

## **Maternity/Parental Leave policy for students**

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#### **Introduction**

1. Metanoia Institute recognises that students may get pregnant during their studies at the Institute. The Institute is committed to being as flexible as possible for any student who becomes pregnant and/or gives birth during their studies at the Institute, whilst, at the same time, making sure that any accommodations made for the student do not compromise the academic standards of the programme of study.
2. The Institute recognises its responsibilities under the 2010 Equality Act, and does everything in its power to ensure no student is treated unfavourably because of their pregnancy; because they have recently given birth; or because they are breastfeeding.
3. In the first instance, the Institute will seek to provide support, in open conversation with the student(s) affected, to allow students to complete their programme of study as originally intended.

#### **Scope of the Policy**

4. The policy applies to:
  - any student who becomes pregnant during their studies;
  - prospective students who are already pregnant when they commence study;
  - any student who has given birth within the previous 26 weeks;<sup>1</sup>
  - any student who is about to become a parent because their partner is pregnant, and who expects to be responsible for the child;
  - any student who has recently become a parent e.g. through adoption
  - The partner of a student who is pregnant or has recently given birth
5. Relevant staff are made aware of the terms of this policy and their responsibilities arising under it.

#### **Support for pregnant students**

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<sup>1</sup> 26 weeks following the birth of a child – this period of maternity is protected by the 2010 Equality Act

6. Any student who becomes pregnant before or during a period of study at the Institute is accommodated as far as practicable to allow them to participate in, and complete their programme of study, providing academic standards are upheld.
7. Students are encouraged to disclose their pregnancy to their tutor or Programme Leader at the earliest possible opportunity, to allow the Institute to conduct any risk assessments and make any necessary reasonable adjustments.
8. Any disclosure will be treated sensitively and only disclosed to other staff on a need-to-know basis. It will be confirmed to the student in writing who will be informed about the pregnancy, when, and why.
9. Students are not required to inform the Institute of their pregnancy, but students must understand that if they choose not to inform the Institute, the Institute cannot conduct a risk assessment or offer support or reasonable adjustments to the student.
10. When a student has disclosed their pregnancy to their tutor or Programme Leader, the Programme Leader must arrange for a meeting with the student, to discuss the possible impact of the pregnancy on their studies, the need for any risk assessments, and the support the Institute can offer the student. Any such meeting must be offered within two weeks of the student's disclosure of their pregnancy.
11. Support that *may* be offered to the student includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. agreeing periods of absence and making arrangements for the student to catch-up on lectures/tutorials missed for pregnancy/birth related reasons to ensure that she is not at an academic disadvantage;
  - b. adjusting timescales/deadlines for assessed coursework or exam submission deadlines if the pregnancy or birth prevents the student from meeting the stated deadlines;
  - c. providing reasonable adjustments to the student's study or assessment environment, including but not limited to: allowing additional breaks; providing suitable furniture; moving teaching to ground-floor spaces;
  - d. allowing the student to complete assessments in an alternative format (for example, a piece of coursework instead of an examination) provided that the learning outcomes of the module can be appropriately tested in the alternative assessment form;
  - e. being flexible with the attendance requirement for the course, allowing the student to miss more classes than would normally be permissible, with the acknowledgement that the onus will be on the student to make up the missed time and prove that they have met the learning outcomes for the period of study that they have missed.

- f. allowing the student to defer assessments to the next assessment period, for example in a situation in which the pregnancy or birth prevents the student from taking an examination at the normal time for their programme of study;
- g. agreeing the student interrupts their studies for a minimum of one full academic year, provided that the time required to complete the programme of study will still fall within the maximum time limit allowed for the programme by the University regulations.<sup>2</sup>
- h. agreeing the student interrupts their studies for a maximum of one full academic year, provided that an extension to the maximum time limit allowed for the programme by the University regulations is approved by the Progression Board.
- i. allowing the student to attend some teaching sessions remotely in accordance with the attendance via Zoom requirements as outlined in the Programme Handbook. Attendance is optional in an 'observational capacity' and will not be counted towards teaching hours.

12. Any offer of support should be made in open consultation with the student, and staff should be mindful of the student's own views on their options for continuing their studies.

13. Notwithstanding the above, the Institute is not required to comply with all requests made by students, particularly if such requests are not practicable or affect the academic standards of the programme of study. Any offer of support will be tailored to the individual circumstances of the student; their programme of study; and their progression on the course.

### **Pregnancy- and maternity-related illnesses**

14. Pregnant students who experience pregnancy-related illnesses which impact on their ability to attend classes or submit assessments, should use the Institute's Extenuating Circumstances process to request adjustments to their assessment deadlines if required.

### **Pregnancy- and maternity-related absences**

15. Although students are not entitled to statutory maternity leave (as they are not employees), students who give birth are entitled to a maternity-related absence. The length of such an absence and the impact on the programme of study must be discussed between the student and Programme Leader in advance of the student giving birth.

16. Due to the nature of the Institute's programmes of study, the Institute does not normally allow a student to fully interrupt their studies part-way through the

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<sup>2</sup> See Table A2 in the University Regulations

year, or to re-enter their programme of study part-way through the year.<sup>3</sup> Students may, however, interrupt (temporarily withdraw from) their studies for a full academic year, as long as their maximum period of registration on the programme does not exceed the maximum allowable period of registration as set out in the University regulations.

17. In the event where a student needs to interrupt their studies, every effort will be made to ensure that they are not financially disadvantaged.

### **Bringing babies and children to the Institute**

18. Students may be accompanied by children in the Institute's public areas, or in one-to-one tutorials if the tutor permits. Children brought to the Institute are the responsibility of the adult who brings them and must be supervised at all times.
19. Students may bring babies under 26 weeks old, or older babies who are being breast-fed by the student to the institute, and a room will be provided for the purpose of breast-feeding. Students are asked to give the Institute as much notice as possible if a space for (breast)feeding is required. A disclaimer form will need to be signed if you wish to bring your child on site.

### **Partners**

20. Students who are partners of people who are pregnant, or who have recently given birth, are permitted to request extensions to assessment deadlines through the Institute's Extenuating Circumstances process if they are unable to meet their assessment deadlines for reasons related to their partner's pregnancy, such as supporting their partner during pregnancy-related illness.
21. Students who are partners of people who have recently given birth are entitled to have up to two weeks of parental absence. Intention to take any such absence must be discussed with the Programme Leader at the earliest possible opportunity, to assess the possible impact on the student's programme of study.

### **Adoption**

22. Students who have been matched for adoption should inform their tutor or Programme Leader at the earliest opportunity. These students are entitled to the level of support and absence from their studies as outlined in points 15-24 of this Policy.

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<sup>3</sup> See also the 'Policy Regarding Time Out Of Training'