

Student Maternity, Maternity Support and Adoption Policy
Family Friendly Policy
2021

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1. Introduction

This Policy provides advice and guidance on issues related to study, health and safety, and finance to:

- i) Students who become pregnant during their studies, prospective students who are already pregnant when they commence study, students who have given birth within the previous 26 weeks, their partners and those who have recently become parents (e.g. through adoption)
- ii) University staff who may have a role in advising students coming to them with these issues.
- iii) The term student is used in the policy paper and its appendices to include degree apprentices.

2. Scope of the Policy

The policy covers:

- Any student who becomes pregnant during their studies,
- Prospective students who are already pregnant when they commence study
- Any student who has given birth within the previous 26 weeks
- Any student who is about to become a parent because their partner (including same sex partner) is pregnant, and who expects to be responsible for the child
- Any student who has recently become a parent e.g. through adoption

3. Policy Statement

The University of Liverpool is committed to promoting equality in all its activities and aims to provide a work, learning, research and teaching environment free from discrimination and unfair treatment. The University actively seeks to develop best practice in discharging its legal responsibility.

The University believes that becoming pregnant or caring for a child should not, in itself, prevent any student from succeeding in their studies. The University is committed to showing as much flexibility as possible to facilitate students' success, making sure no student is disadvantaged whilst ensuring academic standards are not compromised. The degree of flexibility that can be offered will vary between academic disciplines, but all Departments, Schools, Institutes or Faculties will follow the general approach set out in this document.

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

The policy focuses primarily on study-related matters, but sources of help and advice on related issues can be found at the end of the document.

4. Rights and Responsibilities

This section covers rights and responsibilities for students, staff and the University of Liverpool.

4.1 For students who become pregnant during their studies

4.1.1. Confirming the Pregnancy

A student who suspects they are pregnant should see their midwife, GP or other healthcare professional to have the pregnancy confirmed as soon as they can. If they decide to terminate the pregnancy, or miscarries, this need not be disclosed to the University. Absence from the University required as a result should be classed as 'sick leave' but there is no need to give the specific reason. Details of the University's Absence Policy can be found at

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/media/livacuk/student-administration/student-administration-centre/documents/Sickness,Absence,Policy,2021-2022.docx>

4.2 For students who become pregnant during their studies, those who are pregnant when their studies begin and those who have given birth within the previous 26 weeks.

4.2.1. Contacting the Department, School, Faculty or Institute

Any students who are pregnant at the time they commence their studies, irrespective of whether they were pregnant when they accepted the place or during their studies or who becomes pregnant during their studies, should let their Department, School or Faculty know as soon as possible. The University can only make provision for the student if they let them know about the pregnancy. Whilst the Academic Adviser, postgraduate Supervisor or Learning and Teaching Officer would normally be the first point of contact, the student can initially choose to speak to another member of staff with whom they feel more comfortable.

However, students should note that the Academic Adviser, Supervisor or Learning and Teaching Support Officer will be informed. This is in the student's best interest as, in the event of an examination or other compulsory component being missed and the student being unable/unwilling to provide evidence (e.g. because it is of a confidential nature), the Academic Adviser, Supervisor or Learning and Teaching Support Officer can confirm that they have seen evidence to cover the absence.

Students who have given birth during the 26 weeks preceding the start of their programme of study are also advised to inform their Department, School or Faculty.

Overseas students are unlikely to be entitled to maternity benefits and the university recommends that they should return home unless they have sufficient funds to

remain in the UK. Overseas students who have financial sponsors must inform the sponsors of their circumstances and agree an appropriate plan of action. Overseas students who return home for the birth of the child should note that most airlines will not carry pregnant passengers after 7 months of pregnancy have elapsed. Also, overseas students returning home should arrange for continuing ante-natal care in their home country and take with them details of any care they have received in the UK.

Please contact International Advice and Guidance in Student Services for more advice on suspending your studies and returning home. The team can give comprehensive immigration advice and support you with any concerns you may have. The team can be contacted at iagteam@liv.ac.uk or for more information call 0151 794 5863.

4.2.2. Implications for Study

The Department, School, Institute or Faculty will meet with the student to discuss how the pregnancy or maternity period is likely to impact on their study. There may need to be a suspension of studies or a deferral of the start of study, depending on when the baby is due. The student, together with their Adviser or Supervisor will decide whether an interruption or deferral is needed and in the case of a suspension of study, the time period this needs to cover. This decision also needs to consider the academic requirements of the student's programme. A student with a baby due near the examination period might require confirmation from their doctor that they are fit to sit exams. Time off might also be needed for medical appointments.

