

Information for Students who are Pregnant

The University of Worcester recognises that pregnancy and parenthood can be daunting and exciting. We have therefore compiled the following questions and answers to help you choose the support you might need and want and to make sure that support is available and accessible. Hopefully the questions and answers will cover all your needs but if they do not, or you would like clarification on any points you can contact any of the following for help:

- Your Personal Academic Tutor;
- Lucy Sandwell, Student Community Wellbeing Service Manager; tel. 01905 85 5104, email l.sandwell@worc.ac.uk;
- Academic and Welfare Adviser, Worcester Students' Union; tel. 01905 54 3210, email suadvice@worc.ac.uk.

Q1. *I am pregnant; do I have to tell the university?*

You do not have to tell the university you are pregnant; however the university will be unable to provide you with individualised support unless you let us know. In certain areas, it is very important that you inform your tutors/course leader or the Student Community Wellbeing Manager as soon as you become aware that you are pregnant. Especially if studying in laboratories or involved in physical activities as there may be potential to cause harm to you or the unborn.

The university will only enquire if you are pregnant if it has good grounds to believe you are and there are genuine concerns about your health and safety.

Q2. *Who should I tell?*

If you decide to tell the university you should inform Lucy Sandwell, the Student Community Wellbeing Service Manager (telephone: 01905 855104; email l.sandwell@worc.ac.uk). She will ensure you are made fully aware of the support available to you and will co-ordinate arrangements for that support. She will carry out a risk assessment with you and agree a personal support plan. An example support plan is shown at the end of these questions and answers.

During these discussions, and should you wish to proceed with the pregnancy, you will have the opportunity to identify course leaders, Personal Academic Tutors and other members of University staff that you wish to inform of your pregnancy. You will also be asked permission to record your pregnancy and due date on your Student Record. The University will not inform any one about your pregnancy without your express permission, unless it has genuine concerns for your health and safety or the health and safety of your child.

Students who are studying on Nursing or Midwifery courses are supported by specific members of staff within that faculty due to the requirements of the course.

- Nursing students should contact Helen Ford (email: h.ford@worc.ac.uk).
- Midwifery students should contact Lisa Stephens (email: l.stephens@worc.ac.uk)

Students at Partner Colleges are encouraged to inform their Course Leaders or student support department. They will be able to tailor the support specific to the requirements of the course.

Q3. *What if I would rather tell someone else?*

You may not wish the Student Community Wellbeing Service Manager to be the first person at the university you inform about your pregnancy. If you would rather tell another member of university staff or a Student Union officer or staff member you should draw their attention to the document *Student pregnancy and maternity – guidance for staff* available at

[www2.worc.ac.uk/studentsupport/documents/Student_pregnancy_and_maternity -
_guidance_for_staff.pdf](http://www2.worc.ac.uk/studentsupport/documents/Student_pregnancy_and_maternity_-_guidance_for_staff.pdf)

Whilst it is your decision who you inform you should be aware that members of University staff other than the Student Community Wellbeing Service Manager may not be as well placed to have an overview of the support available and to ensure you receive the support you need when you need it.

Q4. *When should I tell them?*

The highest risk of harm to your baby is during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy so it is advisable you notify the university as soon as possible once you find out you are pregnant so that a risk assessment can be carried out and identifiable risks to you and your baby may be avoided. Even if you are unsure whether you wish to proceed with the pregnancy, it may still be beneficial to carry out a risk assessment.

Q5. *Will I have to leave university because I am pregnant?*

No. Being pregnant in itself does not necessarily mean you need to leave your course or suspend your studies. However, there may be risks associated with continuing your studies at certain stages of your pregnancy which will depend on the requirements and nature of your course. For many courses these risks will be low but courses that involve the following are more likely to present greater risks:

- physical activity, including lifting and carrying
- the use of chemicals, including paints and pesticides
- exposure to radiation
- working in hot/cold or pressurised environments.
- where exposure to infectious disease is a possibility, including laboratory work and healthcare provision.

Where risks are identified during a risk assessment, you and, if necessary, your midwife or GP will be consulted on ways to alleviate or minimise the identified risks.

