

**Guidance for Students on  
Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption.**

**1. Guidance Statement**

- 1.1. Maternity is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. As such, the University is committed to ensuring that students who fall under this characteristic are supported in engaging and completing their studies at Edinburgh Napier University.

**2. Introduction**

- 2.1 This guidance provides advice on issues related to study, health and safety, and finance to 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).
- 2.2 This guidance is accompanied by a similar guidance document for the member of staff whom the student has nominated to be their point of contact for the duration of the maternity, paternity or adoption period, and University staff who may have a role in advising students coming to them with these issues.
- 2.3 The University recommends that both the student and staff members read the relevant guidance in order to understand the responsibilities of each party.

**3. Scope of the Guidance**

- 3.1 The guidance 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<sup>1</sup>.
  - 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 expects to become a parent (including through adoption).
- 3.2 This guidance primarily relates to students who are studying taught on-campus programmes. Some sections are relevant for Transnational Education (TNE) students and Global Online (GO) students; Personal Development Tutors (or the nominated academic member of staff) should therefore exercise appropriate judgement depending on the circumstances of TNE / GO students.

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<sup>1</sup> 26 weeks following the birth of a child is the period of maternity protected by the Equality Act 2010.

- 3.3 The guidance contained here is not directed at or for Postgraduate Research Students (although they may find some of the guidance informative). Separate guidance for Postgraduate Research Students is specified in the Research Degrees [Framework](#).
- 3.4 Where an applicant notifies the University of their pregnancy, they are encouraged to discuss any possible implications for commencing their studies with [Student Recruitment and Admissions](#). Applicants are entitled to request deferred entry; however deferral may not be possible in all cases, depending on the programme of study

#### **4. Informing the University**

##### Students Who Become Pregnant During Their Studies.

- 4.1 If you suspect you are pregnant, you should first speak to your General Practitioner (local community doctor) to have the pregnancy confirmed. You should also inform a member of University staff as soon as possible in order to discuss the appropriate support for your pregnancy and post-natal period. Ideally, you should refer to your Personal Development Tutor (PDT). Please note: a student who is undertaking a programme of postgraduate study via a Postgraduate Sponsor has the sole responsibility to inform their Postgraduate Sponsor of any change of circumstance.
- 4.2 If you do not feel comfortable disclosing information with your PDT you are welcome to discuss your situation with a member of University staff who you feel comfortable with. This could be your lecturer, Programme Leader, Module Leader, Dissertation/Thesis Supervisor, ENSA Advice or a member of the Student Wellbeing & Inclusion team.
- 4.3 The staff member you discuss your pregnancy with will be able to offer general advice and signposting to services, as well as offering guidance relating to how to mitigate any impact upon your academic studies. They are not trained to provide counselling but will be able to direct you to appropriate support services where this is required.
- 4.4 Please complete the form found at Appendix 1 so that the staff member can go through it with you. They will ask you questions relating to your due date, forms of communication and other necessary information the University should know in order to give you the best possible support.
- 4.5 The University understands you may not be able to answer all the questions asked at this stage of your pregnancy. In this case your nominated staff member will arrange catch-up meetings at key stages of your pregnancy (e.g. 16 weeks pregnant, 24 weeks pregnant, and prior to return to study); or at key points of the academic year (e.g. prior to examinations and field trips).

#### Termination of Pregnancy

- 4.6 If you wish to seek a termination, it is recommended you inform your Personal Development Tutor (PDT). However, you are under no obligation to inform the University. If you do so the University will be better able to signpost any support you may require such as extenuating circumstances or absence from study. In the case of terminations, the NHS and the sexual health clinic will provide counselling (if needed). You can also contact the University's wellbeing services at [counselling@napier.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@napier.ac.uk) in order to receive support if you feel you need it.

#### Miscarriage or Stillbirth

- 4.7 If you have experienced a miscarriage or stillbirth, it is recommended you inform your Personal Development Tutor (PDT) however you are under no obligation to disclose this to the University. If you do so the University can provide you with any support you may require such as extenuating circumstances or absence from study. If a stillbirth or miscarriage occurs, you may be offered counselling by the NHS. In all these situations, you can also contact the University's wellbeing services at [counselling@napier.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@napier.ac.uk) in order to receive support.

