# Student pregnancy support plan

This plan is based on the University’s parental leave policy[[1]](#footnote-1), and will help to coordinate support and ensure students’ needs are met during pregnancy, following the birth, and on the student’s return to their course. The plan 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 of the matters covered.

The plan should be completed by the college Senior Tutor/Tutor for Graduates or equivalent, or the supervisor, or department/faculty Director of Graduate Studies or equivalent depending on who is the student’s primary contact (for undergraduate students, this will generally be the college; for graduate students it may be someone in the department or faculty).

Responses to some questions may require input from others (the college or department/faculty, Student Visa Team, Accommodation Office, etc.). Some questions are relevant only for taught course students, others are relevant only for research students.

Extracts of the relevant sections of the parental leave policy have been included where appropriate and are shown in italics.

Section 5 should be completed by the department/faculty Safety Officer.

Copies of the completed plan should be given to the student, college and department/faculty.

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

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| **Section 1: Student details** |
| **1** | **Student contact details** |
| Name |  |
| Address |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Email address |  |
| Student number |  |
| **2** | **Emergency contact details** |
| Name |  |
| Relationship to student |  |
| Telephone |  |
| **3** | **College details (matriculated students)** |
| College |  |
| College contact |  |
| **4** | **Department/faculty details** |
| Programme title |  |
| Department/faculty |  |
| Depart/faculty contact |  |
| Year of course |  |
| **Communication with the student** |
| **5** | What is the student’s preferred method of communication: |
| * During pregnancy?
 |  |
| * During maternity-related absence?
 |  |
| * On return to study?
 |  |
| **6** | Who would the student like to be their primary contact person at the collegiate University (e.g. Senior Tutor/supervisor/DGS) |
| Name  |  |
| Title |  |
| College/dept/faculty |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Email |  |
| **Informing other staff and students**  |
| **7** | Who will need to be informed about the student’s pregnancy and when would the student like them to be informed (e.g. college/department/faculty, supervisor, funding body)? |
| **Name and title** | **Date to be informed** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Section 2: Pregnancy and maternity details** |
| **Key dates (to be reviewed and added to over the course of pregnancy and maternity)***3.1 Students should notify their college, department, supervisor or Director of Graduate Studies of their pregnancy as soon as possible, and preferably no later than the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth.* |
| **8** | What is the student’s due date? |  |
| **9** | How many weeks pregnant was the student when they notified the college/University of pregnancy? |  |
| **Pregnancy-related absence** |
| **10** | Will the dates or times of antenatal appointments affect the student’s study? |  |
| **11** | Have you discussed any pregnancy-related illness that has affected the student’s ability to undertake their course? |  |
| **12** | If yes to either of the above questions, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to catch up? |  |
| **Maternity-related absence*****Undergraduate and postgraduate taught students****3.5 Students who give birth may choose to suspend their status before recommencing their studies. This will normally last one full year so that the student may return to student at the same point at which they suspended. Where possible the leave period should be timed to take account of the academic requirements of the course, and should commence at the start of, rather than partway through, a term.* *Maternity leave cannot start later than the date of the child’s birth and all new mothers are advised and expected to take a minimum of two weeks’ leave immediately after the birth. Maternity leave should be taken under current college arrangements for suspension of status.****Postgraduate research students****3.6 Students who give birth during their period of registration are automatically entitled to suspend their status for up to 3 terms (1 year) of maternity leave. This period of leave is calculated separately from the 6 terms of ordinary suspension of status that boards may permit. Terms of maternity leave do not have to be taken consecutively when sharing parental leave, but do have to be taken within 12 months of the birth and any unused terms may not be taken at a later date.* *3.7. Students who hold Research Council or other sponsoring body awards must align their periods of University and funding body leave. Where there is a conflict of interest between the two policies, the sponsoring body’s policy will be followed in relation to the area(s) of conflict.**3.8 The timing of maternity leave will depend on a number of factors, including term dates and the nature of the student’s research work, though it would usually not be expected to commence before the 29th week of pregnancy. The leave period will start on the day of the baby’s birth at the latest and new mothers are advised and expected not to return to study earlier than two weeks after the birth.