



LIVERPOOL  
HOPE  
UNIVERSITY  
Est. 1844

# **Student/Apprentice Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy**

**Document Control**

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EIA	This policy promotes equality and inclusivity by ensuring that pregnant students/apprentices and student/apprentice parents are not disadvantaged in their education or training due to pregnancy, childbirth, maternity, paternity, or adoption responsibilities. The Policy aligns with equality legislation and seeks to address potential barriers and foster a supportive learning environment where all students and apprentices are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness, irrespective of their gender, family status or parental responsibilities.

# **Student and Apprentice Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Liverpool Hope University values the diversity of its student population and is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for its students and apprentices. The University believes that becoming a parent should not in itself prevent any student or apprentice from succeeding in their studies/apprenticeship and recognises its legal and moral obligations to those who are new and expectant mothers and fathers, and those who are adopting.
- 1.2 The Equality Act 2010 places a legal responsibility on the University to protect persons from pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination, and the University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that no student or apprentice is disadvantaged due to pregnancy and maternity.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy provides information for students, apprentices and staff regarding the University's approach to supporting students and apprentices who:
- are pregnant
  - have recently given birth
  - have recently experienced stillbirth or miscarriage
  - have terminated a pregnancy
  - has or gains parental responsibility for a child under 26 weeks old.
- 2.2 This document also provides details of the arrangements for students/apprentices who choose to adopt and details the arrangements for partners of pregnant people.

## **3. Guiding Principles**

- 3.1 The University is committed to the following principles in its treatment of pregnancy, maternity and adoption as it relates to students and apprentices:
- Students/apprentices will be provided with reasonable academic support throughout the period of pregnancy and maternity or adoption and, wherever practicable, will not be unreasonably prevented from applying for, registering upon, or successfully completing a course/apprenticeship.
  - All reasonable steps will be taken to avoid less favourable treatment of pregnant students/apprentices, including those in a period of maternity or adoption. The degree of flexibility possible is likely to vary between course/apprenticeship programme and the level of risk involved, balanced against the University's other obligations (e.g. duty

of care, health and safety, ensuring academic standards are not compromised and other students'/apprentices' ability to learn is not impeded).

- The University will endeavor to enable student/apprentice choice in a fair and non-judgmental manner and will not attempt to direct or unduly influence a student/apprentice's decisions (in cases where there is deemed a significant risk to the student/apprentice and/or their unborn child, the University may be legally obliged to make decisions based on health and safety concerns).
- The University is committed to promoting equality and supporting students and apprentices where reasonably possible. Each case will be reviewed on the basis of the individual circumstances and the health and well-being of the student/apprentice and child will be considered of paramount importance throughout.

#### **4. Notification of Pregnancy**

- 4.1 There is no legal requirement for applicants, students or apprentices to inform the University if they are pregnant or become pregnant whilst registered on a course/apprenticeship, including whilst on placement. However, prospective and current students/apprentices are strongly encouraged to disclose a pregnancy at the earliest opportunity (preferably at least 15 weeks before the child is due) as this will enable the University to carry out the necessary health and safety assessment(s). It will also allow the University to identify and put in place any appropriate adjustments and/or support measures.
- 4.2 Early notification of pregnancy is especially important for students and apprentices following courses that may involve potentially high risks to the student/apprentice and/or their unborn child (e.g. high levels of physical activity/exertion, exposure to toxic substances/chemicals/radiation, infectious diseases etc.). It is important to note that in the case of students/apprentices with a potential exposure to hazardous chemicals or radiation, the greatest risk to the health of an embryo or foetus arises within the first 13 weeks of pregnancy
- 4.3 Upon request, the student/apprentice will provide written confirmation of the pregnancy from doctor or midwife.
- 4.4 Students/apprentices should inform a member of their academic or apprenticeship team of their pregnancy (e.g. Personal Tutor, Course Leader, Research Supervisor, Skills Coach, etc.) and give an early indication of any period of interruption of studies/break in learning they may be anticipating (if applicable and known). Where a student is studying a combined award, they should inform an appropriate member of staff from both subject areas.

- 4.5 At this point, the person(s) who is initially informed of the pregnancy, should obtain consent from the student/apprentice to share details with the Head(s) of School and others on a need-to-know basis. The student/apprentice should be signposted as appropriate to further sources of advice and support (see Appendix 1).