Q6. *What if I decide to take time off because of my pregnancy?*

You may choose to take a break from your studies for up to a year, or you may wish to return to study as soon as possible after your baby is born. It would be in your best interest to make an appointment with the Programme Advisers to discuss the options available to you. The Student Community Development Service Manager can assist you with this or you can make an appointment through Time Centre on your SOLE page.

If you do decide to take time off from your studies because of your pregnancy you must inform Registry Services of the following in writing at least 15 weeks before your baby is due.

- the date on which you intend to start maternity-related absence
- the length of maternity-related absence that you intend to take and the date on which you intend to return to study.

15 weeks' notice should allow sufficient time for you and the university to liaise to review your personal support plan, make any necessary arrangements, and ensure information is communicated as required. (See also Q10.)

Q7. *What if I have assessments or am due to take exams whilst pregnant?*

If you are due to give birth near to, or during assessment deadlines, or an examination period and you want to complete your assessed work or sit your exams, you will not be prevented from doing so.

In examinations, pregnant students may require rest breaks and may need to visit the toilet more frequently than those who are not pregnant. They may also require a more comfortable and supportive chair. In such cases you may need to sit the examination in a location separate from other students. The university will agree with you adjustments it will be able to make to enable you to complete examinations and assessments during your pregnancy.

If you have a pregnancy-related health condition that is exacerbated by stress, you should seek advice from your midwife or doctor. If they advise against you sitting an examination or trying to meet the assessed work deadline, alternative methods of assessment may be explored with you.

If you are unable to undertake an alternative method of assessment, or if you experience significant pregnancy-related problems in the course of an examination or when undertaking assessed work, the university will make arrangements for you to resit the examination at the earliest possible opportunity or agree an extension for resubmitting coursework.

Q8. *What if I am due to go on placement?*

If you are due to undertake a placement as part of your course, the university will, with your permission and agreement, liaise with the placement provider to ensure a risk assessment is carried out. If fieldwork is a requirement of the course, this will need to be considered within a risk assessment.

UK students who are on placement or studying abroad will need to check their visa terms and conditions as they may need to extend their stay or return to the country at a later date.

As pregnancy is considered a pre-existing condition by insurance companies, students who are pregnant prior to commencing a field trip or their placement or study abroad will need to check whether their insurance covers them for pre-existing conditions.

Q9. *Will I be able to claim for exceptional mitigating circumstances?*

Normally you will be expected to take your pregnancy into account when preparing assignments or preparing for exams so an application for exceptional mitigating circumstances would not normally be appropriate. However, if there are complications with the pregnancy or your health deteriorates to the extent your academic performance is affected then an application may be considered. You will however be expected to provide appropriate evidence to support your application e.g. a letter from your GP.

Q10. *Will I be able to carry on studying once my baby is born?*

If you choose to do so you will be able to take maternity-related absence following the birth of their child. How long you take will depend on your personal circumstances and the structure and content of your course. For example, some courses have an attendance requirement so any absences would have to be in conjunction with the attendance policy. The university will work with you to agree a suitable return-to-study date.

If the structure or content of your course requires you to return to study sooner than you would like to, you will be contacted by the Programme Advisers to discuss the options available to you.

You will normally be required to take as a minimum two weeks' compulsory maternity-related absence. This is in line with employment law and is to ensure your health and safety following birth. If you are on a course of professional training or are receiving a bursary from a professional body, you should check your minimum or recommended absence periods with the professional body concerned.

If the university is concerned about your health in relation to your proposed return date or your course requirements, you may be asked for your GP's confirmation of your fitness to return to study.

Normally you will be allowed to take up to one year out of study. If necessary, the university will take steps to ensure you are kept up to speed with developments in your field of study, for example sending you lists of key reading and new research, dates and transcripts of relevant lectures and access to key journals.

In exceptional circumstances, you may need to extend the length of your maternity leave beyond the standard time allowed, for example in cases of postnatal depression, serious illness, loss of your baby, or where there is no available childcare.

The university will take steps to enable you to complete the requirements of your course or module before you take maternity-related absence. If you are unable to complete your course or module before taking maternity-related absence you will, if possible, be allowed to complete the course or module on your return.

You should decide when you start your maternity-related absence in agreement with the university. If you wish to, you may study up to your due date, or start your maternity-related absence a full term or semester before your due date.