**3.10 Suspensions of status are recorded on the student record system as commencing at the start of the relevant term and concluding at the end of the subsequent vacation. As far as possible, students should align their maternity leave with the tripartite structure of university terms. If a student is obliged to suspend mid-term (e.g. for medical reasons), the date of suspension will usually be backdated to the start of term.* ***Overseas students****3.16. Under the terms of the student visa, overseas students who suspend their status will need to obtain an extension to their visa, and may be required to return to their home countries while suspended. Students should consult the Student Immigration team for advice on immigration and visas (email* *student.immigration@admin.ox.ac.uk**).* |
| **13** | How much maternity-related absence does the student intend to take? |  |
| **14** | When does the student intend to start maternity-related absence? |  |
| **15** | When does the student intend to return from maternity-related absence? |  |
| **16** | *Overseas students*Has the UK Border Agency been advised about the student’s maternity-related absence and necessary visa arrangements made? |  |
| **Section 3: Course arrangements** |
| **Maternity-related course arrangements (taught degree students only)** |
| **16** | Will the dates of maternity-related absence (see 15 and 16 above) affect the student’s ability to complete any course module requirements? |  |
| **17** | If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to complete the module? |  |
| **18** | What information will the student require during maternity-related absence to keep up to date on course developments? |  |
| **19** | Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student? |  |
| **Assessment arrangements (taught course students only)** |
| **20** | Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to their pregnancy or maternity?  |  |
| **21** | If so, provide details: |  |
| **22** | What alternative arrangements have been made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments? |  |
| **Factors affecting performance in examinations (taught course students only)** |
| **23** | Has the student been informed about the University’s Factors Affecting Performance policy[[2]](#footnote-2) in the event that their pregnancy or maternity affects examinations and assessments? |  |
| **Students on placement** |
| **24** | Has the placement provider been notified of the student’s pregnancy? |  |
| **25** | Has the placement provider conducted a health and safety assessment? |  |
| **26** | Is the placement provider aware of the University’s policy on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity?  |  |
| **27** | Will the student be able to complete their placement?  |  |
| **28** | If not, what alternative arrangements will be made? |  |
| **29** | Who is responsible for liaising with the placement provider? |  |
| **Return to study*****Undergraduate students****4.1 Some students returning to study after the birth of a child may find it difficult to pursue their course at the normal pace. Under such circumstances it may be possible to extend the duration of their studies, typically by studying the Final Honour School over one additional year. Such a proposal requires endorsement from both the college and the department. The student’s college can then apply to Education Committee to request dispensation from the examination regulations. Approval for the extension of study will also have to be obtained from Student Finance England or the relevant regional body. Applications for remission of the additional year’s university fees will be considered by the Fees Panel.****Postgraduate taught students****4.2 It is not usually possible to study for a full-time postgraduate taught course on a part-time basis. If students returning to study after the birth of a child encounter difficulties, departments should consider what alternative measures of support they might implement, e.g. agreed extensions to submission deadlines. However, in some cases the department may consider that it would be feasible for a student to complete the outstanding elements of a taught course on a part-time basis. If the student’s college also endorses this proposal, the department may make an application to Education Committee on the student’s behalf to request dispensation from the relevant examination regulations. Where necessary, approval must also be granted by the student’s funding body, and visa requirements must be met. Where permission has been granted, students will be charged fees at the part-time rate.****Postgraduate research students****4.3 A student whose programme of study is available on both a full-time and a part-time basis may apply to change their mode of study to part-time.**4.4 If a student’s programme of study is not normally available part-time, but it is agreed that the course can successfully be studied on a part-time basis, and the proposal is endorsed by both the college and department, the student’s department may apply to Education Committee for dispensation from the examination regulations. Dispensation from the regulations to transfer from full-time to part-time status will be considered provided that the student’s faculty or department can demonstrate that their educational and pastoral needs will be met appropriately. In the first instance, permission will be granted to transfer to part-time status for a limited period of no longer than three terms to ensure timely review of the student’s progress. Where necessary, approval must also be granted by the student’s funding body, and visa requirements must be met. Where permission has been granted, students will be charged fees at the part-time rate and their submission deadlines will be recalculated.*  |
