

Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Fostering Policy

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August 2020

Due for review May 2021¹

1 Introduction & policy statement

This document provides practical information for students about Middlesex University's approach to supporting students who become pregnant during their studies, prospective students and students who have given birth within the previous 26 weeks (the 26 weeks post birth is covered by the Equality Act 2010²), their partners (where applicable) and those who have recently become parents (e.g. through adoption). The policy also includes students who may be pregnant through a surrogacy arrangement. In addition, this policy serves as guidance to university staff on advising students who may come to them seeking support.

Middlesex University 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 aims to foster and develop a wide range of skills and experience which cannot be found within any single group of students or staff. In the pursuit of these aims, Middlesex University seeks to create a community in which diversity is valued and which both reflects and services the needs of the broader communities in which it operates. As such, the term 'Birth Parent/Mother' will be used throughout the policy along with the use of 'them' / 'their' pronouns to reflect non-binary and trans people who may become pregnant. The term 'Partner' will be used throughout, where applicable. It will be noted that the terms 'maternity' and 'paternity' are used here in line with language used across the NHS and Government. We acknowledge that much has to be done to make the language used in midwifery more inclusive. This policy does not make assumptions as to the gender identity of the Mother/Birth Parent and partner, if applicable, and Middlesex staff will ask students' preferred pronouns when supporting them.

Middlesex University actively seeks to develop best practice in discharging its legal responsibility under The Equality Act (see *Appendix 1*). Middlesex University also takes on board recommendations from the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) Guidance (2010), which recommends that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) develop policies and procedures "to ensure that students are not discriminated against, that they receive appropriate information on the support provided by their HEI in relation to pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption, and that policies are visible to help to encourage early notification of pregnancy."³

Middlesex 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 with each individual student and programme of study. The health and safety of a pregnant student will be of paramount importance at all times, and staff will engage 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 (unless there is immediate risk of harm, in line with the university's [Safeguarding Policy](#)).

2 Scope of the policy

This 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

¹ This policy has been considered by Wellbeing and Inclusivity Sub-Committee and Assurance Committee. Consultation with the Head of Department for Adult, Child & Midwifery is due October 2020. An Equality Impact Assessment is due in the Autumn Term of 2020. The policy will be updated accordingly and ahead of the May 2021 review date.

² For further information please see *Appendix 1*.

³ Student pregnancy and maternity: implications for higher education institutions, 2010, Equality Challenge Unit, page 4
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- Any student who is about to become a parent because their partner is pregnant, and/or who expects to be responsible for a child
- Any student who has or will become a parent through adoption or fostering
- Guidance for staff on supporting students

3 Implications of COVID-19

The global COVID-19 pandemic has led to many changes and adjustments for students. While there is no evidence at present to suggest that pregnant people are more likely to get seriously ill from Covid-19, they have been included in the list of people at “moderate risk (clinically vulnerable) as a precaution.”⁴ For that reason, students who are pregnant and concerned about their health when returning to campus can carry out the [self risk-assessment](#) as well as adhering to COVID-secure behaviours at all times. As the COVID-19 situation is fluid, and because Middlesex University is responding flexibly, we strongly encourage students who are pregnant to remain up to date with the university’s response [here](#). Some measures within this policy will be changing fluidly in line with the university’s response to Covid-19. For anything that is unclear, students can contact wellbeing@mdx.ac.uk.

4 Rights and responsibilities 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

This section covers rights and responsibilities for students, staff and Middlesex University as an institution. Please see *Appendix 5* for a summary of responsibilities.

4.1 Confirming the pregnancy

A student who suspects they are pregnant will see their General Practitioner (GP) to have the pregnancy confirmed as soon as they can and to seek health advice and guidance. Students who are not registered with a GP can find support to do so [on UniHub](#). Absence from the university required as a result will be classed as ‘sick leave’ but there is no need to give the specific reason, as per section 5 of the University’s [Attendance Policy](#). More information is available for students on pregnancy and sexual health [on Unihub](#) and under *Section 10* ‘useful contacts.’

4.2 Termination of the pregnancy or miscarriage

If the student decides to terminate the pregnancy, or they miscarry, this need not be disclosed to the University, though the student may wish to seek support from university or external support services to support them (see *section 10*). However, if the student (and their partner, if applicable) have upcoming assessments or deadlines which may be impacted, they will contact the Progression and Support Team for guidance and support as they may wish to apply for Extenuating Circumstances (see *Section 4.4* for Implications for Study).

4.3 Contacting the university

We would encourage any students who are pregnant at the time they will 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, to inform the university as the university can only make provision for the student if the university has been made aware of these circumstances. The greatest risk to an unborn baby is during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy and so it is important that the student informs the university as early as possible. For a summary of key responsibilities please see *Appendix 5*. Where possible, it is recommended by the Equality Challenge Unit (2010) that the student inform the Programme Leader in writing at least 15 weeks before the baby is due to allow time to review the support plan and make the necessary arrangements and ensure information is communicated as required.

⁴ Accessed from <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/pregnancy-and-coronavirus/> on 04/08/20
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The student can choose to disclose their pregnancy to whichever member of staff the student feels most comfortable with, however the student will note that the Programme Leader will be required to be informed so that support arrangements, risk assessments and other concerns can be discussed and actioned. The Programme Leader may choose to use the support guide template (see *Appendix 3*) as a guide.

If a student has not informed a member of staff of their pregnancy, generally, they will not be approached regarding a potential pregnancy. If there are particular health and safety concerns which mean that it is important to establish if the student is pregnant, the matter will be handled sensitively, on a one-to-one basis between the student and their tutor/Programme Leader. The tutor/Programme Leader will only take this step if they are concerned for the student's health and safety as per the [Safeguarding Policy](#). Once the student's pregnancy is confirmed, the steps within this policy (see *Appendix 4* for summary) will be followed.

