

# Risk Assessment Procedures and Guidance for Students during and after Pregnancy

## 1. Introduction

**1.1.** The University has a duty of care in respect of the health and safety of any of its registered students who are pregnant, including a responsibility to ensure that such students are informed of the University's expectations of them in terms of ensuring their own health and safety. This document outlines the procedures that should be followed by the students' School of Studies and the expectant student herself, with the aim of ensuring that the conditions of study contribute to a student's healthy and successful pregnancy.

**1.2.** This document supplements the University's Statement of Health and Safety Policy<sup>1</sup> and its Statement of Policy on Equal Opportunities for Students<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Responsibilities of the University

**2.1.** The primary contact for an expectant student is normally their Academic Adviser or the Senior Adviser in their School, or, for post-graduate research students, their Supervisor. The expectation is that the Adviser/Senior Adviser or Supervisor will liaise with appropriate staff elsewhere in the student's School of Studies (or Schools of Studies if the student is on a joint degree programme, or taking modules in other Schools) and, if relevant, with placement providers, with the aim of ensuring that a risk assessment is undertaken that takes full account of all the teaching placement and assessment activities that the student is due to undertake prior to the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

**2.2.** As soon as possible, and with the agreement of the student, the Academic Adviser/Senior Adviser/ Supervisor should notify the Head of School(s) of the student's pregnancy in writing, providing the EWC once known. The Head of School will have final responsibility for ensuring that all relevant risk assessments are completed in a timely fashion.

**2.3.** The Adviser/Senior Adviser or Supervisor should give the student a copy of the UEA *Notification of Pregnancy and Risk Assessment Form* (see Appendix) for completion by the student in consultation with her Adviser/Senior Adviser/Supervisor and/or other relevant members of staff<sup>3</sup>. Once this has been completed and signed by the Adviser/Senior Adviser/Supervisor, the student should be given a copy and asked to discuss any potential risks with her GP or midwife (see 3.3). She should be asked to return the signed form to her Head of School.

**2.4.** Special consideration should be given to the potential impact of any required lab work or anatomy sessions (for example, exposure to or handling chemicals or other hazardous substances such as lead, extreme noise or vibration, or prolonged standing). Schools should follow COSHH guidance supplied by the Health and Safety Executive (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) <sup>4</sup>.

**2.5.** Once the *Form* has been returned to the Head of School by the student fully completed and signed by all parties (the Adviser/Senior Adviser/ Supervisor and the student) the Head should satisfy his/herself that potential risks have been identified and any appropriate adjustments have been put in place. It is the responsibility of the Head to instigate any outstanding actions that are required to ensure that all relevant adjustments have been made or planned for and that the expectant student or her child will not be placed at risk as a result of activities she is expected to undertake as part of her programme of study.

**2.6.** A copy of the *UEA Notification of Pregnancy and Risk Assessment Form* should be placed on the student's file for reference and another given to the expectant student.

### **Placements and field visits**

**2.7.** When it is not possible for the Adviser/Senior Adviser or Supervisor to make an assessment of the potential hazards of a placement or other external environment such as a visit off-campus or field work experience, the placement or other relevant provider should be asked to undertake a separate risk assessment. It is the responsibility of Head of School to ensure that the placement or other provider is contacted in advance of the student's attendance (if possible) and informed (with the student's consent) of the pregnancy. The provider should be sent a copy of, and be asked to complete, the University's *Notification of Pregnancy and Risk Assessment Form*. If the student has already begun the placement or, field experience or visit, the risk assessment should be completed in consultation with the student. The provider should sign and date the *Form* and send it to the Head of School for forwarding to the student for discussion with her doctor or midwife. Once the student has returned a fully completed *Form* to the Head of School, the latter should satisfy his/herself that potential risks have been identified and that all appropriate arrangements and adjustments have been made as indicated in 2.6 above.

**2.8.** Copies of the completed placement risk assessment form should also be placed on the students' file for reference and given to the expectant student.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

**2.9.** When transport to placements or field work etc. is provided by the University the Head of School must ensure that coaches are fitted with suitable seat belts. When long journeys are necessary, adequate rest stops must be built in to the travel itinerary.

