

## **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY & GUIDANCE FOR NEW OR EXPECTANT MOTHERS**

### **POLICY**

It is the policy of University of Worcester to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees and students, including particular measures to protect the health and safety of those who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

The University will fulfil its obligations by carrying out risk assessment for such staff and students and by putting appropriate measures in place to protect their health and that of their unborn child (ren).

For staff this policy should be read in conjunction with the university guidelines on maternity pay and leave which can be found at <http://www.worc.ac.uk/HR/685.htm>

For students it should be read in conjunction with the document 'Student pregnancy and maternity'

### **LEGISLATION**

The applicable legislation is:

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) which put a specific responsibility on employers to assess and control the risks on new and expectant mothers.
- The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) also applies, as it is automatically considered sex discrimination if an employer fails to protect the health or safety of their pregnant workers.
- The Employment Rights Act 1996 as amended by the Employment Relations Act 1999 which requires employers, when offering suitable alternative, to ensure that the work is '.....suitable and appropriate for her to do in the circumstances; and on terms and conditions no less favourable than her normal terms and conditions'
- The Equality Act 2010 which outlines the basic framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in services and public functions, including education.

### **PROCEDURES / GUIDANCE**

#### **Staff**

Employees are encouraged to advise HR of their pregnancy at an early stage, particularly if there may be health and safety concerns due to the nature of their work.

A risk assessment will be arranged by HR, at the same time as discussion concerning maternity leave, maternity pay etc.

Risk assessments will be completed with the employees line manager with reference to the health and safety office and Occupational Health Adviser in particular where there are particular risks identified (e.g. regarding exposure to toxic substances, substantial manual handling or work with radiation).

The line manager will have responsibility for ensuring that any necessary control measures are implemented and kept under review as the pregnancy progresses.

The risk assessment will need to be reviewed if the employee returns to work within 6 months

of the birth of her baby or if she is still breast feeding when she returns to work.

Control measures may involve making temporary changes to an individual's job or working conditions.

## **Students**

It is the responsibility of students to alert the university to the fact of their pregnancy as soon as possible, particularly if there may be particular hazards associated with their course. This is most likely to be an issue for students in areas such as science, sport or art and design, where there are particular chemical or physical hazards.

Undergraduate students should alert their academic tutor/ course leader, postgraduates should raise the issue with their supervisor. The tutor or supervisor should then carry out risk assessment, in discussion with the individual and with the H&S office if particular concerns arise.

The tutor or supervisor may also at this stage need to contact academic registry to discuss issues relating to sitting exams, potential impact on performance etc.

For more detailed guidance and information staff should refer to the document 'Student pregnancy and maternity'

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The **employee** should:-

- Notify HR and their line manager of their pregnancy at the earliest opportunity. If they do not wish to involve the line manager initially they can arrange a confidential discussion with HR.
- Comply with any measures identified through risk assessment which are necessary to reduce the risks to their health and that of their unborn child (ren);
- Raise any concerns they have regarding their health at work during in pregnancy with either their line manager or HR;
- Notify HR and/or their line manager in writing if they return to work within 6 months of the birth of the baby, or if they are still breast feeding when they return to work.

The **HR Department** should:-

- Arrange for a risk assessment with the individual & their line manager
- Advise on any control measures as appropriate to reduce risk
- Refer to Occupational Health any areas of concern

The **Occupational Health Adviser** should:-

- Review all risk assessments carried out by HR
- Review risk assessments carried out by academic staff if requested (in respect of students)
- Carry out more detailed risk assessment (for staff and students) where appropriate
- Keep appropriate records of the above
- Provide general guidance on management of H&S during and after pregnancy

The **Line Manager** should:-

- Carry out a risk assessment with the individual

- Implement any recommended control measures
- Monitor the situation throughout pregnancy
- Refer back to HR or H&S if the risk assessment needs to be reviewed.

**Students** should:-

- Inform their personal tutor or research supervisor of pregnancy as soon as possible
- Comply with any measures recommended to control risk.

The **Academic Tutor/ Course Leader** or **Research Supervisor** should:-

- Carry out risk assessment if informed by a student that she is pregnant;
- Record this on the appropriate form
- Seek further advice from H&S as required
- Ensure recommended control measures are implemented.

## Appendix 1: Health risk assessment in pregnancy\*

Name:

Staff No:

Department / Institute:

Line Manager / Academic Tutor / Course Leader / Research Supervisor:

EDC (date baby(ies) is/are due):

Employee/Student Signature:

(Signing to confirm accuracy of information given)

Line Manager / Academic Tutor / Course Leader / Research Supervisor:

(Signing to confirm completion of risk assessment, accept responsibility for implementation of control measures and for ongoing review)

Health and Safety Coordinator / Occupational Health Advisor:

(Signing to confirm risk assessment is satisfactory)

\* This risk assessment form can also be used to assess risks for those who have given birth in the last 6 months, or for nursing mothers

Does the person's job/course involve any of the following?	Yes √	No X	Controls
Work/Study with chemicals			
Work/Study with micro-organisms or infectious materials			
Vibrating equipment			
Exposure to radiation			
Loud noise			
Work/Study in confined areas			
Work/Study on slippery or wet surfaces			
Exposure to strong or unpleasant smells			
Prolonged sitting or standing			
Repeated bending or stretching			
Lifting and carrying			
Work/Study alone for long periods			
Shift work or night work			

Overtime			
Work/Study in hot/cold conditions			
Use of protective clothing or uniform			
Work/Study without good access to toilet and rest facilities			
Extensive travelling			

Are there any other aspects of the job/course which the person feels may cause risk for your or your baby?