4.4 Implications for study

There may need to be an interruption of studies or a deferral of the start of study, depending on when the baby is due. The student, together with the Programme Leader, will decide whether an interruption of programme or deferral of assessment(s) is needed and in the case of an interruption of study, the time period this needs to cover. This decision also needs to take into account the academic requirements of the student's programme. Advice will be sought from the Progression and Support Team, especially where the student wishes to make use of [the Extenuating Circumstances processes](#). This is especially pertinent where students have Tier 4 sponsorship and changes to study may have visa implications, in which case advice will also be sought from the International Student Advice Team (see *Section 10*). Reasonable adjustments for study and exams should be highlighted in the risk assessment, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP; see *section 4.6*) and conversations around support between the student and Programme Leader to include the exam period.

4.5 Time off for medical appointments

Time off might be needed for medical appointments. This may also be the case if the student is going through fertility treatment and trying to become pregnant. It will be noted that fertility treatment can be incredibly stressful and can in and of itself cause wide ranging physical and psychological difficulty, and the student will be signposted to support within Middlesex and also externally (see *section 10*) and a flexible approach will be taken to time off required. The student will endeavour to schedule appointments outside of their university hours, however where this is not possible, they will give as much notice as possible to their academic tutors who will support them to remain up to date, for example by sending them lecture slides and recommended reading.

4.6 Health and safety including risk assessments, including for students on placement

There may be health and safety measures needed to be put in place in order to protect the baby and pregnant student both prior to and within 26 weeks of giving birth. This will be particularly relevant for students on particular courses (e.g. if the student might be exposed to harmful chemicals or radiation, or be expected to lift heavy objects or undertake other strenuous activity). Therefore, once the student has let their Programme Leader know of their pregnancy, the Programme Leader will complete the pregnancy risk assessment with the student (see *Appendix 2*) and pass this to the University Health and Safety Unit to review. It will be made clear with the student that this document will be shared with the Health and Safety Unit prior to doing so. The Programme Leader will also arrange for the Health and Safety Unit to complete a PEEP which will secure the safety of students in the event of a building evacuation.

Students on placement

When on a work placement a student counts as a 'worker' and the placement provider has various duties under health and legislation to protect the health and safety of its workers. This includes

carrying out a specific risk assessment for pregnant women (and women returning to work following a birth).

Therefore, students who are pregnant must notify their work placement provider when commencing the placement, or during the placement if they become pregnant later. This is necessary so that the work placement provider can carry out a risk assessment as required by law. Students will also ensure that their university Placement Administrator is also notified and receives a copy of the pregnancy risk assessment, along with their Programme Leader. The University's Health & Safety Unit will then review the risk assessment (and any reasonable adjustments) to confirm they are suitable and sufficient.

Generally, work placements can continue during pregnancy although some reasonable adjustments may be required depending on the work activities, location any health or disabilities which the student may be experiencing. However, if when following a risk assessment it is determined that the work could be harmful to the student or unborn child then alternative placement options will be explored. More information as well as risk assessment templates for placements can be found [on the intranet](#).

Students are also advised to check their placement or course handbooks to see if these contains further, course-specific guidance. In the majority of cases, pregnant students will be able to continue on placements (if they wish).

Where a placement is judged to present a particular risk to the student or their unborn child by the Programme Leader, employer or University Health and Safety Unit, the student may be advised to have a conversation with their GP to seek guidance. Where concerns are outstanding, the student's case may be referred to Care and Concern and to the [fitness to study policy](#) to best support the student and ensure their safety. This may involve requiring the student to take time out or to transfer to a different programme of study. MDXworks may also be able to assist students considering different programmes of study by offering individual and independent career advice as to study and work options. Middlesex University Students' Union has more information on fitness to study processes [here](#).

4.7 In the event of a stillbirth or bereavement

As of 6 April 2020, employees in an organisation have a right to 2 weeks' statutory bereavement leave if they experience a stillbirth or bereavement of their child under the age of 18⁵. As an institution, we are aware that in the tragic event of a stillbirth or bereavement of a child, the Mother/Birth Parent, and their partner if applicable, may require this as a minimum, along with additional support, and staff will endeavour to signpost them to support under the 'Useful contacts' *Section 10*. Though not usually classed as 'employees', the university will work to accommodate the student and their partner (if applicable) to be as flexible as possible with their health (physical and mental) needs. It may be that support is drawn on from the Progression and Support Team regarding study options as it may be likely that the Mother/Birth Parent (and their partner, if applicable) need much longer off from their studies and may need to make use of the Extenuating Circumstances policy (see *Section 4.4 Implications for Study*). If the student (and their partner, if applicable) is/are on a course with placement elements, they will liaise with their Programme Leader and placement provider regarding options. It may also be the case that if the student(s) are classed as 'employees' because of their placement that their providers will follow employment law.

5 Maternity period: i.e. duration of pregnancy plus 26 weeks after birth

Students are required to inform their Programme Leader of the date on which they intend to start maternity-related absence at least 15 weeks before the baby is due, though they will endeavour to inform their Programme Leader as early as possible. Some programmes will have specific guidance in place for return to study and processes to ensure that the student and baby's health is prioritised. This

⁵ <https://www.acas.org.uk/time-off-for-bereavement/parental-bereavement-leave-payke>

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may especially be the case for programmes with placement elements. Students will refer to the individual guidance for these programmes.

For apprentices who wish to go on maternity leave, a break in learning will be recorded. The apprentice and their employer should revise the date in the apprenticeship agreement on which the apprenticeship was expected to have been completed to account for the duration of the break. The duration of the apprenticeship and the amount of off-the-job training needed to meet the 20% requirement would therefore remain the same as though there had been no break in training (break in learning).

While the length of maternity-related absence students may prefer to take will vary, the Equality Challenge Unit (2010) recommends that, at a minimum, Mothers/Birth Parents are required to take two weeks' compulsory maternity-related absence, or four weeks if they are on placement in a factory. This is in line with employment law, and is to ensure the health and safety of the Mother/Birth Parent following birth. Depending on factors including the nature of the study / placement, whether a student has had a Caesarean section and whether lighter duties can be identified in a placement setting, students may need a longer period of maternity-related absence. If a Programme Leader or representative from another university team is concerned about how soon the student wishes to return to study including practice, the student may be asked to liaise with their GP or health worker(s) and to provide medical support in evidence of their fitness to return to study. There may also be need for an updated risk assessment.

