

## **Guidance for students on pregnancy and parental leave**

If you or your partner become pregnant, this guidance has been developed to help you manage this as easily as possible. It covers the University's approach regarding student pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption leave.

The guidance below will apply to most undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research students. If you have more specific needs or different requirements, please refer to the Student Registry for further information. Please refer to section K for a flow diagram outlining the steps to be taken in arranging parental leave for students.

### A. Summary of responsibilities

<p><b>Students are responsible for:</b></p> <p>Disclosing their pregnancy to a member of their College in order to discuss any necessary support arrangements, required study adjustments or possible health and safety issues.</p> <p>The College will communicate with the Department / Faculty with the student's consent.</p>	<p><b>The University should ensure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any student who becomes pregnant is accommodated as far as practicable in completing their programme of study</li> <li>• Relevant staff are made aware of this guidance and their responsibilities</li> <li>• Appropriate support is made available through University support services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Faculties and Departments should ensure that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant staff are made aware of this guidance and their responsibilities if a student discloses a pregnancy</li> <li>• A risk assessment is conducted if required</li> <li>• Students are aided in organising time off for appointments and any required teaching adjustments.</li> <li>• Students receive accurate advice and guidance, in line with the recommendations of this document, in a timely and appropriate manner.</li> </ul>	

### B. Who to speak to if you become pregnant

Obviously you should speak to someone you feel most comfortable with. However, following that initial conversation you are advised to speak with your College Tutor or give permission for the person you spoke to initially to pass on the appropriate information to your College Tutor. You should inform your

College no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of childbirth, to ensure that any arrangements can be made in good time.

If you make the decision to end the pregnancy, or you miscarry, then you do not have to inform your College or the University. If you need to take time away from your studies, you are advised to inform your Director of Studies or Supervisor that you will be away for medical reasons.

At any stage and if for any reason you would like some support, please contact the University Counselling Service or the Student Advice Service. They can offer support and advice on academic and personal matters including pregnancy.

### **C. Managing your studies**

Your College should arrange for a meeting with your Department or Faculty to discuss how the pregnancy is likely to impact upon your studies and how best to manage this prior to intermitting. They may suggest that a risk assessment is carried out by Occupational Health to protect both your health and that of your unborn child, but this will depend on your Department or course of study.

### **D. Maternity leave**

*Please see the flow diagram on page 7*

All students should be permitted to take a period of maternity-related absence following the birth of their child. If you do not want to take time out of your course as a result of pregnancy and/or maternity, there is no requirement for you to do so but it is strongly recommended that new mothers do not return earlier than two weeks after the birth.

After discussions with your Tutor, you will need to decide whether an interruption of your studies is required, the impact this may have on your studies and how long this period may be.

The exact length of the period of time you may wish to interrupt your studies for (known as 'disregarding terms' if an undergraduate or intermitting if a graduate student) should be determined by a number of factors including when the baby is due and the requirements of the course undertaken. If you are advised that the structure of the course requires you to return before you would otherwise wish to, the reason should be detailed in writing to you.

You can start your maternity leave at any point during the pregnancy, after discussion with your Tutor. You may wish to study up to your due date, or begin the maternity leave a term prior to that date, where practicable.

Regardless of what happens after the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy, you should be allowed to take a period of maternity leave.

Maternity leave is unpaid for students unless you are entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay.

International students who choose to suspend their studies by disregarding terms should be aware that there may be implications for your Visa. You must ensure that all parties, including your College, Sponsor and the International Student Team are informed of your intention to apply to intermit.

#### *Additional information for Graduate and Postgraduate students*

Graduate students can seek intermission for maternity, paternity or adoption leave. When you apply for intermission, indicate the dates that you intend to be away from your studies and also note on your application form details of your funding body, if applicable. If a break from study has been formally agreed for reasons of maternity by your research funder then the Student Registry, if provided with this information, should be able to grant you intermission for the terms where it is applicable and, at the same time, be able to agree an amended 'end date' (submission date) that fits your maternity leave dates<sup>1</sup>.

Postgraduate students who are self-funded or who receive funding through other bodies should consult the Student Registry for information regarding their funding.