Does the person have any other particular concerns about their pregnancy which they would like us to be aware of?

## Appendix 2: Health risk assessment in pregnancy - Guidance notes

Does the job/course involve any of the following?	Nature of risk in pregnancy	Control measures to consider
Work/Study with Chemicals	Some chemicals are specifically toxic to the developing foetus. Pregnant women are forbidden by law from work involving lead	For low risk chemicals such as disinfectants regularly used by cleaners, the risk is relatively low and usual control measures such as wearing gloves will be adequate. If more toxic substances are involved (e.g. IS&E / NPARU), the condition of the person should be taken into account in the risk assessment for the specific activity.
Work/Study with micro-organisms or infectious materials	Some diseases such as chicken pox or German measles pose particular risks for pregnant women, these are not likely to be a risk except for those working in a healthcare environment Specific control measures may be needed for those working with known microbiological hazards, GMO's etc	The condition of the person should be taken into account in the risk assessment for the specific activity.
Vibrating equipment	Whole body vibration increases the risk of back pain. High levels of whole body vibration and being bumped about can be potentially hazardous for the baby Use of tools which cause hand arm vibration increases the risk of carpal tunnel, the risk of carpal tunnel is also increased by pregnancy	Refer to H&S if this is an issue
Exposure to radiation		Refer to H&S if this is an issue

Loud noise	Prolonged loud noise can increase the blood pressure and reduce growth of the baby	Refer to H&S if this is an issue
Work/Study in confined areas	Work in small areas may increase the risk of musculoskeletal problems, particularly in later pregnancy when the body shape changes	Consider changing duties to avoid this, especially in late pregnancy. E.g. cleaners may struggle to clean toilets and shower cubicles as the bump gets large
Work/Study on slippery or wet surfaces	The likelihood of falling may be higher especially in later pregnancy when the body shape changes. Falling carries a risk to mother and baby	Implement usual good practices to minimise slipping risks (e.g. clear signage, regular cleaning of wet areas). Consider referral to H&S if the risk is very high
Exposure to strong or unpleasant smells	This may increase nausea, especially in early pregnancy	Consider relocation from the area in early pregnancy if this is a particular issue. Consider breaks to be taken away from the area
Prolonged sitting or standing	Prolonged sitting increases the risk of back pain. Prolonged standing increases the risk of back pain in tiredness and varicose veins	Consider additional breaks, regular short walks, provision of a stool or chair if appropriate
Repeated bending or stretching	This may increase the risk of back pain, especially in later pregnancy and also for fatigue	Consider additional breaks. Refer to H&S if a particular problem
Lifting and carrying	The risk of back pain is increased in pregnancy due to softening of the ligaments. This is an issue right from the beginning of pregnancy. In later pregnancy, the risks are increased due to the changed posture	Consider additional breaks. Review tasks, reduce lifting and carrying as far as possible. Refer to H&S if a particular issue

Work/Study alone for long periods	Possible increase in risk of ill-health requiring assistance	Review usual lone working policies, consider additional means for raising assistance if needed
Shift work or night work	Fatigue may be an issue	Review working hours if this causes a significant problem
Overtime	Fatigue may be an issue, growth of the baby may be reduced if working long hours or very tired	Review working hours if indicated, consider whether work demands are excessive
Work/Study in hot/cold conditions	Fatigue may be an issue, also risk of increased blood pressure. This may be an issue even in ordinary offices in particularly hot weather	Consider extra breaks in a cooler area if appropriate, ensure drinking water is available Consider alternate duties if severe
Use of PPE or Uniform	Clothing may be hot or cumbersome and increase fatigue. Clothing may fit badly as shape changes in later pregnancy	Consider whether clothing is comfortable and appropriate provide alternate style if necessary. Consider redeployment if suitable clothing can not be provided
Work/Study without good access to toilet and rest facilities	More frequent toilet breaks may be required during pregnancy Fatigue may be an issue in pregnancy	Consider redeployment if adequate toilet facilities are not available; consider whether a rest area is required
Extensive travelling	Fatigue may be an issue; nausea may be an issue in early pregnancy; carrying luggage maybe an issue on long trips (e.g. overseas); driving may be difficult in very late pregnancy due to the size of the bump	Consider whether travel is appropriate, ensure rest time is built into schedules

### Appendix 3: Pregnancy risk assessment - process and responsibilities