Where there is concern about knowledge of the field being affected by the length of maternity related absence, the school will take steps to ensure the student is kept up to speed with developments in the field for example by sending lists of key reading. Students will indicate the date on which they intend to start maternity related absence as well as the length of maternity related absence that they intend to take.

The student must inform their Programme Leader when they are ready to return to study. The Programme Leader will notify [Academic Registry](#) and [Student Records](#) of their return to study to ensure that their University record is updated to indicate that they are back on their programme of study.

5.1 Study abroad

If the student becomes pregnant whilst studying abroad, it is recommended that they contact their Programme Leader to make appropriate plans.

It is also recommended that students studying on programmes of study abroad check any insurance details to ensure that they provide adequate cover for any complications arising through pregnancy.

It should be noted that most airlines will not carry passengers who are 37 weeks pregnant or more, or beyond 32 weeks pregnant if pregnant with twins or more babies, and this should be taken into account when planning.⁶

5.2 Accommodation

Students who become pregnant whilst living in university accommodation may find that this is no longer suitable. Contact may be made with the Accommodation team for advice. The Accommodation team will try to support pregnant students (and their partners, if applicable) to find suitable accommodation. Students will consider their accommodation requirements in the early stages of pregnancy wherever possible and if they are living in university accommodation and where requests may affect rental contracts, the Accommodation team will try to take a flexible approach. More information on the university's Accommodation team can be found [on UniHub](#).

⁶ <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/pregnancy/is-it-safe-to-fly-while-pregnant/>

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5.3 Parking on campus

Parking on campus is necessarily limited. Students who wish to park on campus will follow university procedure by contacting wellbeing@mdx.ac.uk if they do not have a blue badge, or the [Disability and Dyslexia Service](#) if they have a blue badge. For non-blue badge holders, parking is considered on a case by case basis. It will be noted that pregnancy, the maternity period and childcare responsibilities in and of themselves will not guarantee a successful application for a parking permit. Applications will take into account special circumstances which mean that the student cannot reasonably be expected to use public transport or to park in the surrounding area of the university campus. It will also be noted that all parking is on a first come first serve basis and therefore a permit does not guarantee space availability. More information is available [on UniHub](#).

5.4 Babies and children on campus

The University has responsibility for the health and safety of all visitors to its premises. These duties are much greater for children as they may not be aware of existing or potential risks. It has therefore been agreed that children under 18 years of age are not normally allowed on University premises unless attending officially approved activities. More information can be found in the [Code of Practice: Children on University Premises](#). For children not attending officially approved activities it is a requirement that the person responsible for the child must report to the Campus Reception in the Quad and complete the 'Children on Campus Log'. It may be necessary to verify where the child will be taken and to confirm any other relevant details. In line with this, as well as to avoid the disruption of classes or study, babies and children will not be brought into teaching or learning areas without prior agreement with a Programme Leader. Students wishing to bring babies/children into the Sheppard Library must sign in at Sheppard Library reception.

Mothers/Birth Parents must ensure they have suitable childcare arrangements in place at times when they are expected to be at university. Students can apply to the [Middlesex University nursery](#) for a place if they wish. Students must not bring babies or children to university with the expectation that any staff member will take responsibility for caring for the child whilst the student is in classes.

Students may bring babies and children into public areas of the university provided that they are properly supervised at all times, but the university cannot accept any liability for the child in these circumstances. The university provides baby change facilities on campus in the following locations: Grove : GB21; Grove : GG47; Grove : GG97; Grove : G103; Grove : G308; Grove : G404; Hatchcroft : HG08.

Where childcare issues prevent a student from attending classes in person, teaching staff are asked to supply any available materials that may help the student in making up for missed work, though the student will be mindful of the university's [attendance policy](#).

5.5 Breastfeeding and rest space on campus

Middlesex University supports a Mother/Birth Parent's choice in deciding whether to breastfeed or not. The university has a number of rooms which offer some privacy and may be suitable for breastfeeding and/or expressing milk and the student's Programme Leader can discuss these with the student. On some occasions, Mothers/Birth Parents wishing to breastfeed or express milk may be able to access the welfare room on campus, however in the event of a first aid incidence or emergency they would need to vacate the room.

Middlesex University is committed to securing a designated space for breastfeeding and/or expressing milk and this will be completed within the 2020 - 2021 academic year.

If a student needs to breastfeed during an exam they have two options:

- 1) Option one: the birth parent can take the exam in a separate room with an invigilator and a friend or family member caring for the baby nearby. The birth parent can stop the clock and breastfeed when needed (supervised), up to a maximum of 1 hours' breastfeeding time total (taken in whatever

format the birth parent and baby requires). To arrange this, the birth parent should email wellbeing@mdx.ac.uk and the arrangement will be put through the Disability and Dyslexia Service as a temporary arrangement on MISIS.

- 2) Option two: we recognise that there may be birth parents who are not able to do option one due to their baby's specific feeding needs. The birth parent may therefore choose to interrupt their studies for a period of time, or in exceptional circumstances, may be eligible for a deferral. The birth parents should arrange to speak to a member of the Progression and Support Team (see *Section 10*) to talk through potential impact on their academic studies.

5.6 Financial considerations

Students can find out more about financial considerations in the Middlesex [Pregnancy Advice Guide](#) and by contacting the Student Welfare Advice Team (see *Section 10*) who will be able to guide them based on their individual circumstances. We would encourage students to contact the Student Welfare Advice Team as soon as possible if they are considering interruptions to study and the implications this may have financially.

6 Support for students and partners (if applicable) who have responsibility for bringing up the child, including adoption and fostering

The university recognises that any kind of parental responsibility, whether biological birth, adoption or fostering, will have an impact not only on the Mother/Birth Parent but also the Partner (where applicable). The possible impact on study will be different however, if a student and their partner (if applicable) are fostering a child on a temporary basis versus having giving birth to a child and/or adopting a child. According to Adoption Focus, "When you foster a child, you are caring for them on behalf of the Local Authority and the birth parents. You have no legal rights or responsibilities in respect of the child. It is usually a temporary arrangement, although some fostering placements can be long-term. When you adopt a child you become their legal parent. This is permanent and the child has exactly the same legal status in your family as any other family member, which continues throughout their lifetime."⁷

In either case, we strongly encourage the Mother/Birth Parent and their partner (if applicable) to let their academic school know about their circumstances by speaking with their Programme Leader. Partners who are Middlesex students can access many of the same university support services as the Mother/Birth Parent. The university will also try to support those students who need time off to accompany their partners at medical, adoption or fostering appointments (although it is preferred that these are arranged outside study hours wherever possible). These appointments will be discussed with the academic department concerned. If partners wish to take paternity-related or parental absence they will notify their Programme Leader in writing at least 15 weeks prior to their partner's due date, fostering or adoption date. However, early notification is always preferable, particularly if the period of leave coincides with any planned assessment or key stages of study or research. Students on a Tier 4 visa will be particularly mindful of discussing absence with their Programme Leader and with the International Student Advice Team.

