



Student Pregnancy and New Parenthood Policy

Student-friendly support for pregnancy, pregnancy loss, fertility treatment, adoption, surrogacy and new parenthood

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This policy applies to students on UHE (UK) taught programmes validated by the University of Roehampton or the University of Bradford.

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1. Purpose and scope

This policy explains the support available if you are pregnant, have recently given birth, are undergoing fertility treatment, experience pregnancy loss, become a parent through adoption or surrogacy, foster a child, or support a partner or co-parent through any of these circumstances.

It applies from application and enrolment through to completion of study. It covers all students on UHE (UK) taught programmes, including students studying full-time or part-time, students on placement, distance or blended learners, and international students.

The policy is inclusive of women, trans men, non-binary people and anyone else who is pregnant or gives birth. References to a partner or co-parent include a spouse, civil partner, partner, intended parent or another person who shares parental responsibility, whether or not they live with or are in a relationship with the pregnant student.

2. Our commitments

UHE (UK) is committed to an inclusive learning environment in which students are treated with dignity and are able to participate and achieve their full potential.

- You will not be treated less favourably because of pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, pregnancy loss, fertility treatment, adoption, surrogacy or new parenthood.
- We will listen to you, respect your choices and agree support with you rather than making assumptions.
- We will make reasonable and proportionate adjustments while protecting academic standards and programme learning outcomes.
- We will handle personal information sensitively and only share it where necessary and lawful.
- We will make the relevant validator-specific academic arrangements for you through UHE (UK); you will not be expected to contact the validating university yourself.

3. How this policy works with the Academic Regulations

This policy sets out welfare, practical and academic support. Formal decisions about assessment, progression, interruption or suspension, reassessment, awards and appeals must also comply with the Academic Regulations that apply to your award.

What this means for you: UHE (UK) will identify whether your award follows the Roehampton or Bradford route and will apply the correct rules. Your Programme Leader or Student Support contact will explain the outcome in plain language.

Where a programme specification, professional body requirement, placement rule or approved variation is stricter than this policy, UHE (UK) will explain the reason, consider all reasonable alternatives and confirm the decision in writing.

Your Student Support Plan records agreed support. It does not itself approve a formal academic outcome, change academic standards or override the Academic Regulations. Any formal academic decision will be confirmed through the appropriate UHE (UK) process.

4. Telling UHE (UK) and confidentiality

You do not have to disclose a pregnancy or related circumstance. However, early disclosure can help us put support in place, especially where your course includes laboratory work, fieldwork, placements, physical activity, travel or other potential risks.

You may speak to the Student Support Team, your Programme Leader or another trusted member of staff. You can ask that one named person coordinates communication on your behalf.

We will normally ask for your consent before sharing information. Information may be shared without consent only where there is a serious and immediate safety or safeguarding concern, where the law requires it, or where sharing is necessary to meet an essential regulatory duty. We will tell you where it is appropriate and safe to do so.

5. Your choices and wellbeing

Staff must not try to influence your decision about whether to continue a pregnancy, and must not make assumptions about whether a pregnancy was planned.

Where you ask for medical or pregnancy-options advice, staff will signpost you to an appropriate qualified service. UHE (UK) staff can explain study options and support but cannot provide clinical advice.

Support is available whether you continue a pregnancy, have a termination, experience pregnancy loss, or decide not to disclose the details of your circumstances beyond what is needed to arrange support.

6. Health, safety and safeguarding

A proportionate risk assessment will be offered as soon as reasonably possible after disclosure. It will be reviewed if your circumstances, course activities or placement change, and again before you return where needed.

- physical activity, lifting, moving or carrying;
- laboratory work, chemicals, infection risks or radiation;
- fieldwork, travel, heat, cold, work at height or isolated working;
- placements, professional practice and required clothing or equipment;
- examinations, long periods of sitting or standing and access to breaks;
- rest, toilet access, breastfeeding or expressing facilities, and emergency arrangements.