#### Adoption

- 4.8 If you are to become a parent through adoption, it is recommended that you contact your PDT in order that necessary arrangements can be made in order to support you during this time. This support will vary dependant on the age of the child, the course you are studying, the stage of the academic year at which you become a parent and the support network you have in place.

### **5. Managing the impact on your studies**

#### Risk Assessment to ensure your safety

- 5.1 If you plan to take part in field work as part of your studies, deal with hazardous chemicals or lift heavy goods during your pregnancy or the first 26 weeks following the birth of your child, a risk assessment will be carried out by the nominated staff member (See: <https://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/governance-compliance/healthandsafety/guidance/Documents/risk-assessors-listing.pdf>). There may be particular risks and you should discuss this fully with your nominated staff member who will be contacting and supporting you throughout the pregnancy.
- 5.2 The [Disability Inclusion](#) team can work with you to draft a temporary learning profile to support you in your studies. This could, for example, include things like flexibility around attendance; arrangements to stand up or leave a class for short periods; rest periods; access to toilets for exams and tests

#### Study Abroad/ Placement

- 5.3 If you become pregnant whilst on a study year abroad or a placement, or become pregnant when a study abroad/placement has been planned but not

yet started, you must contact your Programme Leader to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that any health risks and academic progress are properly identified and managed.

### Maternity Related Absence

5.4 You will be permitted to take maternity-related absence following the birth of your child. The length of absence will be determined by your individual circumstance and the structure and demands of your programme.

5.5 Absence for pregnancy-related reasons can vary extensively and there is no right or wrong amount of time take when it comes to maternity absence. In the instance of termination, miscarriage and stillbirth the emotional, mental and physical impact can be unpredictable therefore the University requests that you keep in contact with your nominated staff member regarding how much time you would like to stay absent from your studies.

5.6 If you are giving birth to the child you 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 international students must ensure the impact of such breaks are discussed with the University's international support team as visa restrictions may apply.

5.7 Where there is concern about knowledge of your programme being affected by the length of maternity-related absence your nominated staff member will take steps to ensure you are kept up to speed with developments in the field. For example, ensuring you have access to core reading and journals, Moodle etc. This may also include advice on self-directed study should you request this. Your nominated staff member will discuss with you what academic support can be offered to you on your return to study

5.8 You will be asked to indicate the date on which you intend to start maternity-related absence as well as the length of maternity-related absence that you intend to take. It is recommended that you inform the nominated member of staff in writing at least 15 weeks before the baby is due to allow time to review the support plan and make the necessary arrangements. The University understands you may not be able to answer all these questions in full at the time of completing the form so contact should be maintained with your nominated staff member throughout the duration of the your absence from study.

### Maternity and Visa Related Issues

5.8 If you require a Visa to study in the UK you must check the terms of your Visa closely and comply with any restrictions or requirements. If clarification is needed on the terms of the Visa, you are advised to obtain advice from International Student Support at [internationalsupport@napier.ac.uk](mailto:internationalsupport@napier.ac.uk) as soon as possible. Absence from study in the circumstance of pregnancy, termination,

miscarriage and stillbirth will be treated as 'sick leave' but will not need to be further specified.

More advice should be reviewed at <https://my.napier.ac.uk/international-students/student-route-visas/taking-absence-from-your-programme>

### Resuming Studies

5.9 Information about suspending and resuming studies is available on [My Napier](#). You must inform your nominated member of staff when you are ready to resume your studies giving as much advance notice as possible (normally not less than two months). The support plan in Appendix 1 should be reviewed with your Programme Leader to ensure an appropriate schedule for re-integration into your programme of study, including the examination schedule and any special features such as fieldwork or placements. You should notify your school office at [records@napier.ac.uk](mailto:records@napier.ac.uk) so that they are aware you have resumed your studies. If you are a Tier 4 student you should also contact [internationalsupport@napier.ac.uk](mailto:internationalsupport@napier.ac.uk)

5.10 Directly before, or as soon as practical after your return, you should meet with your Personal Development Tutor to ensure that appropriate academic support is provided, and any necessary adjustments are made to facilitate a smooth return to your programme of study. Students are reminded that it is not permitted to bring children into classes.