If you are close to your due date and unable to study as planned, you may be able to start your maternity-related absence earlier than planned or, if appropriate, agree with the university alternative methods through which you can meet the course requirements.

You should discuss and agree with the university when you intend to return from maternity-related absence prior to beginning the period of absence. However, if you wish to change this date during the course of your absence, you should notify Registry Services as soon as possible.

Before you return from a period of maternity-related absence you should discuss with the university your study options and your continued support and agree your support plan before your return.

You may wish to consider resuming your course on a part-time or distance-learning basis. If so, the university would normally agree to this unless there are justifiable reasons for not doing so. In that case the reasons will be confirmed to you in writing.

You should discuss your return to study with the Student Community Wellbeing Service Manager and your academic tutor.

Q11. What financial benefits are available to me whilst I am pregnant or following the birth?

Your entitlement to benefits and other payments during and following pregnancy and the impact of the pregnancy and maternity-related absence on your funding from statutory and other sources can be complex so you should speak with the university's Money Advisers to discuss your particular situation. You can make an appointment through **firstpoint** by email (firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or by phone (01905 542551).

Provided other eligibility requirements are met students with children are one of the priority groups for awards from the Access to Learning Fund. The Money Advisers can give more information and advice on applying to the fund.

Q12. Will I have to leave my university managed accommodation because I am pregnant?

You will not be asked to leave your existing accommodation because you are pregnant, and you will be supported in finding suitable accommodation prior to the arrival of your baby or prior to your return from maternity-related absence, whichever is most appropriate for you.

Given the demand for student accommodation, you are advised to consider your accommodation requirements in the early stages of your pregnancy.

Contracts for university owned and managed accommodation will allow students to end their contract early because of pregnancy or maternity without penalty. Where a student is in private accommodation, the university will, where possible, provide support and advice on terminating their contract.

Once your baby is born you will not be able to live with her/him in university managed accommodation as children under the age of 18 are not permitted in halls of residence or other university managed accommodation.

Q13. I am studying in the UK but my home is in another country. Does this affect my rights during pregnancy?

Unless you are advised not to do so by your doctor or midwife, you should be able to travel during pregnancy. However, there are some considerations.

- Airlines have different policies and may not allow travel beyond 36 weeks or, in the event that the pregnancy is complicated or multiple, beyond 32 weeks. You will need to check individual airline policies before travelling and be aware that airlines will ask students for proof that it is safe for them to travel.
- As pregnancy is considered a pre-existing condition by insurance companies, students who are pregnant prior to commencing a field trip or their placement or study abroad will need to check whether their insurance covers them for pre-existing conditions.

If you are an international student, it is imperative that you speak to the International Student Adviser as soon as possible. The adviser will be able to look at your individual Visa requirements and support you appropriately. To make an appointment, please contact Deb Graddon either by telephone on 01905 542743 or by email d.graddon@worc.ac.uk.

There are certain visa requirements that may mean that International students are not entitled to the same adjustments and rights as a Home/EU student. For example, an International Student may not be entitled to take longer than the two-week compulsory maternity-related leave as this may affect the University sponsoring them. The reason for this is that as a University we would be unable to meet our sponsorship duties during a longer maternity leave.

The University would issue you with a CAS/ short term student visa (will depend on how much time you need to complete your studies) so that you can apply for a new student visa; however we will only issue a new CAS if you meet the following requirements:

- You have discussed and agreed with us a possible date to return home, we understand that this date might change, but we would expect you to discuss with us any lengthy delays to you returning home.

- You provide us with evidence that you have left the UK, this should be in the form of a boarding pass and a re-entry stamp to your home country.
- If you need to be in the UK to continue your studies, for instance if you only need to submit an almost completed dissertation then this could be completed and submitted from home.

If you decide to continue your studies after a short break then this is fine; however you will need to discuss your planned return with the University and agree with them a date on which you will return to your studies. If you need to delay your return you must contact the University and explain why you need longer, we will need you to provide evidence of why you need additional time and the University may decide that they can't continue to sponsor you for this longer break.

We would suggest that before the birth you consider asking a family member if possible to apply for a visa to come and visit you either just before you give birth or just after. This would be a good idea if you are alone in the UK, for instance your partner was not able to come with you either due to visa restrictions or because of their work.