Where you are on placement, UHE (UK) will work with the placement provider to make sure a suitable assessment is completed and reasonable changes are considered. Only the information necessary to manage safety and support will be shared.

Where there is a safeguarding concern involving you or a child, UHE (UK) will follow its safeguarding procedures while continuing to treat you respectfully and involve you as far as possible.

7. Your Student Support Plan

The Student Support Team and your programme team will offer to develop a Student Support Plan with you. The plan should be agreed as early as practical and reviewed whenever your needs change.

The plan may cover:

- your preferred contact and what information may be shared;
- health and safety arrangements;
- appointments, attendance and access to learning materials;
- assessment adjustments and mitigating circumstances;
- placements, field trips and practical work;
- planned absence, interruption or suspension and your expected return;
- breastfeeding, expressing, rest and welfare facilities;
- keeping in touch during absence and transition back to study.

A plan may remain active for up to 12 months after birth, placement of a child or another agreed date. It can be extended where needed, including following neonatal care, pregnancy loss or ongoing health needs.

8. Attendance, appointments and study arrangements

Reasonable flexibility will be provided for antenatal, fertility, adoption, surrogacy, postnatal and relevant medical appointments. You should tell your named contact as early as you reasonably can, but urgent or sensitive circumstances will be handled compassionately.

Possible arrangements include access to missed teaching materials, agreed catch-up activity, temporary changes to attendance patterns, remote or hybrid participation where educationally appropriate, adjusted practical schedules, or alternative timing for fieldwork and placements.

Remote participation or an alternative activity cannot be guaranteed where attendance is essential to demonstrate a learning outcome, meet a professional requirement or protect safety. Where it cannot be agreed, UHE (UK) will explain why and consider other suitable options.

9. Assessments and examinations

If you wish to sit an examination or complete an assessment, you should normally be enabled to do so safely. Adjustments may include:

- rest and toilet breaks;
- a supportive chair, suitable room or separate venue;
- access to water, food or medication where permitted;
- adjusted timing or temporary changes to an assessment method where the same learning outcomes and academic standard can still be assessed;
- extensions, deferral or another outcome under the Mitigating Circumstances Policy.

A Student Support Plan may support an extension request where the Mitigating Circumstances Policy allows this. Evidence requirements for deferral or another formal outcome remain those set out in that policy, but staff should avoid requesting unnecessary or intrusive evidence.

Programme staff can recommend arrangements. Decisions that affect attempt status, progression, reassessment or award are made or ratified through the appropriate assessment and award process: the Roehampton Module Assessment Board and Awards and Progression Board route, or the Bradford Continuation and Award Board route.

10. Pregnancy- and parenthood-related absence

You may take pregnancy-, maternity- or parenthood-related absence. The timing and length will be agreed with you, taking account of your wellbeing, your wishes, the structure of your programme, any placement or professional requirements, and the Academic Regulations.

UHE (UK) normally requires a minimum of two weeks away from study after giving birth for health and wellbeing reasons. Although this is not a statutory student entitlement, it reflects good practice. Where you believe an earlier return is necessary, the situation will be considered individually with appropriate health and safety advice.

Absence will not automatically require a full-year interruption. Shorter arrangements may be agreed where the programme can support them. Where the programme structure means you cannot return at your preferred time, UHE (UK) will explain the reason in writing and set out the next realistic return point and any available alternatives.

11. Interruption or suspension of studies

Where a longer break is needed, UHE (UK) will discuss formal interruption or suspension with you. The following rules apply within the current Academic Regulations:

Route	Normal position	Important effect
Roehampton	Approved interruption normally totals no more than 12 months unless an exceptional extension is approved.	Interruption counts towards the maximum period allowed to complete the award.
Bradford	The normal registration period allows the standard programme length plus one authorised year of suspension and one permitted academic stage or period of restudy/reassessment.	Any further extension requires a decision through the appropriate Board route.