### Support

5.11 Students are encouraged to gain support and guidance from their School, Programme Leader and Personal Development Tutor in the first instance. If a student may benefit from seeking support and guidance out-with their School, they are encouraged to contact [Keep on Track](#) (a School of Health and Social Care student is encouraged to seek support from the [Student Experience Team](#))

### Health and Safety

5.12 The greatest risk to an unborn baby is during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy and so it is important that you inform the University as early as possible. The University can best support you throughout your pregnancy if it is fully aware of your circumstances, allowing appropriate Health & Safety measures to be put in place. You must not return to University within two weeks of giving birth for health and safety reasons.

### Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEPs)

5.13 During and after pregnancy, a student's mobility may be affected, which could impact upon how quickly and safely they can exit University buildings in an emergency. As a consequence you may need information about our evacuation procedures and a personal evacuation plan. In the first instance you can discuss a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) with an advisor from the University's Disability Inclusion team. You may also wish to discuss evacuation procedures with an appropriate Accommodation Officer if they are staying in university accommodation. Further information about PEEPs can be found on [My Napier](#)

## Other Considerations

### Financial Considerations

- 6.1 Undergraduate students should note that funding will usually stop when the suspension of study begins. Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) funded students must inform SAAS of their situation. SAAS will advise on possible future eligibility. Nursing and Midwifery students are entitled to 45 weeks of SAAS funding while suspending their studies because of pregnancy. More information can be found [here](#)
- 6.2 Non-Scottish UK students should seek advice from their funding provider. The University refund policy covers refunds of tuition fees. Students who are suspending study under this policy should see Section 6 of this document: [Student Fees and University Debt Policy \(napier.ac.uk\)](#) and contact [fees@napier.ac.uk](mailto:fees@napier.ac.uk) to check eligibility for a refund.
- 6.3 Lone Parents Grant - Undergraduate students from Scotland who are lone parents with at least one dependent child can apply to the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) for the Lone Parents' Grant. More information is available from <https://www.saas.gov.uk/guides/living-costs-grants>
- 6.4 If you are studying in the UK of a Student Visa there are specific rules around approved absences. Approved absences cannot typically exceed 60 days, nor must any absence lead you to extend your visa to complete your programme of study. It is your responsibility to ensure you comply with the terms of your visa. You are encouraged to obtain advice from the Visa and International Support team at [internationalsupport@napier.ac.uk](mailto:internationalsupport@napier.ac.uk) as soon as possible. Further guidance can be viewed at <https://my.napier.ac.uk/international-students/student-route-visas/taking-absence-from-your-programme>
- 6.5 If you are a Nursing, Midwifery or Social Care student and you are a parent (or are about to become a parent), you should be eligible to apply to SAAS for the Childcare Allowance for Parents at same time as you apply for your bursary.
- 6.6 Further advice on financial implications of your pregnancy, benefit rules and potential sources of funding can be sought from ENSA Advice at [ensa.advice@napier.ac.uk](mailto:ensa.advice@napier.ac.uk) or go to [www.napierstudents.com/advice/](http://www.napierstudents.com/advice/) to make an appointment.

### University Accommodation

- 6.7 If you become pregnant whilst living in University accommodation you may find that this is no longer suitable for health and safety reasons. Contact should be made with the Accommodation Office at [accommodation@napier.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@napier.ac.uk) for advice and to notify the accommodation officers about your condition in case of emergencies such as early labour.