A support plan should be devised (in writing) by an academic member of staff with assistance from appropriate support staff. The plan should detail any special arrangements agreed during the student's pregnancy and in the first 26 weeks after the birth, including the agreed timescale for their return to study. The student should receive a copy of the support plan, as should other appropriate member(s) of staff requiring this information, where required. The student's permission should be established before passing on any information.

If the student continues to study during their pregnancy and during the first 26 weeks after giving birth, they should meet regularly with designated members of staff to review the support plan and to assess the effectiveness of any special arrangements put in place. Where necessary, further adjustments may be made where practicable.

4.2.3 Field work /placement

Where the student plans to take part in field work or placement as part of their studies, during their pregnancy, or the first 26 weeks following the birth of a child, a risk assessment should be carried out by the Department, School, Institute or Faculty responsible for organising the field work or placement. There may be particular risks associated with the field work/placement and the student should discuss this fully with the appropriate member of staff.

4.2.4 Study abroad/ placement

If the student becomes pregnant whilst on a study year abroad or on a placement, they must contact the Department, School, Institute or Faculty and, if appropriate, the Study Abroad Team, to make appropriate plans to ensure that health is safeguarded and academic progress is properly managed. There may be particular risks associated with the field work/placement and the student should discuss this fully with the appropriate member of staff.

4.2.5. Maternity related absence

All students are allowed to take maternity-related absence following the birth of their child. The length of absence will be determined by the personal circumstances of the student and the structure and content of their course. Students are required to take a minimum of two weeks absence following the birth. Normally, registered students should be allowed to take one year out of study. However, this is with due regard to academic structures on individual programmes.

Where there is concern about knowledge of the academic subject being affected by the length of maternity related absence, the Department, School, Institute or Faculty should take steps to ensure the student is kept up to date with any academic developments so the student is not disadvantaged when returning to study.

Students should indicate the date on which they intend to start maternity related absence this should include the length of maternity related absence that they intend to take. It is recommended that the student inform the Department, School, Institute or Faculty in writing at least 15 weeks before the baby is due to allow time to review the support plan, make the necessary arrangements and ensure information is communicated as required.

Students requiring a Visa to study in the UK must check the terms of their Visa closely and comply with any restrictions or requirements. If clarification is needed on the terms of the Visa, this should be sought immediately from International Advice and Guidance <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/studentssupport/visas-and-immigration/>

4.2.6 Still births and miscarriages

If a student miscarries, has a still birth or neonatal death they are entitled to take time off (medical leave) or apply for a leave of absence. Counselling and advice services are listed below in 'External sources of information and help'.

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.

The first point of contact for student support enquiries is the Student Support Team:
<http://www.liv.ac.uk/studentsupport/>

4.2.6 Resuming studies

The student must inform the Department, School, Institute or Faculty when they are ready to return and the support plan should be reviewed with their Academic Adviser, Supervisor or Learning and Teaching Support Officer to ensure an appropriate timetable for re-integration into their programme of study, including the examination schedule and any special features such as fieldwork or placements. The student must also notify Student Administration and Support to ensure that their University record is updated to indicate that they have returned to programme of study.

4.2.7. Health and Safety

The University has a code of practice for new and expectant mothers.
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/safety/guidance/new-and-expectant-mothers/>
It is recommended practice that the code is applied to both staff and students.

4.2.8. Financial Considerations

It is recommended that you seek advice from the Money Advice and Guidance at the University. They will be able to advise on a range of financial issues including possible additional student funding and eligibility for any maternity benefits (known as maternity allowance), welfare benefits and tax credits. Further advice can be found at <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/studentsupport/money-advice/> for advice on your finances

Undergraduate students should note that funding will usually stop when the suspension of study begins.

UK Students should be advised to seek advice from Money Advice and Guidance to ensure they inform relevant funding bodies of their change in circumstances.

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. Further advice should be sought from International Advice and Guidance and the LDC PGR Student Experience Team.

The benefit rules are different for EU students and international students, and further advice should be sought from the International Advice and Guidance:
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/studentsupport/visas-and-immigration/>

4.2.9. Accommodation

Students who become pregnant whilst living in University accommodation may find that this is no longer suitable for health and safety reasons. Contact should be made with the Accommodation Office for advice:

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/accommodation/>

4.2.10. Childcare

This will need advance planning; it is advisable to make arrangements at the beginning of your pregnancy.

