

## **Information for students who are Pregnant**

Canterbury Christ Church University recognises that pregnancy and parenthood can be daunting and exciting. To complement the medical support you will be receiving externally, we have compiled the following information sheet to help you choose the support you might need and want and to make sure that support is available and accessible. This will hopefully answer any questions you may have, but if it does not, or you would like clarification on any points you can visit or contact the Student Support Advisers.

### **How to access our Support:**

**Virtual Drop-in:** Mon-Fri, 12:00-13:00 using following link:

<https://eu.bbcollab.com/guest/719e627d2c6d4062af78de47c241bf23>

**Physical Drop-ins:** Augustine House: Mon-Fri, 10:30-16:30

Cathedral Court, Medway: Mondays, 14:00-16:00

**Appointments** can be requested using the following email: [studentsupport@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@canterbury.ac.uk)

**Telephone:** 01227 922675

**NB Please consult with your midwife and see latest NHS COVID 19 information if you are unsure how the virus could affect your baby and pregnancy care.**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/pregnancy-and-coronavirus/>

### **I am pregnant; do I have to tell the university?**

You do not have to tell the university you are pregnant; however, the university will be unable to provide you with individualised support unless you let us know. The university will only enquire if you are pregnant if it has good grounds to believe you are and there are genuine concerns about your health and safety.

If you decide to tell the university, you should contact your Personal Academic Tutor (PAT). If required, they can discuss options of how you can continue your studies, arrange an interruption, and organise a Temporary Learning Agreement to help you to fulfil any deadlines and course requirements. They will be fully aware of the academic support available to you and will co-ordinate arrangements for that support.

The university recommend that you book to see a Student Support Adviser, so that you are fully aware of the support available to you and any financial implications associated with taking a break/interruption. They will liaise with your PAT regarding any campus risk assessments that need to be completed. Placement risk assessments will be completed by your course or placement provider. You can book a maternity support appointment with the student support advisers by emailing [studentsupport@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@canterbury.ac.uk) where they can discuss any concerns that you may have.

The University will not inform any one about your pregnancy without your express permission unless it has genuine concerns for your health and safety or the health and safety of your child.

## Will I have to leave university because I am pregnant?

Being pregnant does not necessarily mean you need to leave your course or suspend your studies. However, there may be risks associated with continuing your studies at certain stages of your pregnancy which will depend on the requirements and nature of your course. For many courses these risks will be low but courses that involve the following are more likely to present greater risks:

- physical activity, including lifting and carrying
- the use of chemicals, including paints and pesticides
- exposure to radiation
- working in hot/cold or pressurised environments.
- where exposure to infectious disease is a possibility, including laboratory work and healthcare provision.

These risks will be mitigated when you complete your risk assessment with your PAT and a Student Support Adviser.

## What if I decide to take time off because of my pregnancy?

You may choose to take a break from your studies for up to a year, or you may wish to return to study as soon as possible after your baby is born.

To apply to interrupt, you will need to log in to your services via the CCCU website, and then complete the “Change to Study” tile.

<https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/students/current-students/current-students.aspx>

It is advised that you discuss this in the first instance with your program, and that you discuss any possible financial implications with our student support advisers.

## What if I have assessments or am due to take exams whilst pregnant?

If you are due to give birth near to, or during assessment deadlines, or an examination period and you want to complete your assessed work or sit your exams, you will not be prevented from doing so.

In examinations, pregnant students may require rest breaks and may need to visit the toilet more frequently than those who are not pregnant. They may also require a more comfortable and supportive chair. In such cases you may need to sit the examination in a location separate from other students. The university, via you PAT, will agree with you adjustments it will be able to make to enable you to complete examinations and assessments during your pregnancy.

If you are concerned about sitting examinations or meeting assessed work deadlines, or if you have a pregnancy-related health condition that is exacerbated by stress, you should seek advice from your midwife or doctor. If they advise against you sitting an examination or trying to meet the assessed work deadline, alternative methods of assessment may be explored with you.

If you are unable to undertake an alternative method of assessment, or if you experience significant pregnancy-related problems during an examination or when undertaking assessed work, the university, via your PAT, will discuss with you how you may be able to re-sit the examination at the earliest possible opportunity or agree an extension for resubmitting coursework.

## What if I am due to go on placement?

If you are due to undertake a placement as part of your course, the university will, with your permission and agreement, liaise with the placement provider to ensure a risk assessment is carried out. If fieldwork is a requirement of the course, this will need to be considered within a risk assessment.

UK students who are on placement or studying abroad will need to check their visa terms and conditions as they may need to extend their stay or return to the country at a later date.

