

# Student Pregnancy, Maternity & Paternity Policy

## Purpose of Policy

The University of Bradford is committed to promoting equality in all its activities and aims to provide a work, learning, research and teaching environment free from discrimination and unfair treatment. This policy is relevant to all students who become pregnant or a parent during their time at the university.

## Relevant Legislation

Legal protection for students during pregnancy and maternity has been significantly strengthened in England, Scotland and Wales with the commencement of the **Equality Act 2010**. The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as one of the nine protected characteristics and prohibits discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity.

Section 17 of the Act expands the protection from discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity to women outside the workplace. In doing so, the Act specifically mentions the HE sector. Under the Act, discrimination can occur against students because of pregnancy if:

- The student is treated unfavourably because of their pregnancy.
- Within 26 weeks of the day of giving birth the student is treated unfavourably because she has given birth. This applies if the student gives birth; this also applies in cases of miscarriage, still birth and neonatal death provided more than 24 weeks of the pregnancy has passed.
- The student is treated unfavourably because she is breastfeeding and the child is less than 26 weeks old; if the child is more than 26 weeks old, unfavourable treatment because of breastfeeding is likely to constitute sex discrimination.

To advance equality of opportunity in relation to pregnancy and maternity, HEIs must have due regard to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by students who are pregnant or have given birth in the past 26 weeks.
- Take steps to meet the needs of students who are pregnant or have given birth in the past 26 weeks that are different to the needs of people who have not.
- Encourage students who are pregnant or have given birth in the past 26 weeks to participate in public life.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for HEIs to discriminate against applicants and students in relation to admissions; the provision of education; access to any benefit, facility, or service; and disciplinary proceedings. The protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity is included in the public sector equality duty (PSED) of the Equality Act. The PSED requires HEIs to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

## **Policy**

The University of Bradford is mindful of its responsibilities to all students and will support students who become pregnant / a parent throughout their period of study. The University believes that becoming pregnant or caring for a child should not, in itself, prevent any student from succeeding in their studies. The University is committed to showing as much flexibility as possible to facilitate a students' success, making sure no student is disadvantaged whilst maintaining high academic standards.

The health and safety of a pregnant student will be of paramount importance at all times, and Staff will deal with all students covered in this policy in a sensitive, non judgemental and confidential manner. Only members of staff who need to be informed for valid reasons will be informed of a student's circumstances and this will be done only with the student's prior consent.

Please refer to the **Procedure relating to the Student Pregnancy, Maternity & Paternity Policy** for further information.