



Centre for Alternative Technology

Student Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out the advice and support available to students who become pregnant, adopt a child are involved in surrogacy arrangements, or wish to take paternity related absence during the course of their studies.
- Set out the advice and support available to students who experience pregnancy-related bereavements such as miscarriage, neo-natal deaths, failed In-vitro fertilisation (IVF) attempts and still births.
- Encourage students to actively participate in, and develop, a Maternity/Paternity and Adoption Support Plan with relevant members of Graduate School staff at the earliest possible point.
- Ensure the support in the support plan is delivered in an appropriate, timely and effective manner. In order for CAT to carry out its duties with regard to new and expectant mothers, students are advised to inform their tutor or student support as soon as they become aware

that they are pregnant, in order that reviews of support for you and the suitability of the risk assessments are carried out.

2. Equality

This policy will provide additional support to students who are pregnant or prospective parents/ adoptive parents. The policy is in line with the Equality Challenge Unit's recommendations and offers a 'best practice' approach towards maternity support <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/external/student-pregnancy-and-maternity-implications-for-heis.pdf>.

CAT will ensure that these students are not treated less favourably than other students and recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

3. Policy

CAT is committed to supporting our students who are prospective parents by birth or adoption and those who have experienced pregnancy-related bereavement. We will be guided by the following principles when supporting our students:

- CAT will work with prospective parents in a supportive, non-judgmental and respectful manner;
- Once informed of a pregnancy or adoption, CAT will work with the student to ensure that reasonable adjustments are put in place in a timely manner in line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010;
- CAT will always treat the Health and Safety of the student as paramount.
- We will always treat information provided to us confidentially and will only pass on information to those staff members that need be informed in order to provide support or adjustments for the student concerned;
- CAT will treat all prospective parents equally in accordance with our legislative duties. Students who are adopting a child will be offered the same level of support as those who have become biological parents;
- CAT will be respectful and considerate to any student who requires adjustments to prepare for, or assist recovery after, a termination.

3.1. Eligibility

Pregnancy and maternity are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. This applies to:

- A student who is pregnant, or has given birth within the last 26 weeks;
- A student who has experienced a still birth or neo-natal death within the last 26 weeks
- Sympathetic consideration will also be provided to those students who have experienced a miscarriage or termination of pregnancy.

3.2. Paternity/partnership and adoption.

- 3.2.1. Once paternity/partnership or adoption can be evidenced in line with the Procedure below, CAT will support paternity and adoption-related adjustments (e.g. to attend hospital appointments etc.) in the same way as those for expectant mothers.

3.3. Adjustments

- 3.3.1. It is a legal requirement that mothers take a minimum of 2 weeks off after giving birth. This two week period of absence is in line with health and safety regulations, Employment Law and Department of Work and Pensions guidelines (April 2014) and needs to be planned for as part of a support plan. This mandatory period of absence will be recorded separately from the usual attendance monitoring procedures of CAT.
- 3.3.2. The two weeks do not have to be taken consecutively but will need to be taken in week-long blocks. If both parents/partners or adoptive parents are CAT students, then both are eligible to take leave.
- 3.3.3. If you go beyond your Expected Due Date, you may need to provide additional medical evidence to confirm that it is considered safe for you to continue to attend on-site at CAT.
- 3.3.4. CAT will allow you to take a leave of absence or intermit your studies for up to an academic year as you wish. We recommend speaking with a tutor or student support regarding the timing of your due date and module dates to assist with the coordination of your study break and return to study.
- 3.3.5. Expectant mothers should provide us with a copy of their MAT B1 form, which is a certificate from a doctor or midwife confirming your expected week of childbirth. They will hand it to you when you go in for your regular check-ups. We will use this as evidence of your pregnancy to support a leave of absence or a request for exceptional circumstances. Expectant fathers can use the MAT B1 form as evidence as well.
- 3.3.6. A Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Support Plan is to be completed by Tutor/PL/SSO with the student and circulated to Tutors and SSOs. This is appended to the end of this document.
- 3.3.7. When managing your Maternity, Paternity or Adoption leave, CAT processes personal data collected in accordance with CATs data protection policy. Data is only disclosed to individuals for the purposes of managing maternity leave, health and safety and supporting you with your studies.

3.4. Premature Birth

- 3.4.1. Should your child arrive unexpectedly early, you will be able to claim Extenuating Circumstances in the normal way through the Exceptional Circumstances Policy and Procedures.
- 3.4.2. CAT does not have nursery or creche services on site, so you will need to consider this as you return to study when considering onsite or distance

learning. If you bring a child to site, they must be supervised at all time and their immediate health and welfare remain your responsibility. Childcare.co.uk <https://www.childcare.co.uk/> offer a service to find local registered childcare in your area which you may find helpful.

A Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Support Plan is to be completed by Tutor/PL/SSO with the student and circulated to Tutors and SSOs. This is appended to the end of this document.