The start date and length of paternity-related or parental absence will be agreed in discussion with the student's department. Flexibility will be shown where possible although this will necessarily be more limited in some programmes than others. The university will endeavour to accommodate and support partners in taking paternity leave (including shared parental leave and adoption leave) that is in line with the entitlements of employees under current employment law. For example, under UK employment law, partners are entitled to up to 10 days paid Ordinary Paternity Leave; therefore the university will, wherever possible, allow partners to take the equivalent maternity support (paternity) absence from their studies. Further information about current employment law relating to maternity

⁷ From <https://www.adoption-focus.org.uk/faqs/what-is-the-difference-between-adoption-and-fostering>, accessed on 31/07/20
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support (paternity) leave can be found at on the [Gov website](#). Information about shared parental leave can be found [here](#) and information about adoption leave can be found [here](#).

For students receiving research funding, it may be possible for a period of maternity support leave to be allowed, and students will contact their sponsor or provider prior to arranging leave. 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 are advised to obtain advice as soon as possible the International Student Advice Team (see *Section 10*).

In some cases, partners may also need to access Extenuating Circumstances process (see *Section 4.4 Implications for Study*) to allow for their situation to be considered during examination and assessment marking processes. This may be the case where caring responsibilities or an emotional concern have impacted on an students' performance.

7 International students

It is strongly recommended that international students with financial sponsors contact their sponsors and agree a plan of action (such as deferring study/ when to resume study etc.) when they become pregnant. Those international students who are not entitled to any maternity benefits in the UK may prefer to return home for the duration of their maternity period and possible implications for study, visas and funding will be considered. As a student's Tier 4 sponsor, Middlesex University has a legal obligation to inform the Home Office of any change in Student Status if a student happens to interrupt or withdraw from study and their visa will be cancelled, so it is important that students discuss their circumstances with the International Student Advice Team. The Student Visa Compliance Team may contact the student if attendance monitoring has not been informed of approved absences.

It should also be noted that most airlines will not carry passengers who are 37 weeks pregnant or more, or beyond 32 weeks pregnant if pregnant with twins or more babies, and this should be taken into account when planning.⁸ The benefit rules are different for EU students and international students, and further advice on Tier 4 visas will be sought from the International Student Advice Team (see *Section 10*).

8 Complaints

Any student who feels that the university has failed to live up to the standards of this policy may raise a complaint under the University's [Complaints Procedure](#). It is suggested that problems are resolved as informally as possible in the first instance. [Middlesex University Students' Union Advice Service](#) can provide impartial, confidential advice to students in this situation.

9 Guidance for staff

This section provides guidance on the support of students coming under the scope of this policy, for use by any member of staff with a role in advising or supporting students. A summary of support flowchart can be found in *Appendix 4*, a summary of which staff are responsible for organising which support in *Section 9.4*, and a template student support plan and checklist in *Appendix 3*.

At all times, staff must ensure those students are not treated less favourably than any other student on the basis of their circumstances. In line with the university's legal obligations, flexibility will be shown where possible to ensure continued learning is facilitated. Information given by students will be treated confidentially (unless there is a safeguarding concern) and with sensitivity. Staff will not

⁸<https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/pregnancy/is-it-safe-to-fly-while-pregnant/>

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attempt to influence any student's decision but will provide impartial advice. If a staff member does not feel that they can give impartial advice due to religious, cultural or other beliefs, they will immediately seek to find an alternative member of staff to support the student, and will under no circumstances try to influence the student's decision.

9.1 Use of language

Following guidance from the Equality Challenge Unit 2010, staff will be mindful of the language that they use to refer to a pregnancy depending on the circumstances of the student concerned. If a student discloses to a member of staff that they do not wish to proceed with their pregnancy, using the terms embryo and foetus may be most appropriate. These are scientific terms used to describe process of development of the fertilised egg. During the first eight weeks the cells are referred to as an embryo. The term foetus refers to developments from nine weeks onwards. Scientifically, a foetus is not considered to be a baby until birth.

If a student chooses to proceed with their pregnancy, using the term baby is likely to be more appropriate. This is also the case if a pregnant person miscarries, has a still birth or terminates their pregnancy for reasons relating to their health or the health of the baby.

Staff will offer general support and ensure that their own views regarding pregnancy and termination do not influence conversations with students. Students seeking in depth psychological support will be signposted to the Counselling and Mental Health team, their GP or health worker for health related concerns and other support services as appropriate (see *Section 10*).

Staff will not assume that a student who is pregnant identifies as female and so the term Mother/Birth Parent may be most applicable until the student confirms their preferred gender pronouns. If the Mother/Birth Parent has a Partner, gender neutral pronouns will be used until/unless students confirm otherwise.

9.2 Response time

When a student contacts a member of staff to discuss any circumstances covered by this policy, wherever possible a response will be made within three working days so as to provide students with support and to keep the student and baby safe.

9.3 General flexibility

It is important that support arrangements and study decisions are based on discussion with the student, rather than applying a standard set of arrangements. All decisions taken will be based on discussion with the student. Whilst an appropriate degree of flexibility will be exercised, care must be taken to ensure that academic standards are not compromised. A balance must be achieved between ensuring the student is not disadvantaged, and giving undue special treatment. It is not necessary for the university to grant every request made, although efforts will be made to meet reasonable requests.

