



Family Leave Policy & Procedure (For Students)

FAMILY LEAVE POLICY FOR UCO STUDENTS

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Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	Jun 2012 Academic Council	To provide students with appropriate advice and support who become pregnant whilst studying at the BSO and for students whose partners are pregnant.	Student Welfare & Equality Manager	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Jun 2014 or in line with any legislative changes
V2.0	Mar 2014 Vice-Principal (Education)	Biennial Review Minor Amendment to reflect paternity support.	Student Welfare & Equality Manager	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Mar 2016 or in line with any legislative changes
V3.0	Sep 2016 PRAG Chair	Biennial Review Administrative Amendment to reflect current staff role titles.	Student Support Manager	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Sep 2018 or in line with any legislative changes
V4.0	Aug 2017 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update institution name change from British School of Osteopathy to University College of Osteopathy.	Student Support Manager	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Sep 2018 or in line with any legislative changes
V5.0	July 2019	Minor Amendment Changes made to make the policy more informative, simple and inclusive plus name change	Student Support Officer	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	July 2021 or in line with legislative changes

V6.0	Dec 2019 AC	Major changes (including change of name of the policy)	Student Support Officer	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Website	Dec 2022 or in line with legislative changes
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					X
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
<p>If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this policy, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk</p>					

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1. SCOPE AND INTRODUCTION

Student welfare encompasses many things. Work-life balance and flexibility always come high on the list of priorities, especially with key life events, namely, the arrival of a child. The University College of Osteopathy (UCO) is committed to supporting mothers, fathers and partners. We will go above our legal obligations to support and retain our students during this exciting time that they begin to grow their families.

The UCO recognise that there is no 'traditional' when it comes to families. Families include; single parents, same-sex couples, unmarried couples, parents living apart, step-parents and extended family members. Traditional concepts – even such as the primary caregiver – are becoming harder to pinpoint. In recognition of this, this policy applies equally to biological and adoptive parents of any gender and in a one or two parent family.

This policy aims to provide guidance on how the UCO will support students throughout pregnancy and upon their return to study. The policy aims to be as exhaustive as possible; however, should there be any areas that you would like further guidance with, please do not hesitate to get in contact with our Student Support Officer.

FIRST STEPS

If you believe that you are pregnant, you are advised to visit your local GP as soon as possible. Your GP will then signpost you to the correct healthcare professional or service/care provider that can offer you further tailored support.

If you are from the EU, overseas or outside of London and you are not currently registered with a local GP, please contact the Student Support Officer who will advise you on how to register.

If you feel that you aren't ready to approach your GP or a healthcare provider, you are welcome to speak to the Student Support Officer or Counsellor. All information disclosed will remain confidential.

There are also a number of external agencies that you can turn to for confidential advice and support. Please see section 3 for a full list.

INFORMING UCO

Please inform the Student Support Officer if you or your partner are pregnant, or if you are matched with a child for adoption. With your consent the Student Support Officer will inform the Course Leader and they will work with you to complete a Support Plan.

The Support Plan is put together to ensure that you are well and that you can keep up with the demands of the course and clinic during the pregnancy, and once you return to study. The plan will be tailored to individual circumstance, so you can be assured that you are given the best possible pastoral and academic advice and support.

We appreciate that things may change and develop during the pregnancy, so the Support Plan can be reviewed as and when needed. You are advised to keep the Student Support Officer informed of any physical or emotional changes that you experience during this important time so that they can ensure that your additional needs are met (eg, specialist equipment or furniture).

Where appropriate, the Student Support Officer and Course Leader will also complete a risk assessment to keep you safe whilst on you are on campus and within Clinic.

Please note that all of the information that you share surrounding your pregnancy will remain confidential and will only be shared on a need to know basis.

FAMILY LEAVE (MATERNITY)

Following the birth of the child you must take the legal minimum of the first two weeks off; this is to protect your own health and wellbeing.

You are also entitled to interrupt your course of study for up-to a year, but you may come back sooner if you wish to do so. This is a conversation that you would have with the Student Support Officer and Course Leader when putting together the Support Plan. For example, if the baby is due in July, you may not feel the need to interrupt your studies. However, if the baby is due in January, you may be advised that the best option course of action would be to suspend for a full academic year (January to January).

The earliest date that you can interrupt your course of study for maternity is 11 weeks prior to your due date, but all students will be considered on a case by case basis. If you are consecutively absent due to sickness within the last 4 weeks of your pregnancy, your interruption of study would automatically start from this point.