**2.10.** In order to accommodate an expectant or breastfeeding student, the Head of School in the student's School of Studies may deem it reasonable to change the timing, location and/or nature of teaching events or assessments including fieldwork or placements, or may request a concession to provide an alternative method of assessment. However, there is no automatic right to have the curriculum re-arranged and if the pregnancy or breastfeeding is making the necessary study difficult or impossible, then the student should be advised to intercalate. If a placement involves night shifts, a student may request consideration for alternative times through their School placement office, but the practicality of this will vary according to individual circumstances and such rearrangements are not an automatic right.

**2.11.** The University is investigating the provision of suitable facilities for breastfeeding or expressing (including access to a fridge) and baby changing facilities on campus. Information about current facilities can be obtained from the Student Support Centre or the Union of UEA Students' Advice Centre.

**2.12.** Queries about the implications for international students (for example in respect of visas, intercalation, access to public services etc.) can be referred to the International Student Advisory team in the Student support Service.

### **3. Responsibilities of the Student**

**3.1.** The student has a responsibility to inform a member of UEA staff as soon as she is aware that she is pregnant. The student should normally inform her Academic Adviser, Senior Adviser or Supervisor (see section 2.1 above). If a student wishes her pregnancy to remain confidential to staff in her School of Studies (particularly in the earliest weeks), she should seek a confidential meeting with an adviser in the Student Support Service to discuss her situation. Without relevant knowledge, no specific provisions can be made on behalf of the pregnant student.

**3.2.** The student should fully cooperate with her Academic Adviser, Senior Adviser or Supervisor and if relevant placement provider or field visit/experience organiser in completing the *Notification of Pregnancy and Risk Assessment Form(s)* for all aspects of her study during her pregnancy.

**3.3.** The student may choose to consult either her doctor or her midwife for advice on health and guidance on assessing any risk associated with teaching, assessment and other associated activities including any placements or field experiences or visits due to be undertaken while she is pregnant. It is the student's responsibility to outline clearly to the doctor or midwife the activities that she will be required to undertake as part of her studies, showing them their *Notification of Pregnancy and Risk Assessment Form(s)* (see 2.3 and 2.7). Once the risk assessment(s) have been discussed, the student should complete and sign the form(s) to confirm this discussion has taken place and return it to her Head of School.

**3.4.** When planning field trips and travel, including study abroad programmes, the student should seek advice from her GP and, if relevant, from the airline with regard to flying. It is recommended that the student takes her maternity notes with her whenever she is away from campus on a placement, field experience or visit (particularly if staying overnight). She should ensure that next of kin details on E-vision are up to date.

**3.5.** It is the student's responsibility to inform her GP if she is required to have any immunisations for the purposes of travel as part of her course of study. She should also consult her GP immediately if she is notified that there are outbreaks of infectious diseases on campus or fieldwork, and should take the advice offered.

**3.6.** Pregnant students are advised to consider the risks associated with extensive use of a keyboard or lap top without a mouse which may place pregnant students at an increased risk of carpal tunnel syndrome. The University recommends moderate use of a computer, taking regular breaks and making use of hand/wrist exercises as advised by a midwife. Lifting heavy objects (including manual handling) and standing for prolonged periods should be avoided.

**3.7.** While assessments tasks should in most cases be unaffected by a student's pregnancy, if a student feels that they will need extra time (for example, rest breaks to avoid wrist strain or carpal tunnel syndrome or discomfort caused by extended periods of sitting), she should seek the advice of the Student Support Service. Requests to extend deadlines for the submission of written coursework should be submitted to the student's School of Studies, according to standard practice in the School. However, pregnancy itself may not be considered sufficient reason to grant an extension, although illness arising from pregnancy is more likely to be accepted as a reason, if supported by medical evidence and depending on the seriousness of the illness. When appropriate adjustments cannot be made the alternative may be for the student to apply to intercalate.

**3.8.** If a student believes that she has extenuating circumstances in respect of course attendance or an assessment task, she should submit these to her School for consideration at an Assessment or Re-Assessment Board using normal procedures.