| **30** | What support will be provided to the student on their return to study? (eg meetings with key staff, put in contact with other student parents, etc) |  |
| **Section 4: Support and practical arrangements** |
| **Financial support*****Funded maternity leave for postgraduate research students****3.17. The University aims to provide a limited period of funded maternity leave, and in some cases funded shared parental leave, for holders of all studentships funded or co-funded by the University where the expected week of childbirth falls within the period of the award.**3.20. Research Council funded students are entitled to receive funded maternity leave. The first 26 weeks would normally be paid at full stipend, the following 13 weeks at a level commensurate with statutory maternity pay and the final 13 weeks unpaid. In some circumstances it may be possible for some of this funded leave to be taken as shared parental leave.* *Prior to receiving University or Research Council funding for leave, students are required to state their intention to return to their studies after taking maternity leave. Students who do not return to their studies for at least one term after taking funded maternity leave may be required to pay back in full all monies received during the period of leave.*  |
| **31** | Has the student been informed about sources of financial support or been referred to an external organisation that can do so?  |  |
| **32** | *Students in receipt of student support entitlements*Is the student aware of how any benefits they receive will affect their entitlements, and vice versa? |  |
| **33** | Specify any follow-up required: |  |
| **Rest and care facilities** |
| **34** | Has the student been informed about rest facilities in the college/dept/fac for use by pregnant students? |  |
| **35** | Has the student been informed about the facilities available for baby feeding and changing? |  |
| **Childcare** *10.1. Student parents whose child(ren) already attend(s) a university nursery, or occupy(ies) a university place in a private nursery, may retain their nursery place(s) during suspension of status for maternity, paternity or shared parental leave for a period of usually no longer than 12 months (while continuing to pay fees).**10.2. Students who have suspended status for maternity, paternity or shared parental leave may apply for a university nursery place and be placed on the waiting list. They do not need to wait until they are reinstated to take up a place.* |
| **36** | Has the student been informed about University, college or local childcare facilities? |  |
| **37** | *Students in receipt of childcare funding*Is the student aware that their mode of study will affect their childcare funding entitlements?  |  |
| **Accommodation***9 Postgraduate students who have suspended status to take maternity, extended paternity, adoption or shared parental leave are permitted to be offered university graduate accommodation – should it become available – up to three months before they re-enrol.* |
| **38** | Does the student intend to move to alternative accommodation? |  |
| **39** | Has the student received advice on alternative accommodation and terminating existing accommodation contracts? |  |
| **40** | If the student wishes to move to alternative accommodation, at what point do they wish to move? |  |
| **41** | Will the student require college/university accommodation? |  |
| **International students/those on placement abroad** |
| **42** | Has an international student or student on placement abroad been informed about:  |
| * Possible airline restrictions?
 |  |
| **Section 5: Health and safety (to be completed by the department/faculty Safety Officer or equivalent)** |
| *Risk assessments must be made where the work environment (e.g. laboratory, clinic) might pose a threat to a pregnant student. The University Occupational Health Service (UOHS) recommends that departments seek advice from their Departmental Safety Officer, the Area Safety Officer or the Safety Office. The OUHS can also assist with health queries relating to pregnancy and breastfeeding at work. This may require a consultation with a doctor or nurse and a visit to the workplace (email* *enquiries@uohs.ox.ac.uk**).* |
| **43** | Has an assessment been conducted\* that covers (where relevant): |
| * 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?
 |  |
| *\*If a risk assessment has been carried out, a copy should be attached to this form* |
| **44** | Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risks, who is responsible for ensuring they are implemented? |  |
| **Section 5: Final details and signatures** |
| Plan to be reviewed on: |  |
| **Agreed by college/department/faculty** |
| Name |  |
| Title |  |
| Signature |  |
| Date |  |
| **Agreed by student** |
| Name |  |
| Signature |  |
| Date |  |

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1. <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/childcare> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/field/field_document/Factors%20Affecting%20Performance%20Guidance.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)