When managing your Maternity, Paternity or Adoption leave, CAT processes personal data collected in accordance with CATs data protection policy. Data is only disclosed to individuals for the purposes of managing maternity leave, health and safety and supporting you with your studies.

4. Procedure

Once a pregnancy is confirmed the expectant mother, father/partner or adoptive parent should immediately inform their Programme Leader or Academic Tutor or Student Support so that appropriate adjustments can be considered through the development of the support plan.

The duty lies on the student to inform CAT of their pregnancy and we can only put reasonable adjustments in place if we are informed. It is in your best interest to inform CAT at the earliest opportunity so that we can put as much support in place as possible at the earliest stage of your pregnancy. The highest risk of damage to the baby is during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy. Consequently, students are advised to notify us as early as possible of their pregnancy so that a support plan can be drawn up and a health and safety risk assessment can be conducted (see 5.5.3).

5. The Maternity, Paternity or Adoption Support Plan

- 5.1. CAT can arrange a support plan with you to identify any risks associated with your programme. The plan will also cover important information like study leave and return to study. It will help CAT coordinate support for you throughout pregnancy, post birth and return to study.
- 5.2. To obtain a support plan you will need to arrange a meeting with your Programme Leader, Academic Advisor (if they have detailed knowledge of your course) or Dissertation Supervisor. They will ask you to provide CAT with details of the pregnancy/adoption. In particular, we will require your Expected Date of Delivery in order to properly ascertain your support needs.
- 5.3. As students are unlikely to have documentary evidence of their pregnancy before 20 weeks a support plan can be drawn up prior to evidence being received. Evidence will be required in order for CAT to consider study and assessment arrangements but a risk assessment, advice on pregnancy related absence to attend appointments and possible academic implications can be discussed and implemented prior to evidence being received.
- 5.4. This evidence can include (but is not restricted to):

5.4.1. Expectant mothers, fathers/partners

- Any letters indicating GP/Midwife, Antenatal or Hospital Appointments.
- A MATB1 Certificate (provided to a pregnant woman after their 20 week scan).
- Any medical evidence indicating their expected date of delivery.
- Any reasonable proof of relationship for fathers/partners that are unmarried or in Civil Partnership.

5.4.2. Adoptive parents

- CAT recognises that the adoption process can have very different timescales, and your time for preparation may well be very different to the more usual period of pregnancy and childbirth.
- Therefore the notice periods for you to inform CAT of the adoption can be very different to a pregnancy. Our general principle as for all other maternity and paternity cases, the sooner CAT becomes aware of your circumstances, the sooner we can offer support.
- Proof of adoption can be provided through a birth certificate, but CAT remains open to any reasonable proof of relationship for eligibility purposes. This can include correspondence from local social services or other placement agencies relevant to the adoption process.
- Evidence of any adoption-related dates that will affect attendance or ability to study.

5.5. Completing the Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Support Plan

5.5.1. Your Programme Leader, Academic Advisor or Dissertation Supervisor will work with you to complete the Maternity/Paternity and Adoption Support Plan. Any recommendations will be dependent on your individual needs and will take account of the requirements of your course and the effect of your circumstances on your ability to undertake this.

5.5.2. The Plan will set out your responsibilities and the responsibilities of CAT and may include:

5.5.3. Health and Safety considerations

A risk assessment to ensure that any Health and Safety issues relating to your programme of study are identified and addressed. This is important if your course includes physical activity or exposure to chemicals, radiation or biological agents, as these have been identified as high risk particularly within the first 13 weeks of pregnancy. This also includes any relevant risks associated with field work, laboratory work and placements. You may be asked to provide additional evidence from a responsible medical practitioner who confirms that there will be no risk to you or your unborn child from taking part in part in field work

5.5.4. Antenatal care

Agreeing and documenting all known Maternity/Paternity and Adoption related absences in advance. These absences can be considered against any course

deadlines with a view to identifying whether it is possible for any missed work or assessments to be covered and how this could be done e.g. consideration of alternative methods of assessment

5.5.5. Assessments

Exploration of alternative arrangements where you are unable to complete any assessments due to pregnancy or maternity e.g. for those who's Expected Due Dates and the 2 weeks post-natal compulsory non-attendance period, conflict with submission or examination deadlines (competency standards allowing). Such recommendations will be subject to practicality and administrative deadlines.

If a student is due to give birth near to or during assessment deadlines or the examination period and wishes to complete her assessed work or sit her examinations, they should not be prevented from doing so.

5.6. Maternity-related absence

The support plan should also consider the following:

- How much maternity-related absence the student intends to take
- When the student intends to start maternity-related absence
- When the student intends to return from maternity-related absence
- Consider whether the dates of maternity-related absence will affect the student's ability to complete any course module requirements. If so, what arrangements could be made to enable the student to complete the module?
- Consider what information the student will require during maternity-related absence to keep up to date on course developments and who will provide it
- Agree a proposed return to study plan with timetable.