The University contracts 'Kids in Bloom' to provide high quality, flexible childcare at its purpose-built Children's Centre. For more information, please visit the Kids in Bloom website www.kidsinbloom.co.uk.

There are a limited number of 36-week contracts for taught students. Liverpool Council website also includes information on how to find a childcare provider (a link to their website is provided below).

4.2.11 Breastfeeding and milk expression

The University of Liverpool is proud to have joined the Breastfeeding Mayoral Quality Mark promoting our campus as a breastfeeding friendly environment. Breastfeeding in public places is protected under the Equality Act 2010 for as long as the student wishes to breastfeed their baby, toddler or small child without an age restriction. Protection covers any public space from parks and leisure facilities to public buildings. The following is a non-exhaustive list of locations on campus that have been designated as breastfeeding-friendly locations on campus:

1. Augustus John Pub
2. Chemistry Building Cafe'
3. Leahurst House Café
4. Life Science Building Café
5. Management School Café
6. Ness Gardens Café
7. Sydney Jones Library Café
8. Waterhouse Café (Victoria Gallery & Museum)
9. Vine Court Café
10. Liverpool Guild - Sphinx Bar, Court Yard Bar, Starbucks, and Guild Walk

Some students may return to their studies while continuing to breastfeed their child at home. Should they wish to express milk on campus, requests should be reasonably considered and accommodated locally. Where possible, students should be provided with a private, clean area to express milk such as an office or seminar room. Students should enquire within their department about any local designated spaces.

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

Any student discovering they are to become a father, or any student partner of a pregnant person (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. A student in this situation should contact their Adviser of Studies, Supervisor or another staff member, to discuss this.

Flexibility will be shown where possible although this will necessarily be more limited in some programmes than others. It should be noted that the Academic Adviser, Supervisor or Learning and Teaching Support Officer will require to be informed, even if discussions involve a different staff member. Authorised absence can be considered depending on the structure of the academic programme and following discussions with their Adviser of Studies or Supervisor.

For students receiving research funding, it may be possible for a period of support leave to be allowed, and students should contact their sponsor or provider prior to arranging leave. Please see Appendix A for further guidance for postgraduate research students

Students requiring a Visa to study in the UK must check the terms of their Visa closely and comply with any restrictions or requirements. If clarification is needed on the terms of the Visa, students should obtain advice from International Advice and Guidance

4.4 For students about to become parents (e.g. through adoption)

Students about to become new parents (e.g. through adoption) should inform their Department, School, Institute or Faculty of their circumstances as soon as possible. Arrangements can be made to allow time out of study.

This may vary depending on the age of the child, the programme of study being undertaken, and the point in the academic session at which the event takes place. Again, the Academic Adviser, Supervisor or Learning and Teaching Support Officer will be informed if discussions involve a different staff member.

5. Complaints

Any student who feels that the University has failed to meet the standards set out in this policy may raise a complaint, this should be done initially with their academic department under the University complaints procedure:

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/student-administration/policies-procedures/complaints/>

6. Further sources of information and help

Childcare

University of Liverpool - Families with Children moving from abroad

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/working/relocating/childcareandschools/>

University of Liverpool – The Children’s centre

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/working/whyworkhere/familyfriendly/childcare/childrenscentre/>

Liverpool City Council- Find Nursery/Childcare Providers:

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

Healthcare Advice

NHS (National Health Service)

<http://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx>

Brook

0151 207 4000

<https://www.brook.org.uk/>

Marie Stopes Foundation

020 7574 7400

www.mariestopes.org.uk

National Childbirth Trust (NCT)

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

Sands (Stillbirth and neonatal death charity) - The Still Birth and Neonatal Death charity provides support to anyone affected by the loss of a baby and conducts research into the causes of still and neo-natal death:

<https://www.sands.org.uk/>

Miscarriage Association

<https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/>

01924 200799

BPAS (British Pregnancy Advisory Service) Merseyside

<https://www.bpas.org/clinics/bpas-merseyside-liverpool/>

03457 304030

Adoption UK

www.adoptionuk.org.uk

0844 848 7900

University of Liverpool Internal support

Wellbeing Team

advice@liv.ac.uk

0151 794 5863

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/studentssupport/>

Student Health

0151 794 4720/5820

<http://www.brownlowhealth.co.uk/>

Finances

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/student-support/money/>

Appendix A - Policy for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave for postgraduate research students

1 Introduction

1.1 This policy is designed to ensure that individuals with caring responsibilities for young children are treated fairly and consistently and are not treated less favourably than other students as a result of their parental responsibilities. Following the birth or placement of a child, eligible postgraduate research students can take maternity, adoption, paternity or shared parental leave as appropriate.

