


#	POLICY TITLE:	POLICY AREA:	VERSION:	DATE:
	<b>7.14 STUDENT MATERNITY, PATERNITY POLICY</b>	7) SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS	2.0	AUGUST 2020
<p><b>Introduction and Context:</b></p> <p><b>Purpose</b>  The purpose of this policy is to set out the advice and support available to students who become pregnant, adopt a child or wish to take paternity related absence during the course of their studies.  SNMCI is committed to ensuring that students who are pregnant are not treated less favourably than other students as a result of their pregnancy.  SNMCI recognises the need to provide support during pregnancy, and also maternity and paternity leave, as part of our commitment to equality and diversity, and to ensure students have the best chance of continuing their studies and realising their academic potential.  SNMCI acknowledges that individual students will have different needs and requirements, and it is not possible to provide detailed information to cover all circumstances and situations.  This Policy is intended to be used as a framework, offering general guidance to facilitate individualised planning around the specific needs of each student.</p>				
<p><b>Scope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any student who becomes pregnant during study</li> <li>- Any applicant who will be pregnant when commencing studies</li> <li>- Any student who has given birth within the last 26 weeks prior to commencement of study</li> <li>- Any student who becomes a parent through the process of adoption</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Policy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pregnancy and maternity should not in themselves provide a barrier for students starting, continuing or successfully completing their studies;</li> <li>- SNMCI is committed to supporting students who are prospective parents by birth or adoption;</li> <li>- SNMCI will work with prospective parents in a supportive and respectful manner and once informed of a pregnancy or adoption, will work with the student concerned to ensure that reasonable adjustments are put in place in a timely manner;</li> <li>- Programme Directors and the Learner Support Officer will work with students to complete the Maternity Support Plan. Any</li> </ul>				

recommendations will be dependent on individual needs and will take account of the requirements of each programme of study and the implications for completion of the programme;

- Where placements form a compulsory part of particular programme of studies the Maternity Support Plan will be shared with the placement provider to facilitate a risk assessment to assess any special risks that may be presented in these environments to the pregnant student. Placement providers may also be asked to contribute to any temporary reasonable adjustments or additional control measures that may be required based on their knowledge of the workplace and local arrangements;
- While students are not obliged to disclose pregnancy to the College, in the absence of timely disclosure, the College may not be able to provide necessary advice and support to the student to assist in their planning and non-disclosure may expose the student to health and safety risks;
- SNMCI will always treat the health and safety of the student as paramount;
- SNMCI recognises that students who terminate a pregnancy may need time for medical tests beforehand and to recover afterwards. Consideration will be given to the emotional and psychological impact of termination, and the student will be directed to those support services available in the College;
- SNMCI recognises that students who experience miscarriage may require support and flexibility to allow them to recover from the physical and psychological impact, and to attend medical appointments. Consideration will be given to the emotional and psychological impact of miscarriage and the student will be directed to those support services available in the College;
- SNMCI recognises that a student who experiences a stillbirth or death of a baby shortly after birth, should be entitled to the same support and entitlements as a student whose baby is not stillborn;
- SNMCI recognises that in all situations physical and psychological wellbeing may require flexibility to be applied in respect of deadlines and exams, and encourages staff to be mindful of the need to adopt a sensitive and confidential approach;
- Information provided will always be treated as confidential and will only be shared with those staff members that need be informed in order to provide support or adjustments for the student concerned;
- SNMCI will treat all prospective parents equally; students who are adopting a child will be offered the same level of support as those who have become biological parents;
- Students **are not permitted** to return to their studies for a period of at least two weeks following the birth of the baby, in line with staff maternity leave policy for required Health and Safety reasons; **Note:** whether in person or online;
- Whilst the intention of this Policy is to enable students to make arrangements for pregnancy and maternity related absence, and to consider adjustments in respect of normal arrangements for study and assessment, it is recognised that there may be exceptional circumstances where it may not be possible to accommodate a student's wishes. Where this is so, the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs must approve the decision, and the student must be provided with a written explanation.