Just before you interrupt your studies, the Student Support Officer will ask you to sign a 'Suspension of Studies' form which will inform the Registrar and Finance Team at UCO that you are officially on 'Time Out'. If you have taken out a lengthy period of time (eg a year) you won't be able to attend class or sit any assessments during this time, however; you will have the opportunity to ease yourself back into study with 'Keeping in Touch' days prior to your return.

You should inform Student Finance England (if applicable), or your financial sponsor, of your interruption and return date.

Any other sickness related absence or antenatal appointments that you have throughout the pregnancy will be excused. However, you are always advised to inform Registry and if appropriate, the clinic team of your absence in the usual way.

FAMILY LEAVE (PATERNITY)

Paternity leave enables new fathers to take either one or two consecutive weeks paternity leave (but not odd days) subject to you being responsible for the baby's upbringing. This applies to both childbirth and adoption.

We appreciate that parents and partners can be of any gender. If you are not the child's biological parent, you will be referred to as the Maternity Support Person and are entitled to the same benefits as if you were the child's biological parent.

Paternity leave must be taken within 56 days of the birth of the child the date of their placement for adoption.

If you need to attend any antenatal clinics or important appointments with your partner, you are advised to inform registry and if appropriate, the clinic team of your absence.

FAMILY LEAVE (ADOPTION)

To interrupt your course of study for adoption purposes, students must be matched with a child for adoption by an approved adoption agency. It does not apply in situations where a child is not newly matched (e.g. adopting a partner's child).

Adopters can choose to interrupt their course of study either from the date of the child's placement or from a fixed date, which can be up to 14 days before the expected date of placement.

Adopters are required to inform the Student Support Officer of their intention to interrupt their course of study within 7 days of being notified by their adoption agency that they have been matched with a child for adoption.

KEEPING IN TOUCH & RETURNING TO STUDY

Whilst you are on time out to focus on your family you have the option of keeping the Student Support Officer up-to-date with your progress following the birth of the child and to share this exciting time with us.

Prior to your return to study, the Student Support Officer will get in touch to see how you are and if there are any extra provisions that you may need which weren't previously discussed in your Support Plan (e.g. a room for breastfeeding).

You also have the option to come in for up to 10 keeping in touch days to ease yourself back into academia and the University.

On your first day back to study, the Student Support Officer and Course leader will meet with you to answer any questions, to ensure that you know what stage of the course you are at, what assessments you have outstanding and to ensure that overall, you have a smooth transition back to study. If possible, they will try to arrange for you to have a 'Support buddy' which would be another student that is also a parent or that has experienced pregnancy

2. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

OVERSEAS STUDENTS

Overseas students are unlikely to be entitled to maternity benefit and the UCO recommends that they should return home unless they have enough funds to remain in the UK. Overseas students who have financial sponsors must inform the sponsors of their circumstances and agree an appropriate plan of action. Please check with your airline before travelling.

Overseas students returning home should arrange for continuing ante-natal care in their home country and take with them details of any care they have received in the UK.

Please contact the Student Support Officer for more advice on suspending your studies and returning home.

EXAMINATIONS & CLINIC

If you know in advance that you are not going to be able to sit any exams (e.g. you would've started interruption of study by this point) then these exams will be automatically deferred for you as part of your Support Plan.

If you or your partner experience any unexpected pregnancy related illness near the exam period and require a deferral or extension, you should contact registry

If you are pregnant and wish to sit exams that are close to your due date, we may require a medical note from the GP closer to the time.

If you know in advance that you are unable to attend clinic or clinic blocks, you are advised to inform the clinic team and liaise on making up the hours if necessary.

STUDENT FINANCE ENGLAND

Your student loan can continue for up to 60 days from the beginning of any interruption of study. If you decide to take time out, you will need to inform Student Finance England (if applicable) of your change of circumstances.

CHILDCARE

A private area for breastfeeding can be put in place upon request should you decide to breastfeed upon your return to study.

If you decide to bring your child with you into classes following the birth, please see our policy on 'Children & Babies on UCO Premises'

3. FURTHER SOURCES OF ADVICE

INTERNAL SOURCES

Student Support Officer: StudentSupport@uco.ac.uk or Sara.Wazifdar@uco.ac.uk

UCO Counsellor: Clive.Carswell@uco.ac.uk

Registry: Registry@uco.ac.uk

Clinic Absence: ClinicAbsence@uco.ac.uk

EXTERNAL SOURCES

Student Finance England: Telephone: 0845 300 5090 or email Student Finance England using your personal log in detail.