Requests will not be refused solely on the basis of being too costly to implement, although this will necessarily be considered when assessing the overall 'reasonableness' of a request. If any request is refused, the reasons for the refusal will be provided in writing for the student. Where specific arrangements are required to be put in place for a student who is already granted additional arrangements (e.g. on the grounds of disability), these will be kept separate in order that it remains clear which arrangements relate to which particular circumstance. This ensures that these arrangements are in place for the required amount of time and also clarifies adherence to the different pieces of legislation.

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:

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| Allowing time out of study (for a pre-determined amount of time) for the birth and a period of time thereafter. |
| Prior to and after the birth, giving permission for periods of absence for medical appointments, and making arrangements for the student (and partner where applicable) to catch up on missed classes. |
| Showing a degree of flexibility regarding assignment deadlines if the student's circumstances make it difficult for them to be met. The student will with as much notice as possible where they feel they may not be able to meet a deadline to allow their tutors to make alternative arrangements. |
| 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, where this is possible (although the student will bear in mind the financial implications of this course of action). |
| Offering support to help the student reintegrate to their studies after any period of prolonged absence. |
| Signposting to all internal and external support (see <i>Section 10</i>) that might help the student continue with their studies. |

9.4 Who organises what support?

Students who become pregnant during their studies can access a range of support from within the university.

Different departments have different responsibilities and specialisms as part of this support process.

| | |
|---|---|
| <u>Academic department (usually Programme Leader to lead):</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessment for pregnant students, referral for a PEEP, and liaison around risk assessment for students on professional placements (alongside University Health and Safety Unit) • Organising time off for appointments • Organising teaching space adjustments • Liaison with placement providers • Implementing and offering academic support |
| <u>Personal Tutors</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral and academic support, signposting to appropriate services as necessary |
| <u>Progression and Support Team Advice</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study options (taking time out, part-time study) |
| <u>Student Welfare Advice Team</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on funding and eligibility for benefits • Financial support |
| <u>University Health and Safety Unit</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of employers' risk assessments for students on placement • PEEP for pregnant students • Review of Programme Leader's risk assessment |

| | |
|---|---|
| <u>International Student Advice Team</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International student advice and visa support |
| <u>Student Visa Compliance Team</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with students with Tier 4 sponsorship who may be identified through attendance monitoring procedures as having poor attendance |
| <u>Other Middlesex support which may be drawn upon</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling and Mental Health Team for students in psychological distress • Disability and Dyslexia Service for disability, long term health conditions and/or dyslexia support • MDXworks for careers and employability advice and support and liaison around placements for students on courses with a placement element • Middlesex University Students' Union Advice Service • Student Parents and Carers Community • Security for access to First Aiders and for use of the welfare room for resting and/or nursing • wellbeing@mdx.ac.uk for parking applications and any other non-urgent wellbeing queries |
| <u>External support</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Practitioner • Other support and information agencies listed in <i>Section 10</i> |

10 Useful contacts

Counselling & Mental Health Team

For students in psychological distress

<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/counselling-and-mental-health>

General Enquiries: For general enquiries and information, contact the Counselling & Mental Health Team at: cmh@mdx.ac.uk or call 020 8411 4118

Disability & Dyslexia Team

For support on disability, long term health conditions and dyslexia

<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/disability-and-dyslexia>

disability@mdx.ac.uk

020 8411 2502

Security and First Aiders on campus

For security concerns or to access on duty first aider in the event of feeling unwell

020 8411 6200

Student Welfare Advice Team

For financial advice and support

<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/fees-payments-funding/who-we-are>

Visit the UniHelp Desk

Welfare@mdx.ac.uk

020 8411 3008

Academic Writing and Numeracy

For support with academic writing and numeracy skills

<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/writing-numeracy/who-we-are>

Student Learning Assistants

Support from experienced students

<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/student-to-student-support>

Middlesex University Students' Union Independent Advocacy Service

Independent support and representation for students

<https://www.mdxsu.com/advice>

studentadvice@mdx.ac.uk

02084116450

MDXworks

Support on careers and employability

<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/employment/mdxworks>

020 8411 6161

International Student Advice Team

Support for international students and visa queries

<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/visas-international>

020 8411 4507

intadvice@mdx.ac.uk

Student Visa Compliance Team

visacompliance@Mdx.ac.uk

wellbeing@mdx.ac.uk email inbox for any non-urgent health and wellbeing queries including parking

University Health and Safety Unit

For risk assessment liaison

Vanessa White

Student Wellbeing Coordinator, LSS

UHSU@mdx.ac.uk

MDX Nursery

Early years education and full day-care for children aged six weeks to five years

<https://www.mdx.ac.uk/student-life/facilities/nursery>

020 8411 6032

Student Parents website – this national website provides support information for student parents including information about funding, planning checklists and case studies. www.studentparents.org

MDX pregnancy support guide https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/156447/Pregnancy-Help-and-Advice.pdf

NHS pregnancy and support guide

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/>

GOV.uk information on surrogacy

<https://www.gov.uk/legal-rights-when-using-surrogates-and-donors>

Information on and support around fertility treatment

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/infertility/treatment/>

<https://fertilitynetworkuk.org/trying-to-conceive/emotional-impact/>

Marie Stopes: What are my pregnancy options?

<https://www.mariestopes.org.uk/abortion-services/what-are-my-pregnancy-options/#>

Brook

www.brook.org.uk/

Family Planning Association guides

An information booklet on preparing for pregnancy

<http://www.fpa.org.uk/help-and-advice/planning-pregnancy>

An information booklet about different pregnancy options and support

<http://www.fpa.org.uk/sites/default/files/pregnant-and-dont-know-what-to-do.pdf>

Arc: Support following antenatal screening and consequences, and support around continuing and ending a pregnancy

<https://www.arc-uk.org/>

Information on terminating a pregnancy for medical reasons

<https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/pregnancy-complications/baby-loss/terminating-pregnancy-medical-reasons-tfmr>

Health and Safety Executive guidance

A guide for new and expectant Mothers/Birth Parents who work is available at www.hse.gov.uk/mothers

Stonewall parenting rights – LGBTQ+ support

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/parenting-rights>

Family and Childcare Trust - national childcare campaign

<http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/>

info@familyandchildcaretrust.org

020 7940 7510

Gingerbread – provide advice, practical support and campaign for single parents www.gingerbread.org.uk

0800 018 5026

Vanessa White

Student Wellbeing Coordinator, LSS

Family Lives - national family support charity providing help and support in all aspects of family life
<http://www.familylives.org.uk/>
0808 800 2222

Working Families – national charity helping working parents and carers achieve work-life balance Tel:
www.workingfamilies.org.uk
advice@workingfamilies.org.uk
0300 012 01312

Directgov information for parents

Government website including information about childcare, money and work entitlements, schools, leisure and health & safety concerns.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/parents>

Money Advice Service

<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/categories/having-a-baby>

Information and support on post-natal depression

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders/post-natal-depression>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/post-natal-depression/>

SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity)

Information, support and advice

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

Child Bereavement UK

Information and advice, including how to have conversations with loved ones

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/when-your-baby-dies>

Appendix 1

Legal duties under The Equality Act 2010

Middlesex University 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.

