Procedure for supporting pregnant students and parents with very young children studying at the Language Centre

The University of Leeds believes that being or becoming pregnant, terminating a pregnancy or having a very young child (including through adoption) should not, in itself, be a barrier to a student starting, succeeding in, or completing a programme of study at the University.

The Language Centre aims to support all students to achieve success on our courses regardless of personal circumstances. The following procedure sets out how the Language Centre will support you during your course.

1. General Information for pregnant students

1.1. **Further guidance for pregnant students** studying at the University of Leeds can be found in the University policy on support for pregnant students or students with very young children which can be found at [https://equality.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2011/04/Student-Pregnancy-Policy-updated-2015.pdf](https://equality.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2011/04/Student-Pregnancy-Policy-updated-2015.pdf)

1.2. Students are not under any obligation to inform their School/Faculty if they become pregnant, have a child, or decide to terminate a pregnancy whilst they are a student here. However, at the Language Centre we encourage sharing information, to enable us to provide advice and guidance and specific support to the student. The Language Centre will not be able to take a flexible approach to their programme of study, or provide specific support to the student, unless it knows about the situation.

1.3 The Language Centre and its staff will make sure that a student is not treated less favourably because they are pregnant or have terminated a pregnancy.

1.4 Language Centre staff will take a flexible approach to facilitating the continued learning of a student who is pregnant or who has a very young child or has a partner in either of these positions.

1.5 The Language Centre will ensure a high quality and safe student experience for a pregnant student by carrying out a “risk assessment” on arrival.

1.6 Staff at the Language Centre will adopt a non-judgmental and sensitive approach when supporting and working with a student on issues around pregnancy and termination of pregnancy.

1.7 Members of staff will not attempt to directly or indirectly influence a student’s decision. Their role is to provide information and advice and to explore with the student and others, the flexibility that can be applied to learning whilst pregnant or as a parent of a very young child.
1.8 We suggest that you contact our Student Support Officer, Amanda Barbedette-Green (a.barbedette-green@leeds.ac.uk) if you would like any confidential advice before arrival.

1.9 On arrival at the Language Centre, the student can request a meeting with the Student Support Officer to discuss the pregnancy. The Student Support Officer will arrange a meeting to discuss the implications for the continuation of her study.

1.10 Where the agreed support falls under “mitigating circumstances”, the relevant form should be completed and submitted as normal.

As well as covering the student’s longer-term plans relating to their studies, the continuation of study plan should also consider:

1.10.1 the student’s antenatal care

1.10.2 an absence of at least two weeks after giving birth as a minimum maternity leave period and the Language Centre will ensure that any special arrangements do not place a student at a particular disadvantage compared to other students.

1.10.3 supporting the student’s reintegration to the programme of study on return from any prolonged absence. The student is expected to attend a meeting with their Programme Leader and the Student Support Officer on return to ensure they are supported to continue their studies.

2. Note for International Students

2.1. If an international student requires a Tier 4 General Student visa to remain in the UK during her period of study, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations must be taken into consideration. Where a student is in the UK with a Tier 4 (General) student visa the University is required to notify the Home Office of any suspension of study. This may result in the curtailment of immigration permission. Both the School/Faculty and the student should seek advice from the International Student Office as early as possible during the pregnancy.

This will enable colleagues to ensure that the student understands any implications for their immigration status and that any arrangements agreed with the student comply with UKVI requirements. Early discussions are also important because a late or unexpected decision to fly home could be affected by health considerations.

http://students.leeds.ac.uk/info/10500/international_students/877/international_student_office
3. **Attendance**

3.1. In order to fulfil the requirements of Language Centre courses students are required to attend at least 80% of our classes unless any exceptional non-standard circumstances prevent this. In these cases management discretion will be used to determine the outcome.

3.2. See the [http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/downloads/download/1289/attendance_policy](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/downloads/download/1289/attendance_policy) for more information.

3.3. **Due to the nature and demands of our programmes, 2 weeks is the maximum period of absence** that the Language Centre can authorise from one of their courses. If this is an insufficient period of time for the student to be absent, it may be necessary for the student to withdraw from the current term. It is important that students are aware that taking 2 weeks away from their studies at the Language Centre could have an impact on their progress and that it is not possible to continue and successfully complete the programme. But the LC will try (wherever practicable) to ensure that a pregnant student or student with a very young child is able to complete her programme of study.

3.4. On return from leave, the student would be expected to adhere to the Language Centre Attendance Policy unless further unforeseen circumstances prevented this. In this instance the student would be expected to submit absence requests via MINERVA for any further absences and if necessary complete a mitigating circumstances form. Continuation and completion of the programme and its learning outcomes will be assessed appropriately.

4. **Health and Safety and Risk Assessment**

4.1. The Language Centre is required to undertake a formal Risk Assessment (Appendix 1) to ensure that a safe environment for study is provided.

4.2. Careful consideration will be given to the variety of ways in which the student can be supported and enabled to continue their studies during the pregnancy or after the birth.

5. **Finance**

5.1. Students will not be given a reduction in course fees for a two-week absence as a result of the pregnancy. If more than two weeks of absence is required, we recommend withdrawal from the programme for the Term in question. If absence or withdrawal has implications for the student with regards to their sponsorship for study, it is the student’s responsibility to discuss this with their sponsor in advance of the period of study affected. Further support for students regarding finance and payment of fees can be accessed from the Student Advice Centre.