Q14. *Are child-care facilities available on campus?*

The university has an Ofsted approved nursery and early years education centre on campus, Unitots, located in Bredon building. The nursery takes children aged from 3 months to 5 years of age. Places are limited and are allocated on a first come first served basis. Parents are advised to make contact with Hazel Rutherford, the Nursery Manager as soon as possible to apply for a place. Enquiries and applications can be made before your baby is born. Enquiries can be sent to unitots@worc.ac.uk or telephone 01905 855277.

Room BB180 in Bredon building has been set aside as a rest room and breastfeeding facility. The room contains a bed, reclining chair and nappy changing facilities. The room is suitable for mothers wishing to express breast milk and a fridge and microwave are provided to store and re-heat milk and baby foods.

In addition to BB180 breast feeding can take place anywhere on campus. Highchairs are provided in the refectory for small children eating there.

You may wish to breast feed in parts of the campus which are in or near to buildings and services you use frequently. You are free to do so. If others feel uncomfortable about this, for example for religious reasons, your needs will take precedence.

Q15. *Will I be able to take my child into lectures?*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, campuses are restricted to essential visitors only. Unfortunately, this means that we are unable to welcome babies or children onto campus, except for those attending our Nursery. Students may take babies or children into the Hive, taking account of their COVID-safety measures, and ensuring that they are supervised at all times.

Students should discuss with their tutors or Course Leader if they would like to leave lectures/seminars in order to breastfeed their babies. The University will support breastfeeding mothers and ensure that arrangements are in place for you to feed your baby safely while continuing with your studies.

Q16. *My partner is also a student here? Will this affect his/her studies?*

The university will allow students who are partners of new mothers to take paternity-related absence; this will include those in a same sex relationship.

The university will be flexible in allowing a student to attend their partner's antenatal appointments. In addition, a student may need to take time off if their partner has complications with her pregnancy or a serious pregnancy-related illness.

If a student wants to take paternity-related absence, they should initially inform Registry Services and their personal academic tutor of their partner's pregnancy at least 15 weeks before the baby is due. Early notification is encouraged as partners may need to attend antenatal appointments.

The university will allow students paternity-related absence in line with entitlements that exist in employment law for paternity leave. This is currently a maximum of two consecutive weeks within 56 days of the child being born.

The university will ensure students on paternity-related absence are able to access materials from seminars and lectures missed. If students want to take extended paternity-related absence consideration will need to be given to the support provided to the student, and it may be appropriate to develop a student support plan. Initial enquiries should be made to the Student Community Wellbeing Service Manager.

If a student chooses to sit an examination while their partner is in labour or during their paternity-related absence, they should be aware of the university's exceptional mitigating circumstances policy. If a student is unable to sit an examination or submit coursework on time because of their partner's pregnancy or labour, they should be allowed to resit the examination at the earliest possible opportunity or should be given an extension. Such arrangements may also be appropriate if the student's partner has a serious pregnancy-related illness.

In other compulsory elements of courses, such as field trips or work placements, the university can consider the feasibility of students undertaking them at an alternative time. Where this is not possible, the student will be contacted by the Programme Advisers to discuss the options available to you.

Q17. *I have had a miscarriage what should I do?*

Should you miscarry or have a still birth, or if your baby dies shortly after it is born the university will do its best to support you.

You may wish to meet with one of the university's Counsellors to discuss your situation. The Counsellor will be able to provide support and advice on other sources of help you may wish to use.

You should tell the Student Community Wellbeing Service Manager what has happened, and she will meet with you to establish the support you are receiving from your healthcare provider and the support available from the university. If you do not inform the University of your Situation, we will be limited in the support we can provide.

If you do miscarry you may need time off study for tests and to recover and it may impact on your ability to meet deadlines and sit examinations.

If you have a still birth or your baby dies shortly after birth you will be entitled to the same length of maternity-related absence and financial and wellbeing support as a student whose baby is not stillborn.

Q18. I am thinking of having an abortion, what should I do?

If you are considering an abortion you will be offered counselling by the NHS or, if attending one, a private abortion clinic. Counselling will also be offered by these agencies following an abortion. You may also like to meet with one of the university's counsellors to discuss your situation. Please contact **firstpoint** to arrange an initial triage appointment through STAR (Support, Triage, Advise, Referral).