**3.9.** Children, including nursing infants should not be brought into lectures, seminars, demonstrations or any other teaching session. Children should not be brought into one-to-one meetings with staff without the prior consent of the University.

**3.10.** There is no minimum or maximum legal requirement specified for maternity leave for a student in higher education. Students should first discuss their intentions with their Adviser/ the Senior Adviser/Supervisor and if absence from study is necessary, make the appropriate request for leave using the normal procedures. Leave for short periods of time may be able to be accommodated by a request for an authorised absence. Longer periods of absence will normally require a period of intercalation. Students' partners who wish to apply for leave around the time of the birth should also apply for authorised absence using normal procedures.

Policy approved by Health and Safety Executive on 10 November 2011.

## Notes

1 <http://www.uea.ac.uk/ltqo/ltqoinfo/Equal+Opportunities+for+Students>

2 <http://www.uea.ac.uk/uss/safetypolicy>

3 The HSE advises that “the person carrying out the risk assessment is competent and able to take due account of relevant information. Health and Safety Executive, ‘New and expectant mothers at work: A guide for employers’ HSG122 (second edition, published 2002), p5. Web version accessed from [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) on 08 April 2011

4 Advice from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommends identifying hazards and risks for all female students of child-bearing age, as many pregnancies go either undetected, or undisclosed, for the first 4 to 6 weeks. At the same time, the earliest weeks of a pregnancy are the time when the pregnancy is most at risk, particularly from exposure to chemicals and radiations.

## Additional resources and sources of advice and guidance

University Medical Service <http://www.umsuea.co.uk/>

Student Support Service <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/student-support-service>

UEA Safety Services <http://www.uea.ac.uk/uss>

Student Union Advice Centre <http://www.ueastudent.com/advice>

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance documents:

Pregnancy <http://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/>

Pregnancy risk assessment <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg122.pdf>

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/>

British Pregnancy Advisory Service <http://www.bpas.org/bpaswoman>

Maternity Allowance, impact on bursaries [www.direct.gov](http://www.direct.gov)

World Health Organisation advice on breastfeeding <http://www.who.int/topics/breastfeeding/en/>

## Appendix: University of East Anglia – Notification of Pregnancy and Risk Assessment Form

Parts A and B of this form must be completed by pregnant students with their School Academic Adviser or Senior Adviser, or for PGR students, their Supervisor. Part C should be completed and signed after discussion with the student’s doctor or midwife. Additional risk assessment forms should be completed if a student is due to attend a placement or placements whilst pregnant (see *UEA Risk Assessment Procedures and Guidance for Students during and after Pregnancy*).

### Part A: personal details

Student name	
Registration number	
UEA Email and phone number	
School / Current year of study	
Academic Adviser /Senior Adviser/ Supervisor *	
Expected Week of Childbirth	
Any relevant medical conditions?	

### Part B: Risk assessment

1. Please list below each of the activities that are required to be undertaken as part of the programme of study that might place the student or her unborn child at risk. These might include for example: extensive use of desk top or lap top computers; exposure to harmful substances; exposure to radiation long periods of standing; extended travel; manual handling; fieldwork or placement activities.

2. Outline the recommended action to control/mitigate the risk.

3. State whether or not the recommended action has been taken or set up.

1. Activity/Risk	2. Action recommended to control risk	3. Action taken/initiated?

		<b>PTO</b>
If necessary continue on a separate sheet		

### Part C Confirmation of completion of risk assessment process

I have discussed my programme of study with my GP and/or midwife and they have confirmed that:

- \* my programme of study presents no significant risks to myself and/or my unborn or new child
- \* the activities outlined above present potential risks to myself and/or my unborn or new baby but appropriate arrangements have been made to minimise risk to appropriate levels
- \* some activities (identified above) may present potential risks to myself and/or my unborn or new baby and appropriate arrangements have not yet been put into place.

\*Please delete as appropriate

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Student			
Academic Adviser/Senior Adviser/Supervisor/Placement provider*			

\* Delete as appropriate

**For forwarding by the student to her Head of School. Copy to be kept on student file.**

*January 2017*