



Support for Pregnant Students

Purpose

This document provides guidance for students and staff about the University's approach to supporting a student who is pregnant at any point during the course of her studies.

The University will support students who become pregnant during the course of their studies and, within the limitations of academic regulations and structures, endeavour to facilitate the least possible disruption to the academic progression of the student while offering personal support and care for her health and well-being

Scope

This policy applies to all registered students of DCU across all campuses.

Policy Statement

A student who becomes pregnant during the course of her studies is advised to consult with a **Student Advisor** in the Student Advice Centre (Glasnevin Campus or St Patrick's Campus) in the first instance, to discuss all aspects (academic, personal and financial) of her pregnancy. The Student Advisor will provide information about potential academic options, personal support and childcare and help the student develop a plan of action for the necessary period. S/he will also be your main point of contact to help you coordinate supports required for the period of your pregnancy and early motherhood – and will refer you to relevant areas (see below) where required.

Academic Studies

A student will need to plan the academic implications of her pregnancy with her Programme Chairperson. The student may wish to defer a Semester or year or seek alternatives. The University will respect the student's wishes as far as this is practicable within the limitations of the academic structures.

In cases of deferral, the student's grades will not be negatively affected and the result of the deferred module will be taken as the grade for calculation of the annual progression mark.

If students experience medical issues or complications during pregnancy and need to be absent from class or require extensions, the normal 'extenuating circumstances' procedure should be used. Staff should support students' requests where feasible and academically viable but such requests should be supported by a note from the medical practitioner, as per normal procedures.



Students taking part in strenuous activity or required to attend labs as part of their programme of study, are asked to carry out a risk assessment, to ensure that any risk to the student or pregnancy is identified and managed appropriately. This can be accessed at <http://www.dcu.ie/safety/safety-pregnancy-lab.shtml>. Students will not be expected to take part in any activity considered to be 'risky' during their pregnancy and, where possible and practicable, an alternative to this activity will be arranged. In the case where a physical activity or lab presence is deemed to be unavoidable for academically sound reasons, the student may have no alternative but to defer the module for her own safety and that of the pregnancy.

Work Placement, Clinical Placement, Teaching Placement, Study Abroad

In the case of programmes which include a work/clinical or teaching placement or in the case of programmes which contain a study abroad component, the rigour of the academic calendar and agreed arrangements with external partners may not allow flexibility for the students to defer this component within the given academic year and a deferral to the following academic year may be inevitable. This can be discussed with the Programme Chairperson.

Where feasible, the University should attempt to ensure that the geographic location of placements are conducive to the continued care of the student who is pregnant or a new mother. If the pregnancy is not known to the student when placements are allocated, an empathetic approach by the Placement Coordinator in re-assigning the student to a more suitable location, if feasible, will assist the student in the circumstances.

Nursing Placements:

The School of Nursing and Human Sciences and clinical partner services are committed to protecting the health and safety of all new and expectant mothers. Students must inform the BSc Programme Co-ordinator and the partner service SALO, as soon as the pregnancy is confirmed, in order to review their programme plan and ensure that the student and the pregnancy is not put at risk. Failure to inform the University may result in a prolonged interruption to the programme. A particular consideration is being able to identify a suitable placement for new and expectant mothers. A risk assessment is required to be conducted by the Placement Co-ordinator before any new or expectant mother can be allocated to a placement. She should also contact the BSc Coordinator prior to returning to the programme.

Teaching Placements:

In the case of students completing a placement in a pre-school / primary / post-primary or FET setting, it is in the student's best interest to disclose her pregnancy to the Co-operating Teacher/Placement Director in order to ensure that the placement setting is in a position to provide all reasonable support to the student. The disclosure by the student may be required in the context of the placement setting's Health & Safety policy.



INTRA Work Placements:

As students are employed directly by a company, the rules and regulations of the company will apply and may vary. For Health & Safety reasons, the student may be required to disclose her pregnancy to the company.

Exchange / Study Abroad:

For students on Exchange or Study Abroad, the University is limited in the 'practical' support it can provide to the student. The International Office will liaise with the institution overseas to ascertain the level of support available in order to allow the student make an informed decision. Where a study abroad period is considered to be a risk to the student, the pregnancy or the new born infant, the student should consider a deferral or transfer to another programme, where this is possible.

In the cases of all placements, the University will *endeavour* to facilitate the student in securing a placement location which is conducive to the student's pregnancy or care of the newborn.

Examinations:

In many cases, students who are pregnant will be able to proceed with examinations in the regular fashion. If however, students require additional provisions (e.g. a smaller exam venue), please contact the Registry Office directly at least two weeks before their examinations commence. A candidates' request for additional provisions must be supported by a medical certificate. The Registry will endeavour to provide reasonable accommodations as far as practically possible.

The University cannot set alternative examinations for a candidate who is unable to sit an examination due to pregnancy but will support a postponement of examination to the next available sitting.

Financial Issues

Undergraduate Students:

If a student defers a semester or a year of study due to difficulties during pregnancy or having given birth during the course of the academic year, the University will ensure that no financial penalties will be imposed. The student should inform the University of the situation by applying for fees remission when she returns to her studies. The procedure for applying for remission of fees is documented at <https://www4.dcu.ie/students/finance/remission.shtml>. The HEA *may* cover fees in a repeat year where evidence of complications in pregnancy are provided – this should be investigated by the student herself, as the University cannot make representation on behalf of the student.