Students may need time off from study for tests before, and to recover after, an abortion. This time will be treated in line with the university's usual sickness absence policy, but consideration may be given to the impact of an abortion on a student's ability to meet deadlines and sit examinations.

Q19. What if I am unhappy with the support I have received?

If at any time and for any reason you are not happy with the support you are receiving from the University you should in the first instance raise your concerns with the member of university staff involved. If this does not resolve the matter to your satisfaction you should follow the University's Complaints Procedure which is available at www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/662.htm . You may also wish to consult the Academic and Welfare Adviser in the Worcester Students' Union (see *Useful contacts*).

Useful contacts

Student Community Wellbeing Service Manager

Tel: 01905 855104;

Email: l.sandwell@worc.ac.uk.

firstpoint, Peirson Study and Guidance Centre

Tel: 01905 542551;

Email: firstpoint@worc.ac.uk.

For advice on the University's complaints and appeals procedures, mitigating circumstances, private housing or University Managed accommodation, money

advice (including bursaries, child benefits, statutory maternity pay etc), please contact **firstpoint**.

Counsellors

Email: cmh@worc.ac.uk

Website: www.worc.ac.uk/counselling.

Academic and Welfare Adviser, Worcester Students' Union

Tel: 01905 54 3210,

Email: suadvice@worc.ac.uk.

Sample support form

This form aims to guide discussions with students during pregnancy and maternity. It should be completed and agreed with the student. The form should be reviewed at key stages 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.

Student Details	
Name	
Student Number	
Email address	
Telephone number	
International student:	Yes/No

Course Details	
Course title	
Year of study	
Personal Academic Tutor	
Course Leader	

Key Dates	
What is the student's due date?	
How many weeks pregnant was the student when she notified HEI of pregnancy?	

Informing other staff		
	Name	Date
Course Leader		
Personal Academic Tutor		
Student Records		
Placement Coordinator		

Placement provider		
Other:		

Accommodation	
Is the student living in University managed accommodation?	Yes/No
Action required:	

Health and Safety assessment	
Has a risk assessment for the student's course been completed?	Yes/No
Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risk, who is responsible for ensuring they are implemented?	
Have you discussed any pregnancy related illness that may affect the student's ability to undertake their course?	
Actions required:	

Course Requirements		
	Yes/No	Health and safety assessment completed
Course placement		
Field trips		
Examinations		

If the student has to complete a placement:	
Has the placement provider been notified?	Yes/No
Will the student be able to complete her placement?	Yes/No
If no, what alternative arrangements have been made?	

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Pregnancy-related absence

If the dates or times of antenatal appointments affect the student's study, are they aware who to discuss this with?

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Services and facilities

Has the student been informed about:

Yes/No

- Rest facilities on campus
- Money Advise
- Programme Advisers
- Counselling and Mental Health
- Unitots Nursery
- International Adviser
- Mitigating circumstances policy in the event that pregnancy/maternity affects examinations and assessments

Assessments and Examinations

Does the student have any assessments or examinations around the time of her due date?

Yes/No

Details:

Are there any assessments that the student is unable to complete due to her pregnancy or maternity?

Yes/No

Details:

What alternative arrangements have been made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments?

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Maternity-related absence

How much maternity-related absence does the student intend on taking?

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Expected start date:

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Expected return to study date:

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Will the temporary leave of absence affect the student's ability to complete any module requirements?	Yes/No Details:
Has a temporary leave of absence been completed?	Yes/No

Privacy Notice

Student Support and Wellbeing are requesting this information from you in order to support you as a student. We may also use the data to monitor and evaluate trends and uses of our service. We will record that you are pregnant and your expected due date on your central student record that is managed and controlled by Student Records. Risk assessments are submitted to your Course Leader and Personal Academic Tutor for monitoring purposes and implementing control measures as required.

Please note that the University of Worcester is the Data Controller and details of how we process your data including how long we retain it and your rights are detailed on www.worcester.ac.uk/informationassurance/student-privacy-notice.html. The processing of this data is dependent upon your explicit consent (Article 6(1)(a) and Article 9(2)(a) GDPR).

I consent to my personal information being processed in accordance with the purpose identified above.

Signatures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed by staff member: 	
Name	
Title	
Signature	
Date	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed by student: 	
Name	
Signature	
Date	