This document is intended to serve as general guidance to be followed in the way that is most helpful and practicable to the student concerned, under the following guiding principles:

- Avoiding less favourable treatment – in line with the Equality Act, the university and its staff will make sure they avoid less favourable treatment of a student or applicant in relation to a pregnancy; and because of an illness suffered by the student as a result of pregnancy.
- Taking a flexible approach – the university recognises its legal obligations and its staff will take a flexible approach to facilitating the continued learning of, and maintaining a high-quality and safe student experience for a pregnant student, a student who is the parent of a child or a student whose partner is in either of these positions.
- Demonstrating a non-judgemental and sensitive approach – when supporting and working with a student on these matters, staff will take an open-minded and non-judgemental approach. Information provided by the student will be treated sensitively and only passed onto others on a need-to-know basis and where possible with consent to share.
- Enabling informed choices – members of staff will not attempt to direct or unduly influence a student's decisions. Their role is to provide context and advice to the student and to explore, in consultation with the student and others, flexibility that can be applied to the student's programme or period of study to provide appropriate support.

Copy from The Equality Challenge Unit (2010):

"The Equality Act 2010 significantly strengthens legal protection for students (including applicants to higher education) during pregnancy and maternity in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act considers pregnancy and maternity to be a protected characteristic and prohibits discrimination on these grounds. Section 17 of the Act expands the protection from discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity, which already exists for women in the workplace and vocational training, to women outside the workplace. In doing so, the Act specifically mentions the higher education sector. Under the Act, discrimination can occur against a student because of her pregnancy or because they have given birth if:

- the student is treated unfavourably because of their pregnancy
- within 26 weeks of the day of giving birth the student is treated unfavourably because they have given birth; this also 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 they are 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

The protection afforded due to pregnancy and maternity is narrower than other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Consequently there is no protection afforded for discrimination that occurs by being associated with someone who is pregnant or in a period of maternity, or being perceived to be pregnant or in a period of maternity. However, if a woman's partner is treated unfavourably because of her pregnancy or because they have given birth, this may constitute sex discrimination.

Under the Act, it is unlawful for HEIs to discriminate against applicants and students in relation to admissions; the provision of education; access to any benefit, facility or service; and disciplinary proceedings. The protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity is included in the public sector equality duty (PSED) of the Equality Act. The PSED requires HEIs to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.”⁹

Appendix 2

Pregnancy and maternity risk assessment template

The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that our students are not exposed to risks which could affect their health and safety or that of their child and so that the university can meet its legal obligations.

The Health and Safety Executive advise that some physical, biological and chemical agents may affect the health and safety of new and expectant Mothers/Birth Parents. Middlesex University, through consultation with advisors from the University Health & Safety Unit, have assessed the possible risks from biological and chemical agents and believe that the general university environment has a very low risk in this area.

Likewise the risk from physical hazards is limited. (Physical agents include, shock, vibration, movement, lifting and manual handling, excessive noise and extremes of temperature.)

The risk of each agent will be considered against the working environment of the new or expectant Mother/Birth Parent. Areas other than offices will need additional aspects to their risk assessment.

Data protection: Once completed, this risk assessment will be shared with the University Health and Safety Unit to check for completeness and this will be made clear to the student prior to joint completion. There may be actions from the risk assessment which need to be passed on to other staff at the university, such as adjustments to timetable or parking. In these cases the risk assessment may also be required to be shared.

If the student will be going on placement during the maternity period, a placement risk assessment will also be completed and the University Health and Safety Unit will receive a copy to check for completeness.

Name:

Student number:

Average time spent on campus:

Completed form shared with University Health and Safety Unit on following date:

Department:

Form completed by:

Date:

| Hazard | Risk Yes / No | Possible solution | Agreed actions |
|--|---------------------|--|--|
| Can the student leave the building without assistance during an emergency evacuation? | | Contact the University Health and Safety Unit to complete a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP). Note: it is a requirement that all pregnant students have a PEEP in place. | . Note: it is a requirement that all pregnant students have a PEEP in place. |
| Does the student's study involve: Reaching? Stretching? Repetitive Twisting? Lifting/carrying loads? | | Can a mechanical aid be used? Can the task be adapted or automated? Can peers offer help with loads? Avoid this part of the study or reduce the length of time spent doing it. | |
| Workstation Ergonomics Does the student have a workstation set up? | | Review the equipment the student uses for suitability. Signpost the student to https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.pdf for a DSE self-assessment and to support the student to work safely on campus and at home. | |
| Does the study involve: Standing for long periods? Static Postures? | | Rotate the student into other tasks and roles. Can the student alternate between standing and sitting to perform the task? Can the frequency of breaks be increased? Reduce the length of time spent undertaking the task. | |