### Babies and Children on Campus

- 6.8 As a general rule babies and children should not normally be brought onto campus. Students must ensure you have suitable childcare arrangements in place at all times when you are expected to be at the university. The University does not currently have appropriate on-campus childcare facilities. However, Edinburgh has a range of caring facilities which you can explore at this [link](#). The University has a [fund](#) available to help with childcare costs should you need it.
- 6.9 It is recognised that occasionally it may be necessary to bring babies and children into a university campus (e.g. for breast feeding). In such instances students should ensure your children are kept in public spaces (e.g. atriums, canteens, the LRC family study room at Merchiston). Please note that the University cannot accept any liability for your child in these circumstances and nor will any staff member take responsibility for caring for your child whilst you are in classes. For further information see [Health and Safety Guidance: Access to the University by Children](#)
- 6.10 In case it is required, the University provides baby change facilities on campus in the following locations:
- Merchiston - two in the foyer B57a, B57b.
  - Sighthill - 1C03
  - Craiglockhart - 1/31 and 2/14.
- 6.11 For health and safety reasons, as well as to avoid the disruption of classes or study, babies and children must never be brought into teaching or learning environments, including laboratories and specialist spaces, lecture rooms and general teaching rooms. There can be no exceptions to this requirement.

### Breastfeeding

- 6.12 Students who wish to breastfeed on campus should be aware that there are no designated facilities for breast feeding or for expressing milk on campus. However we fully support parents who wish to nurse and express milk wherever they feel comfortable on campus (and subject to appropriate health and safety considerations). The First Aid rooms offer a private space for breast feeding and expressing milk if these are unoccupied. These rooms are equipped with fridges and microwaves which can be used for the storage and heating of milk.

### First Aid

- 6.13 If required for any reason first aid rooms are available at:

**Craiglockhart** - ground floor on route to the Hydra in the war poets display area. Room 1/44

**Merchiston** - ground floor on route to Library Room B04

**Sighthill** - ground floor B block Room 1.B.32

### Postnatal depression

6.14 Students may suffer the effects of post-natal depression following the birth of a child. Students who are affected may wish to discuss this with the University's counselling service ([counselling@napier.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@napier.ac.uk)) or seek support from your local GP (doctor). If you believe postnatal depression has had an impact on your studies you may wish to consider using the 'fit to sit – extenuating circumstances procedure', details of which are available on [My Napier](#)

## **7. Support for fathers and partners**

This section outlines support for fathers and partners (including same sex partners) who have responsibility for bringing up the child.

Upon discovering you are to become a father, or the partner of a pregnant student who expects to be responsible for raising the child, you will be entitled to 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 paternity/maternity support leave immediately following the birth. If you are in this situation you should contact your PDT (or another appropriate member of academic staff) to fill out the form in Appendix A and discuss the implications on your study. Flexibility will be shown where possible although this will necessarily be more limited in some programmes than others will.

For students in this situation who are receiving research funding please see the Research Degrees Framework for advice on funding and maternity related absence: <https://my.napier.ac.uk/your-studies/postgraduate-and-research-degrees/find-out-about-research-degrees>

**Review date: May 2022**



## **Appendix 1**

This form aims to guide discussions with between students and staff during pregnancy and maternity. It should be completed and agreed with the student. It is not intended that the form should be completed in full at a first meeting as initially a student may be unable – and should not be expected – to respond to all the issues raised.

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

**Edinburgh Napier University  
Student Pregnancy Guidance Support Plan**

**A copy of this plan should be retained by the student and a copy should be held confidentially in the appropriate School Office.**

Contact details	
<b>1</b>	<b>Student's details</b>
	Name
	Address
	Telephone
	Email address
	Student number
<b>2</b>	<b>Emergency contact's details</b>
	Relationship to student
	Telephone
<b>3</b>	<b>Course details</b>
	Course title
	School
	Programme Leader
	Year of course
<b>4</b>	<b>Details of the student's first point of contact within Edinburgh Napier University</b>
	Name
	Title
	Room No.
	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 ENU of pregnancy?	

Communication with the student

7	What is the student's preferred method of communication (email/phone/address).	
	= 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? (Module Leaders/PDT/PL/International Office if applicable)	
	<b>Name and title</b>	<b>Date</b>

Health and safety assessment (attach copy to this form)

9	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 classes and lectures with a parent?	
10	Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risks, who is responsible for ensuring they are implemented?	

