

Department of Psychology guidance for supervisors/PIs: Pregnancy and parental leave procedure for postgraduate students

The University's guidance for students on pregnancy and parental leave can be found on the [Childcare Office's website](#).

Below are some useful pointers to consider. It is possible that these steps might not occur in the order specified below but please act on them all nonetheless. You can use the check boxes to help keep track, if desired.

It is very important for the student to feel that their supervisor and department are engaged with the process and has relevant knowledge about how to proceed. Good communication throughout is key to its success.

Please note that the financial assistance that may be available to students often depends on their College.

First contact

(← check when complete)

If a student discloses a pregnancy to you as their supervisor/PI, check that they have informed their College and encourage them to do this if they have not already. If the College contacts you directly, they will have done so with the student's consent so please get in touch with the student if they aren't copied into the communication.

While it might be a surprise to you, this is a positive event for the student – take care to acknowledge it as such. If the student is happy for you to do so, inform the departmental Postgraduate Administrator (pgadmin@psychol.cam.ac.uk). The Postgraduate Administrator should inform departmental HR as a courtesy.

University Guidance

Direct the student to the guidance below, and read and familiarise yourself with it. Some guidance appears in both websites.

Childcare Office

The [Childcare Office's guidance](#) provides information on:

- a) You and your baby's health and welfare.
- b) Parental leave, intermitting and funding.
- c) Return to study following parental leave.
- d) Financial Support for families in the UK, including help from the University for childcare costs.

HR and Equality & Diversity guidance

The [HR and Equality & Diversity guidance](#) provides information on:

- a) Summary of responsibilities.
- b) Who to speak to.
- c) Managing your studies.
- d) Maternity leave.
- e) Returning to study.
- f) Students with babies and young children.
- g) Students who are fathers or partners (including same-sex).
- h) Adoptive parents.
- i) University contacts.
- j) Additional information.

Meeting with College

According to the [HR and Equality & Diversity guidance](#), the College should arrange a meeting with the student. You are encouraged to attend this meeting, as long as the student is happy for you to be there.

Departmental Risk Assessment

Liaise with the student to conduct a [risk assessment](#) (Raven login required) relating to their departmental work. This should be completed through a meeting (in-person or online) with the Postgraduate Administrator and/or Teaching Office Manager attending. Not all sections will be relevant to the student and you should work through the form, inputting N/A as required.

The risk assessment document will be saved in the Postgraduate Office's files. Should anything additional be raised, discuss and note it on the form. Keep in mind that agile working or working from home may be preferable during pregnancy.

Funding

Encourage the student to contact their funder regarding new-parent policies. The links below are for our most frequent funders. The student should ensure that they are looking at their funder's most up-to-date policy.

- The BBSRC, ESRC and MRC follow the [UKRI Parental Leave Policy](#) (within the standard terms and conditions of grant)
- [Cambridge Trust Maternity and Paternity Policy](#) (within the guidelines for scholars)
- [Gates Trust Maternity and Paternity Policy](#) (under discretionary funding)

Return to study



Consult point E of the [Childcare Office's parental leave guidance](#). In the run-up to their return, you are encouraged to meet with the student to discuss whether they require changes in the way that they study, additional support, or any other considerations.

Once they're returned, it is important to meet with the student in-person and establish keeping-in-touch days to get a sense of their priorities and timescales, and for discussion about their needs. This will help to reassure them that they are being kept in mind during their absence and that their requirements for using shared lab resources or large equipment can be planned and facilitated when they return. Take care not to make any assumptions about what the student wants or requires – it is best to discuss it with them.

The Department has a bookable room for feeding / pumping; Room 400a in the Main Psychology Building has a comfortable chair, mini-fridge and appropriate signage on the door. The room can be booked on [Booker](#) (Booker accounts can be set up by emailing roombookingsystem@uis.cam.ac.uk), or via reception@psychol.cam.ac.uk.