| Hazard | Risk Yes / No | Possible solution | Agreed actions |
|--|---------------------|---|----------------|
| | | | |
| Does the student work hours that are causing them to feel fatigued? | | <p>Adjust timetable?</p> <p>Suggest breaks during lectures and study time. Support the student to create a timetable that better balances their time. Is the student able to get enough sleep? Signpost to self-help sleep resources on togetherall. Speak to Personal Tutor? Can the student make use of the welfare room to rest?</p> <p>Increase frequency of rest breaks.</p> | |
| Does the student have any long term health conditions or disabilities? | | <p>Refer the student to the Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) for support and adjustments. If the student is already under DDS for a long term health condition or disability, they will speak to them again about how their pregnancy may be affected and vice versa and whether any other reasonable adjustments need to be made.</p> | |
| Is the student considered to be a riskier pregnancy by their midwife/pre-natal team e.g. is older than 35? | | <p>Student to speak with their midwife/pre-natal team to ascertain if any aspects of their study/placement are of particular risk, or any other mitigating measures that could be taken.</p> | |
| Do the study processes involve working with/in extremes of temperature? (i.e. hot environments or cold environments) | | <p>Avoid prolonged exposure to extremes of temperature.</p> <p>Offer additional warm clothing for cold temperatures, provide rest facilities and access to refreshments, and (warm) meals.</p> | |
| Do the study/work activities involve lone working? | | <p>Undertake a risk assessment for lone working, including violence, manual handling, the medical suitability of the student to work alone and whether the workplace itself presents a risk to them.</p> <p>Ensure you know what is happening, including having systems in place to keep in touch with them</p> | |

| Hazard | Risk Yes / No | | Possible solution | Agreed actions |
|---|---------------------|--|--|----------------|
| Does the student feel isolated or distressed by work/study | | | Encourage the student to discuss the issues with Personal Tutor to find resolution or other support services at the university. | |
| Does the student undertake travelling or driving for large parts of their day? | | | Adjust timetable to better balance weekly structure? Encourage the student to discuss the issues with their Personal Tutor. Consider requesting temporary parking on campus to minimise the impact of commuting. | |
| Is non - ionising radiation or ionising radiation present in any of the work processes that the student may be exposed to? | | | Unless a local procedure document specifies guidance: Avoid and/or redeploy the student away from the process | |
| Is the student exposed to high volumes of noise e.g. 85dB (A) or more? | | | Avoid prolonged exposure to noise, use PPE and noise reduction methods as recommended by Noise at Work Regulations. Provide quiet rest facilities. It is best to avoid noise exposure in pregnant students completely. | |
| Is the student studying at heights/ in confined spaces | | | Avoid working at heights/confined spaces in later stages of pregnancy i.e.5 months onwards or before if the student feels unable. | |
| Is the student exposed to: Shocks and vibration? Low frequency vibration Whole body vibration | | | A separate risk assessment will be undertaken for students at risk from assault. Refer the student (with consent where possible) to Care and Concern . Avoid exposure to shocks and vibration. | |

| Hazard | Risk Yes / No | Possible solution | Agreed actions |
|---|---------------------|--|----------------|
| Single shocks (e.g. blow to stomach from attack or assault) | | | |
| <p>Is the student working with biological agents?</p> <p>e.g. Micro-organisms, bacteria and viruses</p> <p>Please name the agents (and possible route of entry to the body) that the Mother/Birth Parent is exposed to in the course of their work.</p> | | <p>Refer to local guidance and COSHH Assessments.</p> <p>Each substance is subject to risk assessment. The control measure will depend on the risk assessment recommendations.</p> <p>If in doubt avoid exposure</p> <p>Consider reducing the length of exposure, personal protective equipment, redeployment and mechanical processes to reduce human exposure/ adapting the task for pregnant.</p> <p>Biological agents used by the person:</p> | |
| <p>Is the student working with chemical agents?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon Monoxide • Lead and its derivatives • Mercury and its derivatives • Substances labelled R40, 45, 46, 49, 61, 63, 64 <p>Please name the agents (and possible route of entry to the body), that the student is exposed to in the course of their study.</p> | | <p>Refer to local guidance and COSHH Assessments.</p> <p>It is best to eliminate the hazard all together, for the benefit of all students. Where this is not possible each substance is subject to risk assessment. The control measure will depend on the risk assessment recommendations.</p> <p>Consider reducing the length of exposure, redeployment, and mechanical processes to reduce human exposure/ adapting the task.</p> <p>If in doubt avoid exposure.</p> <p>Chemicals used by the person:</p> | |
| To identify chemical R40 – 64 check the chemical hazard data sheet | | R40 – Can cause possible irreversible effects | |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| R45 – May cause cancer | R46 – May cause heritable genetic damage | R49 – May cause cancer by inhalation |
| R61 – May cause harm to unborn child | R63 – Possible risk of harm to unborn child | R64 – May cause harm to unborn child |

Appendix 3

Pregnancy, maternity, and adoption support plan template example

Date of support plan meeting(s) to compose below document:

| Contact details | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Student's details |
| | Name |
| | Address |
| | Telephone |
| | Student email |
| | Student ID |
| 2 | Emergency contact's details |
| | Name |
| | Relationship to student |
| | Telephone |
| 3 | Course details |
| | Year of course |
| | Personal Tutor |
| | Programme Leader |
| 4 | Details of the student's agreed named contact for support |
| | Name |
| | Title |
| | Location |
| | Telephone |
| | Email |
| | Key dates (to be reviewed and added to over the course of pregnancy and maternity) |
| 5 | What is the student's due date? |
| 6 | How many weeks pregnant was the student when they notified their Programme Leader of pregnancy? |

| Communication with the student | |
|---|---|
| 7 | What is the student's preferred method of communication: |
| | during pregnancy? |
| | during maternity-related absence? |
| | on return to study? |
| Informing other staff and students | |
| 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 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Health and safety assessment (attach copy/copies to this form) | |
| 9 | Has an assessment been conducted? |
| | And passed to the University Health and Safety Unit (with the student's permission) to check for completeness? |
| | If the student is on a course with a placement element, has a placement risk assessment been conducted? |
| | And passed to the University Health and Safety Unit (with the student's permission) to check for completeness? |
| 10 | Where changes are required to alleviate or minimize risks, who is responsible for ensuring they are implemented? |
| Assessments | |
| 11 | Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to their pregnancy, maternity or adoption? |
| 12 | If so, provide details: |
| 13 | What alternative arrangements have been made between the student and the course team for any outstanding or incomplete assessments? |