## **5. Health and Safety**

- 5.1 Upon notification of a student/apprentice's pregnancy, the Head(s) of School (or nominee) will take responsibility for reviewing the health and safety risks to the student/apprentice and their unborn child by completing a Maternity Risk Assessment Form. The risk assessment should be carried out with the student/apprentice at the earliest possible opportunity and cover all aspects of their course/apprenticeship. In cases where the student is studying on a combined award, it is necessary for the Head of School (or nominee) from each subject to carry out a risk assessment.
- 5.2 With appropriate consent, the Apprentice Skills Coach will liaise with The University's Apprentice Business Development Manager and the relevant Programme Lead(s) to ensure that a risk assessment is carried out relating to the University campus and workplace. A Student Maternity Risk Assessment template can be accessed via the [Student/Apprentice Pregnancy and Maternity information](#) webpage on the Staff Gateway.
- 5.3 Any pertinent issues arising from the risk assessment, including any practical implications, will be taken into account when making decisions around how the pregnancy might be accommodated and what adjustments and mitigations may need to be made. Where necessary, advice regarding conducting the Maternity Risk Assessment can be sought from the University's Health and Safety Adviser.
- 5.4 In cases where there is deemed a significant risk to the student/apprentice and/or their unborn child, the University may be legally obliged to make decisions based on health and safety concerns.

## **6. International Students**

- 6.1 International students on tier 4 student visas who become pregnant during their studies are advised that they must seek up-to-date immigration advice promptly from the University's International Student Compliance Officer. Students cannot extend their visa for reasons relating to pregnancy or maternity, and the maximum period of approved authorised absence will be considered on an individual basis in line with UK Visa and Immigration Authority (UKVI) regulations. In all cases, the University's legal responsibilities imposed by Government through the immigration system will take precedence.

## **7. Students/Apprentices on Programmes Leading to Professional Registration**

- 7.1 Students/apprentices on professional, regulated programmes are required to demonstrate certain knowledge, skills and competencies required by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) that must be satisfied. This will be taken into account when agreeing what reasonable adjustments will be made, including any associated period of interruption of studies/break in learning.

## **8. The Student/Apprentice Pregnancy and Maternity Support Plan**

- 8.1 A Student/Apprentice Pregnancy and Maternity Support Plan should start to be prepared with the student/apprentice as soon as possible, once they have notified the University of the pregnancy. The Head of School (or nominee) from the relevant subject area(s) will arrange an initial meeting with the student/apprentice to begin the process and the plan will be developed jointly by the student/apprentice and nominated person(s).

The Student/Apprentice Pregnancy and Maternity Support Plan template can be accessed via the [Student/Apprentice Pregnancy and Maternity information](#) webpage on the Staff Gateway.

- 8.2 It is not intended that the Plan will be fully completed at a first meeting, as initially, it is likely that the student/apprentice will be unable – and should not be expected – to respond to all the issues raised.
- 8.3 The student/apprentice should meet with the Head(s) of School (or nominee) periodically during the pregnancy to ensure that any special arrangements/adjustments that have been put in place are working effectively, making any further adjustments where necessary.
- 8.4 The Plan should be reviewed at key stages (e.g. 16 weeks pregnant, 24 weeks pregnant, and prior to return to study); and at any key points during the academic year (e.g. prior to examinations/ field trips/ placement, etc.).
- 8.5 The Plan should also be reviewed where the student/apprentice's situation changes due to unforeseen circumstances. Where pregnancy-related illness/health issues arise that may require the identification of further reasonable adjustments, alternative assessments or other support arrangements, the student/apprentice should be referred to the Senior Learning Support Adviser at the earliest opportunity for further assistance, noting the referral in the Plan.
- 8.6 Any additional arrangements that may be necessary to facilitate the return to studies/ apprenticeship following childbirth should be noted in the Plan. This may include the provision of a suitable facility to allow the student/apprentice to express breast

milk/breastfeed, or enabling access to public areas/facilities or services (e.g., Library, catering outlets, support services, etc.) on site accompanied by their new-born child for a temporary period, where necessary. In such cases, a risk assessment should be completed (or original Maternity Risk Assessment updated), by the Head(s) of School (or nominee) in liaison with the University's Health and Safety Adviser.

- 8.7 When completing the risk assessment, along with any potential health and safety risks involved, supervision of the child and the potential for disruption to other students' learning should be considered and included as part of the discussion with the student/apprentice.
- 8.8 Students/apprentices should ensure they have suitable childcare arrangements in place at times when they are expected to be at university for scheduled teaching or research activities. A government childcare grant may be available to undergraduate students to help with the costs of childcare, and students are advised to contact their funding provider for information. Apprentices may be eligible to receive other forms of government childcare support provision. (See Appendix 1 for more information on Childcare grant/government childcare support provision).