2 Definition of terms used

2.1 Maternity leave – a period of up to 52 weeks of leave that may be taken by postgraduate research students registered at the University of Liverpool following the birth of a child.

2.2 Adoption leave - a period of up to 52 weeks of leave that may be taken by postgraduate research students registered at the University of Liverpool following the placement of a child with an adoptive parent.

2.3 Paternity leave – ordinary paternity leave refers to a period of up to ten days leave available to the partner of the person giving birth, the partner of the primary adopter or an intended parent (for those having a baby through a surrogacy agreement).

2.4 Shared parental leave - a mechanism through which a parent may share their partner's entitlement to maternity or adoption leave

3 Terms and Conditions

3.1 Suspension of study

3.1.1 Any postgraduate research student applying for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave should be requested via Liverpool Life.

3.1.2 Requests for suspension of study requires supporting evidence which will either be a MATB1 form or evidence of placement of a child for adoption. (A MATB1 form is issued approximately 15 weeks before the expected week of birth and is normally provided by the midwife).

3.1.3 When the suspension is granted, the student's final submission date will be amended to consider these circumstances, and the student will be notified of the new submission date by the Liverpool Doctoral College (LDC) PGR Student Experience Team.

3.1.4 After the suspension is agreed, the LDC PGR Student Experience Team will update the student's record to reflect the change to the student's registration status. the LDC PGR Student Experience Team will make any appropriate changes to the student's stipend payments.

3.1.5 Postgraduate research students who also have staff contracts should consult with HR about maternity leave.

3.2 Payments to students

3.2.1 UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)-funded students will be entitled to payment for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave as outlined in this policy.

3.2.2 Students who are funded by the University of Liverpool PGR Scholarships will be entitled to payment for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave as outlined in this policy.

3.2.3 Students who are funded by their Faculty, School, Institute or Department will be entitled to payment for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave as outlined in this policy.

3.2.4 Students who receive external funding either directly from an external organisation or an external award administered through the University of Liverpool must consult with their funder to determine whether payments can be made during periods resulting from adoption, paternity and shared parental leave. If the funder does not provide additional money to fund periods of leave, the University is not liable to provide any payment.

3.2.5 Students who are self-funded (and those entitled to tuition fee only awards), are entitled to the periods of leave detailed within this policy, but will not be eligible for any financial support from the University.

3.2.6 Payments made to University-funded students who are either part-time, or only part-funded by the University, will be subject to a pro-rata adjustment in line with the percentage of funding received.

3.3 Students with UKVI student visas (formally known as Tier 4)

3.3.1 In the case of students sponsored by the University under UKVI Student Visa (formally known as Tier 4), suspension as a result of parental leave may require the University to withdraw sponsorship and for the student to return to their home country for the duration of the leave. In such cases, students will thereafter need to apply to the University for a new CAS number to apply for a new visa to resume their studies.

3.3.2 All requests for parental leave must be made in good time to allow time for approval of the request and to ensure travel home can be made following the report of the suspension to the UKVI.

3.3.3 In all cases, advice should be sought from the International Advice & Guidance Team as early as possible (especially in the case of a pregnancy) to ensure compliance with the student visa (formally known as Tier 4) can be maintained.

3.4 Repayment of stipend payments

3.4.1 Should a student not return to their studies after the period of suspension, any stipend paid during that period will normally be recovered by the University. This requirement could be waived in exceptional circumstances, which would be approved on a case-by-case basis.

3.4.2 Students should return to studies at the University in a full or part-time capacity (at least 50% FTE), for at least 3 months following maternity or adoption leave. Should a student not return to their studies after the period of suspension, any stipend paid during that period will normally be recovered by the University. This requirement could be waived in exceptional circumstances, which would be approved on a case-by-case basis. There is no minimum period of return required after paternity leave.

4 Maternity leave

4.1 Stipend payments during maternity leave

4.1.1 The following table outlines a students' entitlement to stipend payments during maternity leave which is dependent upon the source of funding:

Funding source	Leave Entitlement	Stipend Payments
UKRI-funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
University-funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
Department, School, Institute or Faculty-funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
Externally-funded	52 weeks	Payments at the discretion of the funder
Self-funded	52 weeks	No payment

4.1.2 The reduced rate refers to an equivalent payment that is available to staff who are entitled to statutory maternity pay. The lower level of statutory maternity pay is set by the government each year (see <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave>).