| Maternity, paternity and adoption related absence | | |
|--|---|--|
| 14 | How much absence does the student intend to take? | |
| 15 | When does the student intend to start the absence? | |
| 16 | When does the student intend to return from absence? | |
| 17 | Will the dates of absence affect the student's ability to complete any course module requirements? | |
| 18 | If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to complete the module? | |
| 19 | What information will the student require during absence to keep up to date on course developments? | |
| 20 | Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student? | |
| Financial support | | |
| 21 | Has the student been informed about the sources of financial support at MDX? | |
| 22 | Is the (UK) student aware of how any benefits they receive will affect their student support entitlements, and vice versa? | |
| 23 | Specify any follow-up required: | |
| Baby feeding and childcare | | |
| 24 | Has the student read this policy which covers breastfeeding on campus and childcare arrangements? | |
| International students/those on placement abroad | | |
| 25 | Have international students or students on placement abroad been informed about: | |
| | possible airline restrictions? | |
| | the need to check visa implications of returning home, taking a break from studies, or extending their stay due to pregnancy and maternity? | |
| Students on placement | | |
| 26 | Has the placement provider been notified of the student's pregnancy? | |
| 27 | Has the placement provider conducted a health and safety risk assessment? | |
| 28 | Has this risk assessment been (with the student's permission) passed to the University Health and Safety Unit to check for completeness? | |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| 29 | Will the student be able to complete their placement? | |
| 30 | If not, what alternative arrangements will be made? | |
| 31 | Who is responsible for liaising with the placement provider? | |
| Extenuating Circumstances | | |
| 32 | Has the student been informed about MDX's Extenuating Circumstances arrangements with support from a Progression and Support Adviser? | |
| Accommodation | | |
| 33 | Does the student intend to move to alternative accommodation? | |
| 34 | Has the student received advice on alternative accommodation and terminating existing accommodation contracts? | |
| 35 | At what point does the student want to move to alternative accommodation? | |
| 36 | Will the student require university accommodation? | |
| Return to study | | |
| 45 | What support will be provided to the student on their return to study? (e.g. meetings with key staff, put in contact with other student parents, etc.) | |
| Further information | | |
| 46 | Any other information or comments | |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Signatures | |
| Plan to be reviewed on | |
| Agreed by Staff Member | |
| Name | |
| Title | |
| Signature | |
| Date | |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Agreed by student | |
| Name | |
| Signature | |
| Date | |

Appendix 4

Support Process Flowchart for Maternity Period

Step 1

- If a student has confirmed with their GP that they are pregnant and they choose to continue with their pregnancy, they will contact their Programme Leader to discuss their pregnancy and any implications they foresees through their studies.

Step 2

- The Programme Leader will endeavour to respond to the student within 3 working days. The Programme Leader may choose to use the support plan template (*Appendix 3*) as a guide for considerations. The Programme Leader will complete a pregnancy and maternity risk assessment in (see *Appendix 2*) and arrange for the University Health and Safety Unit to complete a PEEP. If the student is on a course with a placement, the student will inform their placement provider who will need to complete a risk assessment. This will be shown to the Programme Leader and the Health and Safety Unit at the University.

Step 3

- Where the student wishes to take maternity absence following the birth, they will (where possible) inform their Programme Leader at least 15 weeks in advance. If they are an International student on a Tier 4 Visa, they will discuss their plans with the International Student Advice Team. When they are ready to return, the Programme Leader will discuss their return transition with them and inform Academic Registry of their status.

Step 4

- The student and Programme Leader (together with any other identified channels of university support or expertise) will remain in contact and the support arrangement adjusted accordingly and where reasonable in accordance with the student's needs.

Appendix 5

Summary of Key Responsibilities

The university will ensure that:

- Relevant staff are made aware of the terms of this policy and their responsibilities arising under it through sharing to appropriate colleagues on a bi-annual basis
- Support and guidance is available for staff undertaking risk assessments on elements of the programme of study that are likely to result in a risk to the health and safety of the student or unborn child
- Staff from appropriate teams (Student Support and Wellbeing, University Health and Safety Unit, Middlesex University Students' Union etc) are available to discuss with academic staff the best way to support the continuing study of a pregnant student to ensure they are able to complete their programme of study
- Appropriate support is available to students through various support services
- The policy is kept under review and updated on a bi-annual basis

Schools and faculties will ensure that:

- The policy is available to staff and students
- Staff are aware of the policy so that they can respond appropriately when a student discloses their pregnancy and seeks support to continue their programme of study
- When a student discloses that they are pregnant, the Programme Leader will complete the pregnancy and maternity risk assessment and liaise with the student around the risk assessment which will be completed by the employer and ensure that the University Health and Safety Unit have view of this
- Wherever practicable, accommodation is made to ensure that a pregnant student, or student with a very young child, is able to complete their programme of study
- If requested, a female member of staff or relevant is identified with whom a pregnant student can discuss their support needs
- The student is given information on other sources of advice/support that are available

All individual staff members are advised to:

- Familiarise themselves with this document and the university's responsibilities towards students who are pregnant or have very young children
- Individual staff members to whom a pregnancy is disclosed are responsible for:
 - Reading the policy and this document and, in particular, becoming familiar with the procedure for supporting pregnant students
 - Treating any disclosure of a pregnancy seriously and making students aware of appropriate sources of support
 - Respecting a student's right to confidentiality and verifying that a student has no objections to their pregnancy being discussed with others – particularly when information needs to be passed on to other staff members to arrange any agreed accommodations to the programme of study or adjustments to fees
 - Ensuring accurate information is given to prospective students regarding the availability of support for students who are pregnant or have very young children
 - Seeking advice from colleagues or central support services within the university if they are unsure of how best to support the continued study of a pregnant student

Students and applicants covered by this policy are responsible for:

- Disclosing their pregnancy to a trusted member of staff within their Department and/or their Programme Leader at an early stage of their pregnancy and at least 15 weeks before the due date, with a view to discussing any necessary risk assessments, support arrangements or adjustments – particularly where elements of their programme of study might present a health and safety hazard to the student or unborn child
- Ensuring the safe supervision of any child they may bring onto campus

Students and applicants covered by this policy are advised to:

- Read the policy in order to understand the university's approach to supporting pregnant students and students with very young children
- Ensure that they have a clear idea of what will be expected of them on their course of study in order to understand the potential impact of pregnancy related absence