<p>of at least two weeks following the birth of the baby, in line with staff maternity leave policy for required Health and Safety reasons, whether in person or online;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Where possible, the intended date for return to study should be discussed and agreed as part of the Plan;</li> <li>- International students should seek advice from the International Officer regarding the implications of any pregnancy-related absence on their visa, which will be considered within the Pregnancy and Maternity Support and Adjustments Plan. <b>It is imperative that International students seek early advice as any interruption of studies could have serious consequences in relation to visa permissions and study status.</b></li> <li>- Evidence will be required in order for the College to consider examination arrangements or alternative assessments</li> <li>- As students are unlikely to have documentary evidence of their pregnancy before 20 weeks the Maternity Support Plan can be drawn up prior to evidence being received.</li> </ul> <p>This evidence can include (but is not restricted to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any letters indicating GP/Midwife, Antenatal or Hospital Appointments;</li> <li>- Any medical evidence indicating their expected date of delivery (EDD);</li> </ul> <p>Adoptive parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proof of adoption can be provided through a birth certificate but SNMCI remains open to any reasonable proof of relationship for eligibility purposes;</li> <li>- Evidence of any adoption-related dates that will affect attendance or ability to study.</li> </ul>	<p>Student</p> <p>Student</p> <p>International Officer</p> <p>Student</p>	<p>Attendance Records</p> <p>Correspondence</p> <p>Evidence as outlined in policy</p>
<p><b>College:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff who are involved in advising and supporting students to make informed decisions about their pregnancy and maternity should do so in an open-minded and non-judgemental way;</li> <li>- Staff who are advising students on the impact of the pregnancy and maternity should be</li> </ul>		

<p>familiar with the requirements for the student’s programme of study, in order to assist them in formulating a plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff members are not expected to be experts in all matters relating to pregnancy or maternity, and it is anticipated that there will be limitations to the advice that they will be able to offer. In this respect staff should be clear with students about limitations of their knowledge and experience, and should seek further advice as appropriate;</li> <li>- Staff members who are responsible for undertaking the Maternity Support Plan with the student should ensure that arrangements for review are clearly stated within the Plan;</li> <li>- The Plan should be approved and signed off by the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs;</li> </ul>	<p>PD LSO</p> <p>Student</p> <p>PD/LSO DQAA</p>	<p>Policy Maternity Support Plan Form</p>
<p>The Plan should include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How much maternity-leave the student intends to take;</li> <li>- When the student intends to start maternity-leave;;</li> <li>- When the student intends to return from maternity-leave;(Note: cannot be in first 2 weeks following birth whether in person or online)</li> <li>- Consider whether the dates of maternity-related absence will affect the student’s ability to complete any programme module requirements. If so, what arrangements could be made to enable the student to complete the module?</li> <li>- Consider what information the student will require during maternity-leave to keep up to date on course developments and who will provide it;</li> <li>- Agree a proposed return to study plan with timetable;</li> <li>- Explore alternative arrangements where student is unable to complete any assessments due to pregnancy or maternity e.g. for those who’s EDDs and the 2 weeks post-natal compulsory non-attendance period, conflict with submission or examination deadlines;</li> <li>- Guidelines and arrangements if a student is due to give birth near to or during assessment deadlines;</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> The Plan may also involve advice on deferring studies to a later date and the implications of this deferment.</p>	<p>PD LSO</p> <p>Student LSO</p>	<p>Maternity Support Plan Form</p>

The Plan will be updated if:-

- there is a change in circumstances that affects the students ability to attend or study;
- a student makes a decisions that affects her planned return to study;
- if additional support is required because of issues related to the birth;
- if the student goes beyond their EDD and wishes to continue to attend classes; Note: further medical evidence stating 'fitness to attend' may be required;
- any attendance difficulties occur;
- if the student becomes ill or develops a medical complication, during pregnancy or gives birth unexpectedly early and, as a result is unable to complete or submit assessment or participate in examination(s);

**Note:** Due respect for confidentiality should be observed at all times, and staff should be mindful that information on pregnancy and maternity is personal and sensitive, and should only be shared with others on a need to know basis, with the knowledge and consent of the student.

### Policy Control Sheet

Policy	<b>7.14: Student Maternity, Paternity Policy</b>
Version	2.0
Adopted/Effective	August 2020
Supersedes	1.0
Monitoring/ Next Review Date	Yearly August 2021
Responsible Officer(s) Designated Reviewer(s)	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs (DQAA); Programme Directors;
Scope	College wide

### References

SNMCI Policy area	<b>3) Programmes of Education and Learning: QA Vol2</b>
Developed with reference to	Qualifications and Quality Assurance <i>Education and Training Act 2012</i> Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) <i>Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis</i> European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2015) <i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)</i> , (2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.) AHEAD and Higher Education Authority (2013) <i>Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning</i>
Related SNMCI Policies /	<b>FQA7.14: Maternity Support Plan</b>

### Revision

Revision Number	Revision Description	Originator	Approved By
2.0/August 2020	General update based on application for Blended Status	Office of DQAA	AB