Find a GP: <http://www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories/Pages/ServiceSearch.aspx>

Brook Advisory Service: <http://www.brook.org.uk/>

Marie Stopes Foundation: <http://www.mariestopes.org.uk/>

Childcare: <http://www.childcarelink.com/>

Maternity Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave>

Paternity Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/employers-paternity-pay-leave/entitlement>

Benefits for Families: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/families>

Flying during Pregnancy:

<http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/927.aspx?CategoryID=54&SubCategoryID=133>

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The UCO acknowledges that this guidance document is based on the policy produced by University College, London and would like to thank The Equality Challenge Unit for use of its resources.

APPENDIX 1: PREGNANCY, MATERNITY & PATERNITY POLICY SUPPORT FORM FOR STUDENTS

This form aims to guide discussions with students during pregnancy and maternity. It should be completed and agreed with the student. It is not intended that the form should be completed at a first meeting as initially a student will be unable – and should not be expected – to respond to all the issues raised.

The form should be reviewed at key stages (e.g. 16 weeks pregnant, 24 weeks pregnant, and prior to return to study); or at key points of the academic year (e.g. prior to examinations and attending outreach clinics). If the student's circumstances change, the plan will also need to be reviewed.

Contact details	
1	Student's details
	Name
	Address
	Telephone
	Email address
2	Emergency contact's details
	Relationship to student
	Telephone
3	Course details
	Course title
	Course Leader
	Year of course
4	Details of the student's first point of contact within the HEI
	Name
	Title

	Location	
	Telephone	
	Email	

Key dates (to be reviewed and added to over the course of pregnancy and maternity)

5 What is the student's expected due date?

Communication with the student

7 What is the student's preferred method of communication?

during pregnancy

during maternity-related absence

on return to study

Health and safety assessment (attach copy to this form)

8 Has an assessment been conducted that covers (where relevant)?

the student's course.

course placements (outreach clinics)?

examinations or other assessments?

return from maternity-related absence?

10 Where changes are required to alleviate or minimise risks, who is responsible for ensuring they are implemented?

Pregnancy-related absence		
13	Have you discussed any pregnancy-related illness that has affected the student's ability to undertake their course?	
14	If yes to either of the above questions, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to catch up?	
Assessments		
15	Is the student unable to complete any assessments due to her pregnancy or maternity?	
16	If so, provide details:	
17	What alternative arrangements have been made for any outstanding or incomplete assessments?	
Maternity-related absence (students should provide information in writing at least 15 weeks before their due date)		
18	How much maternity-related absence does the student intend to take?	
19	When does the student intend to start maternity-related absence?	
20	When does the student intend to return from maternity related absence?	
21	Will the dates of maternity-related absence affect the student's ability to complete any course units requirements?	
22	If so, what arrangements have been made to enable the student to complete the units?	
23	What information will the student require during maternity-related absence to keep up to date on course developments?	
24	Who will be responsible for providing the information to the student?	

Financial support		
25	Has the student been notified to make suitable financial arrangements?	
Baby feeding		
28	Does the student intend to feed their baby on UCO facilities on their return to study?	
30	Has the student been informed about the facilities available?	
International students/those on placement abroad		
33	Have international students or students on placement abroad been informed about:	
	Visa implications of returning home or extending their stay due to pregnancy and maternity?	
Students on placement		
34	Has the outreach clinic been notified of the student's pregnancy?	
35	Has the outreach clinic conducted a health and safety assessment?	
36	Is the outreach clinic aware of the UCOs policy on supporting students during pregnancy and maternity?	
Extenuating circumstances		
40	Have students been informed about the UCOs extenuating circumstances policy in the event that their pregnancy or maternity affects examinations and assessments?	
Return to study		
44	What support will be provided to the student on their return to study? (eg meetings with key staff, put in contact with other student parents, etc)	

Further information

45	Any other information or comments	
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Signatures

Plan to be reviewed on	
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Agreed by staff member

Name	
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Title	
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Signature	
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Date	
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Agreed by student

Name	
------	--

Signature	
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Date	
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This form was adapted from one published by the Equality Challenge Unit. www.ecu.ac.uk