### **E. Returning to study**

Prior to starting your maternity leave, the date that you intend to return should be discussed with your Tutor. This date may change during your maternity leave. You should maintain contact with your College and Faculty / Department and communicate any anticipated changes to your return date as soon as possible.

You are advised to meet with your Tutor prior to your return to discuss whether you will require any changes in the way that you study, additional support and any other considerations.

### **F. Students with babies and young children**

University social spaces will be available to you while you are breastfeeding or have a baby less than six months with you. Rest facilities for pregnant and breastfeeding women should be made available where possible within your

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry/current/graduate/programme/intermission.html>

Faculty / Department if you request it, and you should also be given access to refrigeration if required. Faculties / Departments may wish to extend facilities they already make available to breastfeeding staff to students or other nearby University or College facilities may be available.

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for you to request permission for a baby or young child to accompany you to tutorials and lectures. This may not always be possible, as there may be health and safety issues to consider, as well as the potential disturbance of other students. Any such request should be an exception, and should not be as a substitute to on-going child care provision.

Information on the University's childcare facilities is available from the [Childcare Office](#).

### **G. Students who are fathers or partners (including same-sex)**

If your partner is pregnant you can request absence from your studies to attend medical appointments, as well as a period of paternity leave following the birth. You should discuss this with your Tutor as soon as practical.

In the case of same sex couples, if you are a woman who is pregnant then you will be eligible to take maternity leave, whereas if you are her partner you will be able to take paternity leave.

If you wish to take paternity leave then the University may allow you to intermit for up to a year. As with maternity leave, if you are an international student who decides to intermit because of additional paternity leave then you should be aware that there may be implications for your Visa. Please seek further advice from the International Student Team.

If you are a student receiving funding from a research council, then you are permitted a period of paternity leave and additional paternity leave if required. You should contact the Student Registry (Fees and Funding Team) for more information.

### **H. Adoptive parents**

If you have been matched for adoption, you should inform your Tutor as soon as possible. If you are a student who adopts a child then you will be entitled to intermit for the purposes of adoption leave, but please note that only one of the adoptive parents may take adoption leave. The other parent will be entitled to take paternity leave (regardless of whether he / she is a student or not).

## I. University Contacts

Tutor: for an undergraduate student this will be the Senior Tutor, or you may wish to speak to your Director of Studies in the first instance. For graduate students, this will be your Graduate Tutor.

Student Registry can be contacted at [student.registry@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:student.registry@admin.cam.ac.uk) or on 01223 766302 (internal extension 66302)

Student Advice Service can be contacted at [advice@studentadvice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:advice@studentadvice.cam.ac.uk) or on 01223 746999 (internal extension 46999)

International Student Team can be contacted at [internationalstudents@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:internationalstudents@admin.cam.ac.uk) or on 01223 761806 (internal extension 61806)

## J. Additional information

**Adoption UK** – Adoption UK is a national charity run by and for adopters, providing self-help information, advice, support and training on all aspects of adoption and adoptive parenting: [www.adoptionuk.org.uk](http://www.adoptionuk.org.uk).

**Direct Gov** – Direct Gov is the UK government's website. It provides information on health, care and benefits during pregnancy, benefits for parents etc: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk). The Direct Gov website also provides information on finding and choosing a childcare provider in your local area: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Childcare](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Childcare).

**Family Planning Association** – The Family Planning Association's mission is to establish a society in which everyone can make informed choices about sex, relationships and reproduction. Its website contains impartial advice on pregnancy, abortion, adoption and also contains a list of useful organisations: [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk).

**Family and Parenting Institute** – The Family and Parenting Institution provides support to parents in bringing up their children and has a range of resources for parents: [www.familyandparenting.org](http://www.familyandparenting.org).