During formal interruption or suspension, access to teaching and assessment is normally paused unless a specific activity has been authorised. UHE (UK) will explain what contact, facilities and learning access remain available.

No student will be required to approach the validating university directly. UHE (UK) will submit and manage any required approval through the correct route.

12. Returning to study

Your expected return date should be discussed before your absence begins where possible. You should contact your named UHE (UK) contact at least three weeks before return, or as soon as reasonably possible if plans change.

A return meeting will normally be offered during the first week. This may review your timetable, wellbeing, assessment position, placement arrangements, facilities and any continuing reasonable adjustments.

Where modules, assessments or programme content have changed during your absence, you may be required to follow revised provision. UHE (UK) will preserve the intended award and approved learning outcomes as far as reasonably possible and will provide a clear transition plan.

A request to return part-time or at a different study rate will be considered where the programme can support it. A refusal must be justified in writing, with any available alternative explained.

13. Financial, practical and campus support

The Student Support Team can explain how absence or interruption may affect tuition fees, student finance, scholarships, accommodation and access to services. Entitlement depends on individual circumstances and the rules of the relevant funding body or sponsor.

Scholarships are normally payable only for periods when you remain registered and eligible under the scholarship terms. If you interrupt, payments may stop or be recalculated.

UHE (UK) will provide access to a suitable space for rest and, where possible, private breastfeeding or expressing. Students may breastfeed in public areas and will not be asked to stop because they are breastfeeding.

Babies and children may enter appropriate campus areas when supervised, subject to safety, space and the needs of other users. They are not normally permitted in teaching sessions, laboratories or assessments unless an exceptional arrangement and risk plan have been agreed in advance. UHE (UK) does not provide routine childcare.

14. Partners and co-parents

Partners and co-parents may request reasonable time away from study for antenatal appointments, birth, adoption placement, surrogacy arrangements, neonatal care, pregnancy complications or another serious related event.

Where study or assessment is affected, the student may apply under the Mitigating Circumstances Policy. Arrangements may include extensions, deferral, access to missed materials, an alternative placement or field-trip date, or formal interruption where necessary.

A student considering a substantial period of parenthood-related absence should contact UHE (UK) as early as reasonably possible. UHE (UK) will apply the relevant Roehampton or Bradford interruption rules set out in section 11.

15. Adoption, surrogacy and fostering

Students who are adopting, becoming a parent through surrogacy, or fostering a child are entitled to the same respectful and individual approach. Support will reflect the student's role, the timing of matching or placement, travel and legal appointments, and the needs of the child.

The primary parent or adopter may receive support broadly equivalent to that provided for a student giving birth. A partner, co-parent or secondary adopter may receive support broadly equivalent to the partner arrangements in section 14. These descriptions do not limit individual consideration.

16. Pregnancy loss, stillbirth and neonatal death

Pregnancy loss, stillbirth and neonatal death can affect students in different ways. You may request support without having to disclose more detail than is necessary.

Support may include compassionate absence, extensions or deferral under the Mitigating Circumstances Policy, temporary attendance changes, counselling or wellbeing support, interruption or suspension, and a phased return.

A student who has a stillbirth or whose baby dies shortly after birth may take the same maternity-related absence and access the same academic and wellbeing support described in this policy. Support is also available to partners and co-parents.

Where a baby is receiving neonatal care, planned return dates and support plans may be extended or changed to reflect the circumstances.

17. Fertility treatment and assisted conception

Students undergoing fertility treatment, including IVF or related procedures, may request flexibility for appointments, treatment effects and recovery. Because treatment can be time-sensitive and unpredictable, students will not be penalised for being unable to give substantial advance notice where this is reasonable.

Support may include temporary attendance arrangements, access to missed learning, assessment support through the Mitigating Circumstances Policy, wellbeing support and a confidential named contact.

18. International students

Pregnancy, maternity or parenthood-related absence can affect visa sponsorship, permitted study patterns and travel. UHE (UK) will provide advice based on current UKVI requirements and will record any agreed arrangements appropriately.