As pregnancy is considered a pre-existing condition by insurance companies, students who are pregnant prior to commencing a field trip, their placement or study abroad will need to check whether their insurance covers them for pre-existing conditions.

## Will I be able to make an extenuating circumstance request?

Normally you will be expected to take your pregnancy into account when preparing assignments or preparing for exams so an application for extenuating circumstances would not normally be appropriate. However, if there are complications with the pregnancy or your health deteriorates to the extent your academic performance is affected than an application may be considered. You will however be expected to provide appropriate evidence to support your application e.g., a letter from your GP.

## Will I be able to carry on studying once my baby is born?

If you choose to do so you will be able to take maternity-related absence following the birth of your child. How long you take will depend on your personal circumstances and the structure and content of your course. Your program will work with you to agree a suitable return-to-study date.

If the structure or content of your course requires you to return to study sooner than you would like to, you will be notified in writing of the reasons.

You will normally be required to take as a minimum two weeks' compulsory maternity-related absence, or four weeks if you are on a placement with significant health and safety risks. This is in line with employment law and is to ensure your health and safety following birth. If you are on a course of professional training or are receiving a bursary from a professional body you should check your minimum or recommended absence periods with the professional body concerned.

If the university is concerned about your health in relation to your proposed return date or your course requirements, you may be asked for your GP's confirmation of your fitness to return to study.

Normally you will be allowed to take up to one year out of study. If necessary, the university will take steps to ensure you are kept up to speed with developments in your field of study, for example sending you lists of key reading and new research, dates and transcripts of relevant lectures and access to key journals.

In exceptional circumstances, you may need to extend the length of **your maternity leave** beyond the standard time allowed, for example in cases of postnatal depression, serious illness, loss of your baby, or where there is no available childcare.

The university will take steps to enable you to complete the requirements of your course or module before you take maternity-related absence. If you are unable to complete your course or module before taking maternity-related absence you will, if possible, be allowed to complete the course or module on your return.

**You should decide when you start your maternity-related absence in agreement with the university. If you wish to, you may study up to your due date, or start your maternity-related absence a semester before your due date.**

If you are close to your due date and unable to study as planned, you may be able to start your maternity-related absence earlier than planned or, if appropriate, agree with your program alternative methods through which you can meet the course requirements.

You should discuss and agree with your program when you intend to return from maternity-related absence prior to beginning the period of absence and notify Registry Services. However, if you wish to change this date during the course of your absence, you should notify Registry Services as soon as possible.

Before you return from a period of maternity-related absence you should discuss with the university your study options and your continued support and agree your support plan before your return.

You may wish to consider resuming your course on a part-time basis. If so, the university would normally agree to this unless there are justifiable reasons for not doing so. In that case the reasons will be confirmed to you in writing. You should discuss your return to study with your Personal Academic Tutor.

### **What financial benefits are available to me whilst I am pregnant or following the birth?**

Your entitlement to benefits and other payments during and following pregnancy and the impact of the pregnancy and maternity-related absence on your funding from statutory and other sources can be complex so you should speak to the Department of Work and Pensions to discuss benefits you may be eligible for. You can also seek advice for the Citizens Advice Bureau.

The University's Access to Learning Fund is a discretionary fund to support students in financial hardship. The Student Support Advisers can give advice and information on eligibility and applying to the fund.

### **What facilities are available on campus?**

#### Canterbury Campus

Lg.03 - Breastfeeding and changing rooms

AHg.05 – Ground Floor library

#### Salomon's Campus

SALs.02

#### Medway Campus

RWf.42 - Baby Change

RWs.06 - Breast Feeding

### **Will I be able to take my child into lectures?**

Students will not be prevented from attending their course or accessing university facilities or services if they are breastfeeding or have with them a baby under 26 weeks old.

As long as babies are supervised at all times and any health and safety risks identified can be resolved, babies are allowed onto university premises. However, their presence in seminars, lectures, the library, and study areas may potentially be disruptive to other students and their studies. Students with babies should therefore check with teaching staff and fellow students if their baby's presence is acceptable and have alternative arrangements for childcare in place for those instances where having their baby with them is not practicable.

### Useful Links:

Parental learning allowance: <https://www.gov.uk/parents-learning-allowance>

NHS additional financial support: <https://www.gov.uk/nhs-bursaries/further-information>

Students and universal credit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-and-students>

Safe zone app: <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/our-students/ug-current/support-services/health-and-safety/safety-support-and-safezone-app>

Citizen's Advice Bureau: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Covid-19 – Living Safely with respiratory infections: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19>