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

## **6. Violence and Aggression**

Is the student exposed to potentially violent situations from children, adults or members of the public?

### **Risk could be:**

If a woman is exposed to the risk of violence at work during pregnancy, when she has recently given birth or while she is breastfeeding this may be harmful. It can lead to miscarriage, premature delivery and underweight birth, and it may affect the ability to breastfeed.

### **How to Avoid the Risk**

All face to face contact with service users where there is believed to be a significant risk above that identified by the generic risk assessment must be risk assessed.

Adjust the environment – avoid lone working, reduce/remove the face to face client contact, reassign difficult cases.

If you cannot significantly reduce the risk of violence you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

## **7. Welfare**

Is there a rest room or a suitable area for the student to rest?

Has the student received any advice from the doctor or midwife that has any bearing on her role?

Are there any other specific welfare issues mentioned by the student?

Is the student allowed regular breaks?

Is the student allowed to take a comfort break when needed?

Does the student suffer from morning sickness? This may be relevant where early morning placements, lessons, study sessions, etc, or where there may be exposure to nauseating smells.

The student's posture is also significant if varicose veins and/or haemorrhoids develop – the latter also being linked with a hot work environment.

Can nursing mothers frequently re-hydrate?

Are nursing mothers aware there is a facility for privately expressing milk?

### **Risk can be:**

**Rest facilities** – Tiredness increases during and after pregnancy and may be exacerbated by study related factors.

**Hygiene facilities** – Because of pressure on the bladder and other changes associated with pregnancy, pregnant women often have to go to the toilet more frequently and urgently than others. Breastfeeding women may also need to, due to the increased fluid intake to promote breast milk production.

### **How to Avoid the Risk**

**Rest facilities** – There must be facilities to sit or lie down in comfort and in privacy. Access to drinking water should also be available.

**Hygiene facilities** – If necessary measures should be put in place to ensure that new and expectant mothers can leave their environment at short notice.

**Expressing milk facilities** - The University has facilities available for nursing mothers to express milk in Interview Room 1 (Student Centre) Monday to Friday from 9 am until 5 pm and in the Quiet Room (Chancellors Mall) Monday to Friday from 5 pm to 8.30 pm.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

## **8. Working at height**

Does the student have to carry out any activity that requires them to work from height? (**Such as putting up displays, ladder use**).

### **Risk could be:**



It is hazardous for pregnant women to work at heights, for example for short duration work off of ladders.

### **How to avoid the Risk**

Working at height should be avoided by new and expectant mothers.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

## **9. Stress**

Is the student exposed to undue stress such as assessment/examination periods?

Has a mental health assessment been carried out?

### **Risk could be:**

New and expectant mothers can be particularly vulnerable to occupational stressors for a variety of reasons at times of exams or handing in assignments, dissertations, etc.

- Hormonal, physiological and psychological changes occur and sometimes change rapidly during and after pregnancy, sometimes affecting susceptibility to stress, or to anxiety or depression in individuals.
- Financial, emotional and insecurity may be issues, due to changes in economic circumstances brought about by pregnancy.
- It may be difficult to organise work and private life, especially with long, unpredictable or unsocial working hours or where other family responsibilities are involved.

Stress is associated in some studies with increased incidence of miscarriage and pregnancy loss, and also with impaired ability to breastfeed.

Where women have recently suffered loss through stillbirth, miscarriage, adoption at birth, or neonatal death, they will be especially vulnerable to stress, as will women who have experienced serious illness or trauma associated with pregnancy or childbirth.

### **How to Avoid the Risk**

The University's Student Mental Health Policy details initiatives, sources of advice, training and support systems available to students.

Protective measures may include adjustments to study times, attendance, and ensuring that the necessary understanding, support and recognition is available when the women returns to study without compromising academic standards.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

## **10. Biological**

Is the student exposed to any infectious diseases particularly the following:

- Rubella (measles)
- Chickenpox
- Slapped cheek disease
- Chlamydia
- Psittaci (from lambs)
- Zika Virus
- Other (specify)

For more information on diseases refer to the Health Protection Agency Guidance on Communicable Disease and Infection Control in Schools and Nurseries or to the Safetynet document on Infectious Control Guidance.

Is the student exposed to any bodily fluids?