## **9. Extenuating Circumstances**

- 9.1 Where a student/apprentice becomes unwell during their pregnancy, or something unplanned or unexpected occurs (such as pregnancy-related illness, early labour, etc.), they may require additional support beyond that outlined in the Student Pregnancy and Maternity Support Plan. In such circumstances, the student/apprentice should liaise with the named contact within their School/ or Skills Coach in the first instance, to ascertain whether further reasonable adjustments can be identified (e.g., where appropriate, moving an assessment submission deadline, or arranging an alternative form of assessment). The Senior Learning Support Adviser can also be contacted to advise in such circumstances, where necessary.
- 9.2 In more serious cases (such as miscarriage, termination of pregnancy, still birth, or the need for neonatal care), initiating the University's Mitigating Circumstances Procedure may be appropriate. The University will give sensitive consideration to the impact of such circumstances on the student/apprentice's ability to undertake their studies/apprenticeship, including assessments and examinations.

## **10. Maternity Absence and Return to Study**

- 10.1 Students and apprentices will be permitted to interrupt their studies/take a break in learning following the birth of a child, should they wish to do so. Students/apprentices may request up to 52 weeks maternity leave. The maternity leave can begin at any time from the start of



the 11th week before the expected childbirth due date up to the day the child is born.

Students/apprentices do not have to take the full 52 weeks and can decide when they wish to return to their studies/training. However, the University requires that there is a minimum absence of two weeks following childbirth in order to ensure the health and safety of the student/ apprentice and their new born child.

- 10.2 In cases where the University is concerned about a student/apprentice's health in relation to the proposed return to study/apprenticeship date, formal medical evidence of fitness to return may be requested.
- 10.3 Where the duration of the period of interruption/break in learning taken is substantial, the Student/Apprentice Pregnancy and Maternity Support Plan should detail the steps that will be taken to ensure that the student/apprentice is enabled to keep their subject knowledge up-to-date, (e.g. through the provision of reading lists, research articles, webinars, etc.).
- 10.4 Where there are concerns about the student/apprentice meeting the requirements of their course/apprenticeship (e.g. coursework assessments, examinations, PSRB requirements, etc.), reasonable arrangements wherever practicable may be made for alternative assessment methods to be used, or completion of the requirements prior to the commencement of the period of interruption/break in learning, or during it. Such adjustments/arrangements should also be detailed in the Plan.
- 10.5 In certain exceptional cases, and following the review of the Student Pregnancy and Maternity Support Plan prior to the student/apprentice's return, an extension to the usual period of interruption/break in learning may be agreed, (e.g. in cases of post-natal depression, serious illness, infant death, or where there is no suitable childcare).
- 10.6 The University will make every effort to avoid or minimise the impact on a student/ apprentice's ability to continue and complete their studies/apprenticeship. However, if there are occasions when pregnancy, maternity or adoption may impact upon the continuation and completion of studies/apprenticeship, the University will discuss and explain the implications with the student/apprentice.

## **11. Adoption**

- 11.1 The University is committed to supporting students/apprentices who choose to become primary adopters. Students/apprentices who are planning to adopt should inform a member of their academic team (e.g. Personal Tutor, Course Leader, Research Supervisor, etc.) or Skills Coach as early as possible. Where a student is studying on a combined award, they should inform an appropriate member of staff from both subject areas.

- 11.2 The student/apprentice will provide written confirmation of the proposed adoption, supplied by the Adoption Agency or Local Authority.
- 11.3 At this point, consent should be obtained from the student/apprentice to share details of their intention to become a primary adopter with the Head(s) of faculty/school, (and others on a need-to-know basis). The Head(s) of School (or nominees) will then liaise with the student/apprentice, relevant academic staff and where necessary, other professional services to co-ordinate arrangements in order to take reasonable steps to meet the student/apprentice's educational support needs during the relevant period of adoption. This will include any associated periods of leave, suspension of studies/break in learning, and upon return to studies/apprenticeship.
- 11.4 Students/apprentices may request to take up to 52 weeks of Adoption Leave. They do not have to take the full 52 weeks and can decide when they wish to return to their studies/training. Only one member of a couple jointly adopting may take Adoption Leave, regardless of whether one or both members of the couple are students. The other member in the couple may request to take a period of leave to support their partner following the adoption (see section 12 below).
- 11.5 Any arrangements and/or reasonable adjustments agreed should be documented in the Student/Apprentice Pregnancy and Maternity Support Plan (e.g. arrangements for pre-adoption meetings, examinations and assessments, student finances, periods of Adoption Leave, suspension of studies/break in learning, and communications during the period of adoption, etc.).

## **12. Partner Leave/Second Parent Leave**

- 12.1 A student/apprentice whose partner is pregnant, or is part of a couple adopting, will be permitted reasonable time off studies/training in order to enable them to accompany their partner to any medical/adoption appointments prior to/after the birth or adoption, as well as a period of paternity leave/maternity support leave following the birth. Basic paternity leave/maternity support leave is typically two consecutive weeks taken within 56 days of the birth (or child placement in the case of adoption), however if the student/apprentice wishes to request a longer period of leave, this should be discussed with a member of their School or Apprentice Skills Coach in the first instance.
- 12.2 The academic Faculty/School will take reasonable steps to ensure that the student/apprentice is able to catch up with any sessions missed should the teaching materials not be available on the University's virtual learning environment (Moodle).