Under the current institutional approach, a short interruption may sometimes be compatible with continued Student visa sponsorship where the student maintains the required engagement and can complete within existing visa dates. Longer interruption will often require sponsorship to be withdrawn and the student to leave the UK before applying for new permission to return. Because immigration requirements can change and individual circumstances differ, UHE (UK) will confirm the applicable position in writing before an interruption is finalised.

Students will not be asked to make immigration decisions without an opportunity to discuss the academic and sponsorship consequences with the relevant UHE (UK) team.

19. Academic decision-making and appeals

UHE (UK) will confirm formal academic decisions in writing, including the applicable route, reasons, next steps, deadlines and appeal rights.

The current appeal deadlines are:

Route	Formal appeal	Further review
Roehampton	Normally within 10 working days of formal notice of the decision.	The applicable Roehampton review stage and stated deadline will be included in the outcome letter.
Bradford	Normally within three weeks of receiving the ratified result or decision. Students are encouraged to seek informal resolution in writing within one week without missing the formal deadline.	Normally within two weeks of the formal-stage outcome.

You do not need to identify the correct form or validating-university contact yourself. UHE (UK) will provide the correct route and assist you to submit through it. Disagreement with academic judgement alone is not a ground of appeal, but procedural error, relevant undisclosed circumstances and other permitted grounds may be considered under the applicable route.

20. Responsibilities

20.1 Students

- Tell UHE (UK) what support you need and update your named contact where circumstances change, as far as you reasonably can.
- Participate in risk assessment and support planning where relevant.
- Follow the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and any stated deadlines for formal academic requests.
- Provide relevant evidence where required, while raising any concern about unnecessary or intrusive requests.

20.2 UHE (UK) staff

- Listen without judgement, protect confidentiality and avoid assumptions.
- Act promptly on safety, support and academic arrangements.
- Explain decisions in student-friendly language and apply the correct validator route internally.
- Record agreed actions and ensure that formal academic decisions are made by the authorised person or Board.
- Review support when circumstances change and support a smooth return to study.

Appendix 1. Student Support Plan and Risk Assessment

This form should be completed with the student. Only information needed to arrange support, manage risk and meet regulatory duties should be recorded. The student should receive a copy.

A. Student and course details

Item	Agreed detail / action
Student name	
Student number	
Programme and level/stage	
Validating route (Roehampton/Bradford)	
Programme Leader	
Named Student Support contact	
Preferred contact method	

B. Key dates and communication

Item	Agreed detail / action
Expected due date / placement date / relevant date	
Date UHE (UK) was notified	
Expected start of absence	
Expected return date	
Who may be informed, and what may be shared	
Keeping-in-touch arrangements during absence	

C. Health, safety and facilities

Item	Agreed detail / action
Course, laboratory or practical risks identified	
Placement or fieldwork risks identified	
Assessment or examination risks identified	

Item	Agreed detail / action
Required changes and person responsible	
Rest, toilet, breastfeeding or expressing arrangements	
Emergency and safeguarding information provided	

D. Teaching, attendance and assessment

Item	Agreed detail / action
Appointments or treatment affecting study	
Temporary attendance or hybrid arrangements	
Missed teaching and catch-up arrangements	
Assessment adjustments requested	
Mitigating Circumstances application needed	
Placement, field trip or practical alternatives	

E. Absence, interruption and return

Item	Agreed detail / action
Planned type and length of absence	
Interruption/suspension approval required	
Effect on registration period explained	
Learning or contact during absence, if authorised	
Return-to-study meeting date	
Curriculum or assessment transition plan	
Continuing adjustments after return	

F. Review and agreement

Item	Agreed detail / action
Next review date	
Student comments or preferences	

Item	Agreed detail / action
Student name/signature/date	
Programme Leader or delegate/date	
Student Support contact/date	
Copy provided to student	Yes / No