Postgraduate students:

Taught postgraduate students and Research postgraduate students who are paying their own fees should apply for 'remission of fees' in the same way as undergraduate students (see above). Funded students should liaise with their School regarding Remission of Fees.

Postgraduate **Research** Students *on DCU Contracts of Employment* are treated as DCU Employees. Please consult the following pages for relevant information:
https://www4.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/policy/72%20-%20maternityleave_researchers_jan_11_final_hr_v1.pdf

Personal Care & Safety

Students are under no *obligation* to disclose their pregnancy unless their programme of study puts them or their pregnancy at risk. This may be applicable to students undertaking a programme of study with a lab component or clinical placement, where manual handling or strenuous activity is involved. It is highly *advisable* to inform the University of a pregnancy in order to develop a comprehensive plan of support and discuss academic implications of the pregnancy.

The Student Health Centre is not in a position to provide comprehensive ante-natal care but can provide information on ante-natal hospitals and facilities, if required. It is very important that a student who is pregnant is under the care of an external medical provider to ensure her safety.

The Health Centre can provide a rest facility for students who are pregnant and require this during the course of the day. Staff in the Health Centre can also refer a student to other services within the University who can provide personal support.

Breastfeeding & Expressing on DCU Campuses

DCU has put in place facilities on campus to allow a mother express milk in a safe and clean environment.

Mother's Rest Room Glasnevin Campus: Science Block, XG38

Mother and Baby (Care) Room: New Student Centre, Glasnevin Campus

Mother's Rest Room St Patrick's Campus: Student Health Centre, A104

Please contact the Health & Safety Office for swipe card access to the Mother's Rest Room. Further information can be found at <https://www.dcu.ie/safety/policies/mothers-room.shtml>.

Access to the Mother's Rest Room on the St Patrick's Campus is through the Student Health Centre directly.



There are no specific *breastfeeding* facilities on our campuses. For reasons of health & safety and to avoid disruption of classes or study, students should not bring a baby into the classes or areas where other students could be disturbed.

Childcare

DCU has a commercially operated facility on the Glasnevin campus. A student should consult with the Student Advice Centre for information on this facility as early as possible in the pregnancy, as Financial Assistance may be available through the Student Assistance Fund for childcare on or off campus, in a registered crèche.

Roles and Responsibilities

University staff will support students who experience a pregnancy during their time at the University. If a student presents to a member of staff in the first instance, it is advisable to refer the student to the Student Health Centre or the Student Advice Centre in the first instance where a full discussion will take place. Staff members are asked to support the students, where possible, in terms of extensions, deferral of examinations or full year of studies and this should be supported in line with academic regulations and providing that this does not adversely affect the learning outcomes of the programme or negatively impact on other students. It is not expected that staff set alternative examinations for students.

Related Documentation

All related documentation is supplied in the Appendix.

Contacts


Student Advice Centre (Glasnevin Campus) T 01- 7007165 Student Advice Centre (St Patrick’s Campus) T: 01-8842004 Student.support@dcu.ie	Student Health Centre (Glasnevin Campus) T: 07-7005143 Student Health Centre (St Patrick’s Campus) T: 01-8842239
Fees Office T: 01-7005875 fees@dcu.ie	Counselling & Personal Development (Glasnevin Campus) 01-7005165 counselling@dcu.ie Counselling & Personal Development (St Patrick’s Campus) 01-8842239 spd counselling@dcu.ie
Chaplaincy (Glasnevin Campus)	International Office

01-7005491 Chaplaincy (St Patrick's Campus) T: 8842224	T: 01-7007411 International.office@dcu.ie
On-Campus Crèche http://www.dcu.ie/info/creche.shtml	Students' Union (Welfare Officer) T: 7005652 welfare@dcusu.ie

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed every 5 years and presented to the Executive Committee of the University for approval.

Version Control

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Appendices

This 'to-do' list may be of assistance to students during the course of a pregnancy at University:

Action	To Do	Action / Contact Persons
Pregnancy Risk Assessment http://www.dcu.ie/safety/safety-pregnancy-lab.shtml	Contact Health & Safety Office	
Extenuating Circumstances (R30) http://www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml	Fill out if absent from class / extensions required (speak to lecturer first)	
Postponement of Semester I exams only http://www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml	Fill out if deferring Semester I exams (after October 31 st)	
Postponement of Semester II exams only http://www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml	Fill out if deferring Semester II examinations only	
Postponement of Repeat Examinations (August) http://www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml	Fill out if deferring Repeat Examinations	
Deferral of Academic Year (R32 form) http://www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml	Fill out if deferring year (before October 31 st)	
Remission of Fees for Deferral of Year or Exams https://www4.dcu.ie/students/finance/remission.shtml	Fill out if deferring (after October 31 st)	
Financial Assistance Required for	Contact	



Equipment for Baby or Childcare https://www4.dcu.ie/students/finance/assistance_fund.shtml	studentassistancefund@dcu.ie	
Childcare Arranged for Return to Studies	Speak to Student Advice Centre for information on local crèches or mail student.support@dcu.ie	

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