### **Risk could be:**

The level of risk will depend on the type of activity carried out, the infectious disease the student is exposed to and the control measures in place. There will be an increased risk of exposure to student who have contact with;

- Human blood and body fluids
- Infected animals including parrots, turkeys, pigeons, ducks, cats, rodents and sheep as well as household pets.
- Laboratory cultures
- Water or food contaminated by human or animal faeces
- First aid duties

Usually during pregnancy, women are no more likely to catch an infection than at other times, however in some cases, the infection may be more severe in pregnancy. It is important to remember that if the mother does become infected, some infections may be dangerous for the baby.

### **How to Avoid the Risk**

When assessing the infection risks to all students the following should be considered:-

- The types of infection likely to be transmitted at work
- The possible sources of infection
- The likelihood that a possible source of infection i.e. pet, service user, is actually infected

- The number of different sources of infection that student may come into contact with and how often it may occur
- The control measures already in place to protect students
- The medical history of the student (Nurse Advisor may be able to assist without breaching confidentiality with the student)
- The history of previous infection or immunisation (Nurse Advisor may be able to assist without breaching confidentiality with the student)
- The need for suitable information, instruction and training for students which may help them to prevent or reduce the risk from infection.

Protective gloves should be worn in all cases of students dealing with bodily fluids.

Guidance on infections that are known to present a risk to the foetus and new-born baby are detailed in Appendix 2 of the HSE publication 'Infection Risks to new and expectant mothers in the workplace'.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

### **11. Chemical Agent**

Is the student exposed to any chemical agents? (Check COSHH risk assessments and chemical datasheets)

Is the student exposed to cigarette smoke?

Is the student exposed to Ionising Radiation? (Procedures should be designed to keep exposure of the pregnant woman as low as reasonably practicable and certainly below the statutory dose limit for pregnant women.)

#### **Risk could be:**

##### **Hazardous Substances –**

Although substances have the potential to be harmful there may be no risk in practice because exposure is below the harmful level.

Some substances are classified with the following warnings: - R40: possible risk of irreversible effects, R45: may cause cancer, R46: may cause heritable genetic damage, R40: may cause cancer by inhalation, R61 may cause harm to the unborn child, R63 possible risk of harm to the unborn child & R64 may cause harm to breastfed babies. However, the actual risk to health of these substances is determined by how they are used in the learning or study environment.

**Ionising Radiation** – Significant exposure to ionising radiation can be harmful to the foetus. There may also be a risk to the foetus from significant amounts of radioactive contamination breathed in or ingested by the mother and transferred across the

placenta. If nursing mothers work with radioactive liquids or dusts, these can cause exposure if the child, particularly through contamination of the mother's skin.

### **How to Avoid the Risk**

**Hazardous Substances** – All hazardous substances should have a COSHH assessment carried out upon it. COSHH data sheets should be supplied by the chemical company and COSHH assessment then carried out and the appropriate control measure put in to place.

**Ionising Radiation** – Safe practices should be designed to keep exposure of the pregnant woman as low as is reasonably practicable, and certainly below the statutory dose limit for pregnant women. Special attention should be paid to the possibility of nursing mothers receiving radioactive contamination. They should not work in areas where the risk of contamination is high and therefore alternative work should be arranged.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

### **12. Any other issues**

Increasing size may present problems: consider personal protective clothing (PPE) and uniforms that may be worn by students.

If a risk has been identified indicate on the Risk Assessment Checklist the action to be taken to remove the hazard or reduce the risk.

If you cannot reduce the risk to a significantly low level, you should offer the pregnant woman and new mother alternative arrangements including suspending studies.

**Further guidance and information to help you complete a pregnancy risk assessment can be obtained from the following sites:**

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/POD/HealthandSafety/HandSManual.aspx>

- Risk Assessments
- Controlling the risks with Display Screen Equipment
- Managing the risk of Violence and Aggression
- Managing the risk to Health as a result of using Substances Hazardous to Health
- Managing the Health and Safety Risks due to Line Working
- Managing the Health and Safety Risks of Off Site Activities excluding Work Placement and Working Overseas
- Managing Health and Safety Risks in Research

- Managing Health and Safety of Overseas Activities

The following free leaflets can be downloaded from the HSE website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk>

- COSHH Essentials
- Display Screen Equipment
- Manual Handling
- Noise at Work Advice for Employers
- New and expectant mothers
- Working at height
- Infection risks to new and expectant mothers in the learning or study environment

Further guidance and information on student mental health issues can be obtained from the following sites:

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk.uk/Students/PoliciesRegulations.aspx>

- Student Appeals Policy
- Mitigating circumstances
- Mental Health Policy