- 12.3 Upon request, the student/apprentice will be required to provide formal evidence confirming any medical/adoption appointments.
- 12.4 If a student/apprentice wishes to request an extension to a submission deadline as a result of being affected by a partner's pregnancy, maternity or adoption, they should follow the normal extension request process.
- 12.5 If a student/apprentice wishes to request an interruption of studies/break in learning following a partner's birth or adoption if they intend to take on primary caring responsibilities, they should discuss this with a member of their School or Apprentice Skills Coach in the first instance. Details of any agreed arrangements should be updated in the Student/Apprentice Pregnancy and Maternity Plan.

### **13. Complaints Procedure**

- 13.1 Students or apprentices who are not satisfied with the arrangements identified to support them during their pregnancy, maternity, paternity, or adoption may submit a complaint by following the University's [Student and Apprentice Complaints Procedure](#).

### **14. Data Protection**

- 14.1 All data and correspondence relating to student/apprentices' pregnancy, maternity, paternity, or adoption support will be processed in accordance with the [University's Data Protection Policy](#).

## **Sources of Help/Support and Further Information**

### **Liverpool Hope - Student Life Team**

Providing a range of support services including mental health, counselling, well-being, disability, student funds/finance, and learning support. Student Life also provides advice and assistance to university staff in the area of student mental health, well-being and disability/learning support.

T: 0151 291 3427 - E: [studentlife@hope.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@hope.ac.uk)

### **Liverpool Hope Students' Union Advice Service**

Providing advice and advocacy for students covering a range of issues.

T: 0151 291 3708 - E: [suadvice@hope.ac.uk](mailto:suadvice@hope.ac.uk)

### **Liverpool Hope Global Student and Partnership Centre**

Providing information, advice, signposting and assistance to international students.

T: 0151 291 3308 - E: [globalcentre@hope.ac.uk](mailto:globalcentre@hope.ac.uk)

### **Liverpool Hope Chaplaincy Service**

Providing a listening service, pastoral support, and hospitality for persons of any faith or none.

T: 0151 291 3545 - E: [chaplaincy@hope.ac.uk](mailto:chaplaincy@hope.ac.uk)

### **LHU Health and Safety Adviser**

Providing advice to university staff regarding health and safety matters

T: 0151 291 3835 - E: [fahye@hope.ac.uk](mailto:fahye@hope.ac.uk)

### **Local GP Surgeries linked to Liverpool Hope**

#### **Rutherford Medical Centre**

1 Rutherford Road  
Liverpool  
L18 0HJ  
T: 0151 722 1803

#### **Valley Medical Centre**

75 Hartsbourne Avenue  
Liverpool  
L25 1RY  
T: 0151 722 2744

#### **Islington House Medical Centre**

45 Everton Road  
Liverpool  
L6 2EH  
T: 0151 317 8600

## **External sources of advice and support (pregnancy and maternity)**

Both Mumsnet and the National Childbirth Trust (NCT) provide lots of useful information on all aspects of pregnancy, childbirth, child development and parenting (including details of local support groups and meet-ups for pregnant and new parents), which you may find helpful.

<http://www.mumsnet.com/>

<http://www.nct.org.uk/>

## **Childcare Grant Information**

<https://www.ucas.com/money-and-student-life/money/student-finance/student-finance-england/dependants-grants-full-time-students/childcare-grants-full-time-students>

<https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/products/full-time-undergraduate-education/full-time-childcare-grant/>

<https://www.gov.uk/childcare-grant/eligibility>

Northern Ireland:

<https://www.studentfinancenir.co.uk/types-of-finance/undergraduate/full-time/tuition-fee-and-living-cost-students/extra-help/childcare-grant/what-is-it/>

**Childcare Choices information** \*(Apprentices can check their eligibility for support with childcare)

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

## **Liverpool City Council early years and childcare information**

You can search for day nurseries, school nurseries and childminders on the Liverpool Early Help Directory as well as other services for children, young people and families. The Early Help Directory is an online directory of local and national organisations, services, events and activities that exist to support children, young people and families.

<https://liverpool.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/early-years-and-childcare/nursery-and-childcare-providers/>

## **Pregnancy and Maternity for Students: A guide to benefits**

<https://workingfamilies.org.uk/articles/pregnancy-and-maternity-for-students/>

## **External sources of adoption advice and support**

<https://www.gov.uk/child-adoption>

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/fostering-adoption-kinshipcare/adoption-support/>

<https://www.first4adoption.org.uk/adoption-support/>