

MB ChB Programme – Parental Leave Guidance

If you are about to become a parent you are likely to be excited but also anxious about combining new parenthood with studying. So, whilst enjoying the congratulations of staff and fellow students, it is also important that you consider how you will manage to combine new parenthood with your studies. Speak to Student Pastoral Support (SPS) as early as possible to ensure that you have the correct advice from the start. The information given here is to help you begin to think about what your options are.

Maternity Leave

The University normally allows students to interrupt their studies for the purpose of maternity leave at any time from 28 weeks of the pregnancy usually for a maximum period of 12 months during their degree, subject to approval of the interruption from the Programme. In the case of the MB ChB Programme, it is the Progression Committee that will consider your application for interruption. Bear in mind that if you are on placements, you will also need to follow Trust policies relating to being in the clinical environment as a learner during and immediately after pregnancy. You must take the leave in one consecutive block and cannot commence your maternity leave any later than the day after your delivery. The Department of Health and Social Care have advised that 2 weeks is the statutory minimum amount of maternity leave that must be taken by NHS students, so you will be unable to return to clinical placements within 2 weeks of giving birth. It is recommended by the Royal College of Midwives that maternity leave should be for at least 12 weeks (for the wellbeing of the mother and baby).

It is important that you refer to the [interruption policy](#) and consider carefully the implications of the duration and timing of leave of absence in terms of the academic and [progression requirements of the Programme](#) when deciding what is best for you. You are strongly advised to discuss the options with [SPS](#) and make your application as soon as possible.

Paternity/ Parental Support Leave

Options to consider if your partner is going to have a baby/ adopt a child include:

Interruption of studies

You may wish to interrupt your studies for a period of time if you plan to take a role as primary carer, or if there are complications for the mother or baby. In these circumstances, please refer to the [Programme guidance on interruptions](#) and consider carefully the implications of any leave of absence (including its timing) in terms of the academic and [progression requirements of the Programme](#). Be aware that the University is not obliged to agree to every request for interruption but that efforts will be made to meet reasonable requests.

Paternity/ parental support leave

The University allows up to [two weeks' paternity / parental support leave](#) to be taken during a partner's pregnancy or within three months following birth. This must usually be taken in one-week blocks. You must request permission for this absence and are advised to talk to [SPS](#) as early as possible to make planning easier. Bear in mind the attendance requirements and [the progression rules](#) within the MB ChB Programme. These may affect *when* you chose to take your paternity leave. The progression rules mean that, depending on the time of year and your year of study, you may not be able to satisfactorily complete part of the Programme alongside your classmates if you take two weeks paternity leave. For example, two weeks away from a four-week block would mean that you would not have gained sufficient experience in that specialty by the end of the placement. In some instances, the progression rules may allow you to complete the block later during an elective period or SSCP, however you will need to consider the implications of choosing this option carefully as performance in other blocks will be taken into account in applying progression rules.

Adoption Leave

If you are adopting a child you may apply to interrupt your studies usually for a for a maximum 12-month period, subject to approval from the progression committee. The period of leave must be taken in one consecutive block. Refer to the [guidance on interruption](#) and consider carefully the implications of any leave of absence in terms of the academic and [progression requirements of the Programme](#) when deciding what is best for you. You are strongly advised to discuss the options with [SPS](#) and make your application as soon as possible.

Other considerations if you choose to interrupt your studies for new parenthood

Students on an NHS bursary

If you are on the NHS Bursary Scheme, you have to comply with the arrangements of the NHS Maternity/ Maternity Support Leave. You will need to refer to [the NHS guidance from NHS bursaries](#).

University Tuition Fees during interruption

The University of Manchester's policies on [tuition fees](#) and access to facilities during interruptions will apply.

Other finance issues

The university has put together [advice to help you think about the whole range of benefits](#) and sources of support you may find useful

Students on a Tier 4 student visa

If you are a non-EU student in the UK on a Tier 4 student visa, the University is legally required to report to the UK Visas and Immigration any interruption of studies of over 60 days. Contact the [Student Immigration Team](#) in the Student Services Centre to discuss the consequences of taking an interruption if this applies to you.

How else might we help you manage your studies alongside new parenthood?

Time off for antenatal appointments

Provided rules around attendance and engagement with the Programme continue to be met, you may be given time off to attend medical appointments relating to the pregnancy you should complete absence forms/absence form requests in the usual way for your stage of the Programme.

Review of clinical education campus/ individual placements for new parents

Students with significant caring commitments on entering medical school are considered under the [MB ChB Policy on Allocation to a Clinical Education Campus](#) when allocations to clinical education campus are made. Occasionally a change of circumstances (such as new caring commitments arising during the Programme) will mean that you wish to request a transfer. Consideration will be given to reallocation if your situation meets the mitigating circumstances criteria for allocations, however you must be aware that placement availability frequently limits the possibility of moving students between bases. Transfers cannot usually be made mid-year. You will need to submit your application to transfer at least 12 weeks prior to the start date of the new academic year. Otherwise, there is unlikely to be sufficient time to consider the case fully and to make arrangements for clinical placements.

If you have significant caring responsibilities, you may also request allocation of individual placements within sector close to your caring commitments, or alterations to the sequence of placements to avoid distant placements at critical times. Where feasible, the Programme will take these requests into account. However, again you must be aware that there are limits to the flexibility that can be offered due to limited availability of placements and the need for every student to experience a wide range of learning opportunities in the clinical environment. Where it is not possible to meet requests for changes to base or placement allocation we will inform you in writing of the reasons for this.

Mitigating circumstances - assessments

Mitigating circumstances in this context are unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances that could have, or did have, a significant adverse effect on your academic performance in an assessment. A student

who fails an assessment but has their mitigating circumstances accepted will be allowed to take that assessment at the next sitting without the mitigated fail counting as an attempt. Mitigating circumstances do not allow your assessment result to be otherwise altered.

Pregnancy does not always go to plan. If the birth, serious complications of pregnancy, or ill health of the baby, occur during an assessment period, then these may meet [the criteria for mitigation](#). It is your responsibility to [submit the mitigating circumstances form](#). It must be submitted as soon as the circumstances or events become known to you and before the assessment takes place. If the events or circumstances take place on the day of the assessment, then you must submit mitigation within one working day.

Support from other students who are parents

Students may also wish to make contact with other students who are parents for information and advice. The [Students Union](#) may be able to help them in this.

Staff advising students may also wish to refer to:

www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students/student-parents/ (requires a University staff log on)

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