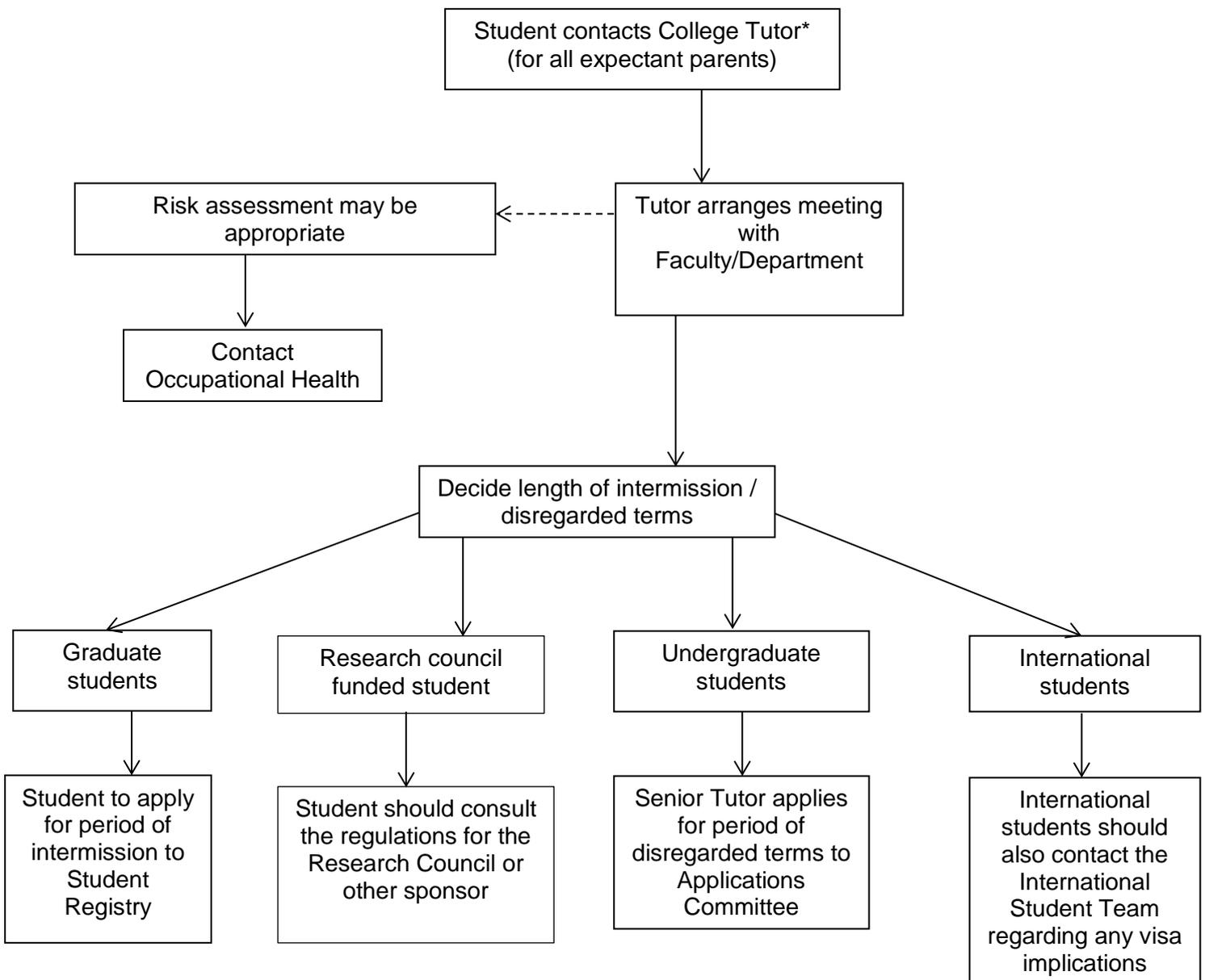
**Marie Stopes** – Marie Stopes is the UK's leading provider of sexual and reproductive healthcare services. The services include unplanned pregnancy counselling, termination information and advice etc: [www.mariestopes.org.uk/](http://www.mariestopes.org.uk/).

**Miscarriage Association** – The Miscarriage Association offers support and information to anyone affected by the loss of a baby during pregnancy: [www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk).

**National Union of Students** Provides information and advice to students and students' unions about student finance, rights and welfare. Information for student parents is available on its website, along with research and publications about students with dependant children: [www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk)

**SANDS** – The Still Birth and Neonatal Death charity provides support to anyone affected by the loss of a baby and conducts research into the causes of still and neo-natal death: [www.uk-sands.org](http://www.uk-sands.org).

**K. Pregnancy / Maternity / Paternity / Adoption Leave flow diagram**



\* For undergraduates the College Tutor is the Senior Tutor, for graduates the Graduate Tutor