Rest facilities

11	Has the student been informed about rest facilities on campus for use by pregnant students?	
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## Pregnancy-related absence

12	Will the dates or times of antenatal appointments affect the student's study if known?	
13	Have you discussed any pregnancy-related illness that has affected the student's ability to undertake their course?	
14	If yes to either of the above questions, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to catch up?	

## Assessments

15	Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to her pregnancy or maternity?	
16	If so, provide details:	
17	What alternative arrangements have been made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments?	

## Maternity-related absence (students should provide information in writing at least 15 weeks before their due date)

18	How much maternity-related absence does the student intend to take?	
19	When does the student intend to start maternity-related absence?	
20	When does the student intend to return from maternity-related absence?	
21	Will the dates of maternity-related absence affect the student's ability to complete any course module requirements?	
22	If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to complete the module?	
23	What information will the student require during maternity-related absence to keep up to date on course developments?	
24	Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student?	

Financial support		
25	Has the student been informed about sources of financial support or been referred to ENSA or an external organisation that can do so?	
26	Is the (UK) student aware of how any benefits they receive will affect their student support entitlements, and vice versa?	
27	Specify any follow-up required:	
Baby feeding		
28	Does the student intend to feed their baby on university facilities on their return to study?	
29	Does the student intend to breastfeed? If so, see health and safety section above.	
30	Has the student been informed about the facilities available?	
Childcare		
31	Has the student been informed about childcare facilities on campus or in the local community?	
32	Is the (UK) student aware that their mode of study will affect their childcare funding entitlements?	
International students/those on placement abroad		
33	Have international students or students on placement abroad been informed about:	
	= possible airline restrictions?	
	= the need to check visa implications of returning home or extending their stay due to pregnancy and maternity; through discussion with the University's visa and immigration team.	

Students on placement		
34	Has the placement provider been notified of the student's pregnancy?	
35	Has the placement provider conducted a health and safety assessment?	
36	Is the placement provider aware of Edinburgh Napier's guidance on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity?	
37	Will the student be able to complete her placement?	
38	If not, what alternative arrangements will be made?	
39	Who is responsible for liaising with the placement provider?	
Extenuating circumstances		
40	Have students been informed about Edinburgh Napier's extenuating circumstances policy in the event that their pregnancy or maternity affects examinations and assessments?	
Accommodation (Student Halls)		
41	Has the student informed the Student Accommodation Team of the pregnancy?	
42	Does the student intend to move to alternative accommodation?	
43	Has the student received advice on alternative accommodation and terminating existing accommodation contracts?	
44	At what point does the student want to move to alternative accommodation?	
45	Will the student require university accommodation?	
Return to study		
46	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)	
Further information		
47	Any other information or comments	

Signatures	
Plan to be reviewed on	
<b>Agreed by staff member</b>	
Name	
Title	
Signature	
Date	
<b>Agreed by student</b>	
Name	
Signature	
Date	

## **Appendix 2: Sources of Information and Help**

### **Reproductive Health and Pregnancy Advice**



Chalmers Sexual Health Centre

British Pregnancy Advisory Service

**Childcare**

Childcare Providers

**General Information and Advice**

ENSA Advice

One Parent Families Scotland

Adoption UK

Edinburgh Napier Accommodation

Edinburgh Napier Student Finance

Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS)

Student Funding

**Counselling & Support**

Edinburgh Napier Counselling Service

Mental Health Assessment Service (MHAS)

Breathing Space

<https://www.lothiansexualhealth.scot.nhs.uk/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://www.bpas.org/>  
03457 304030

<https://www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/funded-early-learning-and-childcare>

[ensa.advice@napier.ac.uk](mailto:ensa.advice@napier.ac.uk)  
0131 229 8791

[www.opfs.org.uk](http://www.opfs.org.uk)  
0808 801 0323

[scotland@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:scotland@adoptionuk.org.uk)  
0131 202 3670 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

[accomodation@napier.ac.uk](mailto:accomodation@napier.ac.uk)

[fees@napier.ac.uk](mailto:fees@napier.ac.uk)

0300 555 0505

[Studentfunding@napier.ac.uk](mailto:Studentfunding@napier.ac.uk)

[counselling@napier.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@napier.ac.uk)

0131 537 6000

0800 83 85 87