

STUDENT PREGNANCY, MATERNITY, ADOPTION AND SECONDARY CARER POLICY

Department	Campus and Student Life		
Author	Campus and Student Life/HR Team		
Authorised By:	Executive Director of Operations		
Implementation By:	Student and Campus Life/Faculties/SPSA		
Policy Reference:			
Policy Replaced:	POOPS2021011		
Version No:	2	Approval Committee:	VCB
Date approved:	17.01.22	Minute no:	
Status:	Approved	Implementation Date:	January 2022
Period of approval:	3 Years	Review Date:	January 2025
I have carried out an equality impact assessment screening to help safeguard against discrimination and promote equality.			
I have considered the impact of the Policy/Strategy/Procedure on the Welsh language and Welsh language provision within the University.			

1. Purpose and scope of the policy

Glyndŵr University is committed to promoting equality in all of its activities and aims to provide a work, learning, teaching, and research environment free from discrimination and unfair treatment.

Pregnancy and maternity are protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. This policy is relevant to prospective Glyndŵr University students who have been offered a place and become pregnant during the admissions process, and Glyndŵr University students who become pregnant during their studies, and to staff who must ensure that all students who are pregnant, on maternity leave or breastfeeding will not be discriminated against or treated unfavourably.

The policy is also intended to help students who are about to become parents understand their rights and the processes for arranging maternity and adoption leave, and secondary carer (paternity) leave.

2. Organisational policy statement

Glyndŵr University is aware of its responsibilities to all students and will support students who become pregnant or a parent during their period of study. The University believes that becoming pregnant or a parent should not in itself be a barrier to any student starting, succeeding, or completing their studies. The University is committed to showing as much flexibility as possible to facilitate a student's access, making sure that no student is disadvantaged, whilst maintaining high academic standards.

The University will not discriminate against students during the admissions process or any part of the educational experience, or in the offer or delivery of other services provided by the University. Students will not be discriminated against or treated unfavourably because of: their pregnancy, the termination of a pregnancy, maternity, or adoption leave, breastfeeding or because they are a partner of a woman who is pregnant, has given birth or the partner of someone who has adopted a child.

The health and safety of a pregnant student is of paramount importance at all times and staff will deal with all students covered in this policy in a sensitive, non-judgemental and confidential manner.

Members of staff who need to be informed for valid reason, will be informed of the student's circumstances, and this will be done with the student's prior consent.

International students who require a visa to study in the UK cannot extend their visa for reasons relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, the adoption process, or for any other childcare reason. All visas allow for a stipulated period of stay in the UK in addition to the time spent on a programme. International students who become pregnant should seek immigration and visa advice as soon as possible by contacting the immigration team.

3. Legislation

Legal protection for students during pregnancy and maternity has been strengthened under the Equality Act 2010 as it applies in England, Scotland, and Wales. The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as one of the nine protected characteristics and prohibits discrimination on these grounds.

Section 17 of the Act expands the protection from discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity to women outside the workplace, and the Higher Education sector is mentioned specifically. Under the Act, discrimination can occur against students because of pregnancy if:

- The student is treated unfavourably because of pregnancy;
- Within 26 weeks of the day of giving birth, the student is treated unfavourably because she has given birth. This applies if the student gives birth in the case of miscarriage, still birth and neonatal death provided more than 24 weeks of pregnancy has passed.
- The student is treated unfavourably because she is breastfeeding and the child is less than 26 weeks old; if the child is more than 26 weeks old, unfavourable treatment because of breastfeeding is likely to constitute sex discrimination.

To advance equality of opportunity in relation to pregnancy and maternity, HEIs must have due regard to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by students who are pregnant or have given birth in the past 26 weeks.
- Take steps to meet the needs of students who are pregnant, or have given birth in the past 26 weeks, that are different to the needs of people who have not.
- Encourage students who are pregnant or have given birth in the last 26 weeks to participate in University life.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for HEIs to discriminate against applicants and students in relation to admission; the provision of education; access to any benefit, facility, or service; and disciplinary proceedings. The protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity is included in the public sector equality duty of the Equality Act which requires HEIs to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

4. Responsibilities for delivery

4.1 Responsibilities of Students

Students are expected to:

- a. disclose their situation as soon as possible to their programme leader or personal tutor, who will discuss with them the anticipated impact on their studies;
- b. advise their programme leader or personal tutor of any changes to their situation, which may require the University to amend any arrangements made to support them through their studies.

4.2 Responsibilities of Staff

Staff will not:

- a. give advice or guidance on pregnancy, maternity, adoption, paternity or breastfeeding matters unless they are qualified and employed to do so. Where such advice is sought staff will signpost the student to appropriate counselling services/agencies within and outside of the University as detailed in the **student pregnancy, maternity, adoption and secondary carer (paternity) procedure, appendix 3**.
- b. be judgemental in relation to a student's decisions and will respect a student's right to confidentiality.

Staff who are qualified and employed to do so are expected to:

- c. initiate, implement and regularly review a student support plan in discussion with the student;
- d. avoid treating students less favourably because they are pregnant, on maternity, adoption or secondary carer (paternity) leave, or breastfeeding a baby less than 26 weeks old, although account will be taken of the outcome of health and safety risk assessments, which will be carried out by the student's programme leader or personal tutor.
- e. ensure accurate information is given to prospective students regarding the availability of support for students with dependants;
- f. offer unbiased, non-judgemental support in making decisions about course and placement choices, exams, assessments, student accommodation and student finance matters.

5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

5.1 Communication

The policy and its related procedure will be published on the Student Moodle site alongside all other student policies. Reference will also be included in programme handbooks and the Student Guide.

The location of the documentation will be communicated to all staff, and staff training and development will be provided as required.

5.2 Support and Advice

Further advice and guidance may be sought from the following University departments:

- Student and Campus Life:
 - Student Funding and Money Advice
 - Counselling
 - Inclusion Services
 - Chaplaincy
- Health and Safety:
 - Risk assessments
- Strategic Planning and Student Administration:
 - Interpretation of academic regulations
 - Examination arrangements
- Students' Union:
 - General support and advice for students
 - Interpretation of student policies and procedures

5.3 Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Adoption and Secondary Carer (Paternity) Procedure** for further information.

6. EVALUATION

The University will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through its Equality and Diversity Forum which will include review of qualitative and quantitative data relating to those groups of students to whom this policy applies.