5.7. Taking a study break

In certain instances, it may be necessary to consider intermitting or a leave of absence. CAT will support a leave of absence for up to an academic year as you wish. We recommend speaking with a tutor or student support regarding the timing of your due date and module dates to assist with the coordination of your study break and return to study.

Please refer to the GSE Student Support & Welfare Guide Student which offers guidance on student study breaks.

The support plan should also consider advice on academic progression related to taking a study break.

6. Changes in circumstances

If there is a change in your circumstances that affect your ability to attend or study, or you make any decisions that affect your planned return to study, or you require additional support because you have experienced a still birth or neo-natal death . This is perfectly acceptable). Please contact student support or tutor so changes to your support plan can be made

If you experience any attendance difficulties relating to maternity, paternity or adoption, you should discuss these with your Tutor, Programme Leader or Student Support.

7. Unexpected circumstances/Pregnancy Related Sickness

- 7.1. If you become ill, or develop a medical complication, during pregnancy or give birth unexpectedly early and, as a result are unable to complete or submit coursework, students are strongly advised to obtain medical evidence as a priority and apply for extenuation in the usual way.
- 7.2. Additionally, CAT will also consider the impact of a termination, miscarriage, still birth or neonatal death on a student's ability to meet deadlines and sit examinations. Students will need to obtain medical evidence and apply for extenuation in the usual way.
- 7.3. Evidence that certifies pregnancy alone will not ordinarily be considered as sufficient evidence to apply for extenuation claims for coursework

8. Emotional support

Students that have suffered a miscarriage, unexpected complications during pregnancy, still birth or neonatal death may need further emotional support and/or time off from study to recover after bereavement. Likewise, a student who has a termination of pregnancy, for whatever reason, may also need emotional support and/or time off from study. CAT subscribes to the Employee Assistance Programme for its students. This is a 24-hour access service to free and confidential counselling service

To access this, students can self-refer online or by contacting the helpline:

- Freephone: 0800 328 1437;
- Online: www.employeeassistance.org.uk;
- Access to the website via password 'cat' and confidential counselling and advice.

As a confidential service, details of any counselling or browsing will not be shared with CAT, therefore it is strongly advised to refer or signpost the student to Student Support as well so any reasonable adjustments can be made.

9. Additional information

NB CAT cannot be held responsible for the information offered by external organisations.

Useful information for expectant mothers in Higher Education can be found at:

<https://pregnantatuni.co.uk/>

National Health Service <https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/>

Pregnancy and maternity for students: a guide to benefits:

<https://workingfamilies.org.uk/articles/pregnancy-and-maternity-for-students/>

Single parent support: <https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/>

MSI Reproductive Choices: <https://www.mschoices.org/>

PAC-UK Adoptive Parent & Carer Support: <https://www.pac-uk.org/>

Childcare.co.uk offer a service to find local registered childcare in the UK:

<https://www.childcare.co.uk/>.

Support for bereaved parents for neo-natal death can be found at:

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

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Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Support Plan

Date _____

Student Details

Name	
Student Number	

Course Details

Course Title	
Programme Leader	
Academic Tutor	

Emergency Contact Details for Support Plan purposes

Name	
Relationship to Student	
Phone	

Key Dates (To be reviewed as appropriate during pregnancy)

What is the students expected due date?	
How many weeks pregnant was the student when CAT were informed of the pregnancy?	
Has the student been informed that medical evidence (either letters/maternity notes/form MATB1) is required?	
Has evidence been provided?	

Pregnancy related absence

What are the dates of antenatal or other medical appointments?	
What is the expected impact of these appointments on the student's studies?	
What measures can the student take to reduce the impact?	
What arrangements have been agreed to enable the student to catch up?	
Is the student unable to complete any assessments, due to their expected due date? If yes, please provide details.	
What alternative arrangements have been agreed for any assessments for the student?	

Health and Safety

Has the School conducted a risk assessment?	
Date of risk assessment	

Students on volunteer placement / workplace project (if appropriate)

Date the provider was notified of the pregnancy.	
Will the student be able to complete the placement?	
If not, what alternative arrangements can be made?	
Has the placement provider completed a Risk Assessment?	
Date copy of placement provide risk assessment received by CAT.	
Name of the person responsible for liaising with the placement provider	

Intermission of studies / Extenuation

Has the student been advised on taking a study break and/or CAT's extenuation policy (extenuation is only applicable if there have been complications or a sudden, unexpected incident, e.g. miscarriage, premature birth, still birth or a medical condition caused by pregnancy which impacts on a student's ability to meet deadlines).	
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Maternity related absence (students should provide information at least 15 weeks before their due date)

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

Any other information or comments?

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Student record will be updated to reflect key dates and Emergency Contacts related to Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Support Plan but no other details to maintain confidentiality


Plan to be reviewed on:

Agree at least one review date with student. Remind student it is their responsibility to contact you if there are changes to their circumstances

	Student	Staff
Name		
Signature		
Date		

To be completed by Tutor/PL/SSO and circulated to Tutor and SSO

CAT Charity Ltd

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