4.1.3 Students who are unsure about the source of their funding should contact their School Postgraduate Administrator for clarification.

4.1.4 Students who are registered at less than 100% will receive their standard pro-rata stipend payments (for the initial 26-week period as above) followed by 13 weeks of the reduced payment, with the appropriate pro-rata percentage applied.

4.1.5 Students do not have to take the full 52 weeks maternity leave and can opt for a shorter period of maternity leave; however, in line with guidance for staff, students should take at least two weeks leave following the birth of the child.

5 Adoption leave

5.1 Students who are planning to or who have become parents as a result of adoption are entitled to the same support and advice as other students who become parents during their

studies, and the processes, leave allowances and stipend payments outlined in the table above and elsewhere in this policy apply equally.

5.2 It is acknowledged that the time-frame for adoption arrangements may not allow as much time for planning in comparison with a pregnant student, and, where this is the case, the student and the member of staff will follow the principles and processes as far as they are able.

5.3 Where two students are jointly adopting, only one member of the couple can be considered as the primary caregiver who will be entitled to be considered for maternity related absence. The other partner will be afforded the same entitlements as is outlined for partners entitled to paternity leave and shared parental leave.

5.4 All references to adoption and adoption leave include circumstances where individuals foster a child for adoption or are 'Parental Order' intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement.

6 Paternity leave

6.1 All postgraduate research students registered at the University of Liverpool are eligible for paternity leave, if they are:

- the partner of the person who will give birth **or**
- the partner of the primary adopter **or**
- the intended parent (if you are having a baby through surrogacy arrangement)

and

- also have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing

6.2 In the case of couples who are adopting a child or having a child through a surrogacy arrangement, adoption leave and pay are available to only one member of the couple. The other person can take paternity leave.

6.3 Paternity leave permits the individual to take up to 10 days leave on full stipend. Paternity leave must be taken in blocks of not less than one week. The funding end date should be extended to cover this period of absence.

7 Shared parental leave

7.1 Shared parental leave is a mechanism through which a parent may share their partner's entitlement to maternity or adoption leave, and is available to those who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- i) They must share responsibility for the child with one of the following: their husband/wife/civil partner, or the child's other parent, or their partner (if they live with them) and they must provide a written statement from the other parent to confirm this;

- ii) They must be taking the leave to look after the child;
- iii) The other parent must have qualified for maternity leave or pay; or statutory adoption leave or pay or maternity allowance, or have qualified for the payment of a stipend during maternity leave under a policy such as this, (e.g. if they are also a research student);
- iv) The other parent must have returned to work and must no longer be in receipt of maternity/adoption pay or allowance, or must have returned to their research/studies if they are also a research student, (the start and end dates of their leave must be provided);
- v) The other parent must have some entitlement to maternity or adoption leave remaining;
- vi) The terms and conditions of their grant must not specifically exclude the taking of such leave.

7.2 The number of weeks that may be taken as shared parental leave will depend on how many of the other parent's 52 weeks of maternity or adoption leave, they have remaining, but will in any event be capped at a maximum entitlement of 39 weeks. Shared parental leave must be taken as a continuous block and may not end later than the child's first birthday.

7.3 The payments and leave entitlement reflect those made to students undertaking maternity leave. Therefore, qualifying students in receipt of UKRI funding, or funded by the University of Liverpool Scholarship, or Faculty, Department, Institute or School funding, will continue to be paid at full stipend for shared parental leave taken in the 26 weeks following the birth of the child, or at the reduced rate in the 13 weeks after week 26.

7.4 The student should apply for a suspension of study as outlined above. All applications should be submitted with a statement from the parent, in receipt of the paid maternity or adoption leave, confirming that the applicant for shared parent leave is their husband/wife/civil partner, or the child's other parent. In addition, the student must also provide the contact details of the employer of the individual in receipt of paid maternity or adoption leave (to check when their entitlement to maternity or adoption leave/pay ends). A form can be obtained from the student's Faculty Office for this purpose.

7.5 Where the individual in receipt of maternity or adoption leave is also a research student, please provide details of the relevant HE Institution

8 Returning to research

Postgraduate research students should confirm their return to studies within the final month of their chosen leave period by emailing the PGR Team (pgrs@liverpool.ac.uk) copying in their supervisor for confirmation. The postgraduate research student will need to complete an Annual Progress Report in order to reinstate their registration, if one is outstanding.