



NEW AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS

This Health and Safety Policy Standard states the requirements placed on the University and its Colleges, Professional Services, Staff and Students with regards to health and safety considerations for expectant and new mothers and their child.

The Policy Standard applies to:

- All members of Staff.
- Students.

The Policy Standard does not consider:

- Visitors.
- Contractors.

Further Information: *Non-Health and Safety Information, including policies relating to time off work or studies, support and benefits, is available from Human Resources and/or Student Services, as applicable.*

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Bangor University, so far as is reasonably practicable, but in accordance with the relevant legislation, statutory requirements and good practice, to ensure the health and safety of staff, students and visitors to the University.

The University has therefore produced this Policy Standard and associated information, to meet its general duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that additional risks to a new or expectant mother encountered whilst undertaking University related activities are suitably controlled.

2. INTRODUCTION

In addition to those general duties in law, the University and its constituent Colleges and Professional Services, have a specific obligation under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to ensure that any additional risks to a new or expectant mother encountered whilst undertaking University related activities are suitably considered and controlled as far as is reasonably practicable.

3. TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy Standard New and Expectant Mothers are defined as:

- *Those who are pregnant; those who have given birth within the previous six months; and those who are breastfeeding.*

4. BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

The New and Expectant Mothers Policy Standard and its supporting documents are designed to provide information, instruction and guidance to Staff and Students and establish the necessary mechanisms to evaluate and control risk and maintain suitable records.

Whilst a woman is expecting a child it is important that the potential impacts which her work may have on the unborn child are assessed to make sure the potential dangers that exist in the workplace do not cause harm. It is also appreciated that whilst the child is developing, the needs of the woman will change and physical changes to the workplace may be necessary to accommodate these changes.

Upon a return to work of the mother following childbirth it is important to appreciate that the workplace can still affect the newborn child, particularly when breastfeeding. Arrangements should be reviewed upon or even prior to return and risks assessed to confirm controls are no longer required or remain suitable whilst breastfeeding.

5. DUTIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

In accordance with the University's Health and Safety Policy, day to day managerial responsibility for health and safety has been delegated to each College and Professional Service. It is the responsibility of these to implement this Policy Standard and associated guidance.

6. COLLEGE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Colleges and Professional Services are required upon receiving confirmation that a member of Staff or student is expecting a child or is a new mother to:

- a) Inform Student Services (for Students) or Health and Safety (Staff).
- b) Evaluate existing risk assessments pertaining to the woman's activities, consider the New and Expectant Mother's Risk Assessment and produce a revised assessment if risks are heightened through pregnancy or breastfeeding.

- c) Ensure that risks to the new or expectant mother's safety or health are reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable.
- d) Ensure that work activities and materials do not affect the unborn or newborn child.
- e) Where the risks cannot be adequately managed or reduced, remove the woman from a risk or alter the work activities to ensure the safety of the mother and the unborn or newborn child.
- f) Inform Health and Safety or Student Services, as applicable, of the action to be taken to control significant risk.
- g) Keep the risk assessment of the new or expectant mother under regular review and keep on record for a minimum of 5 years.
- h) Ensure provision of somewhere for pregnant and breastfeeding employees to rest.

It is noted that other Risk Assessments within the workplace must also consider risks that are particular to women of a child bearing age, including zoonotic diseases, teratogenic and mutagenic materials.

Deans of College and Heads of Professional Services should ensure that all their Staff members and Students comply with this Policy.

7. DUTIES OF HEALTH AND SAFETY / STUDENT SERVICES

Both Health and Safety and Student Services (as applicable), will assist Colleges, Professional Services, Staff and Students through the provision of information and support.

Health and Safety will produce template New and Expectant Mother's Risk Assessments for Staff who are expecting a child and make these available for consideration and adaption by Colleges and Professional Services.

Health and Safety will assist Colleges evaluate potential risks to Staff and Students when working within chemical, biological research and radiation laboratories and also with EMF (electromagnetic fields), whilst pregnant or breastfeeding.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

It is the responsibility of the appropriate Dean of College or Head of Professional Service to ensure mechanisms are in place, to review risk assessments and where appropriate produce a personal risk assessment for all expectant and new mothers within their College or Professional Service. It is also their responsibility to ensure necessary control measures are put in place and are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

The aim of the New and Expectant Mother's Risk Assessment is to help ensure that no harm comes to the mother or baby as a result of the University's undertakings or activities. This takes into account additional hazards associated with work or study and actions that need to be taken to eliminate or minimise these risks, as far as is reasonably practical.

To support this process a risk assessment and web resource for New and Expectant Mothers has been produced. The risk assessment should be reviewed and where necessary adapted to reflect local hazards and risk control measures.

9. STAFF AND STUDENTS

Staff and Students who are expecting a child or who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding, should notify their Line Manager or Personal Tutor as soon as possible and cooperate with any controls required by the risk assessment. Those new or expectant mothers, who do not wish to

inform their Line Manager or Personal Tutor immediately, can approach Health and Safety (staff) or Student Services (students) for advice.

Students should also approach Student Services as soon as possible to discuss their needs and the support available to them.

Members of Staff should contact Human Resources as soon as possible regarding their pregnancy so arrangements can be put in place to ensure suitable financial and contractual advice is provided.

Each member of Staff who has notified Human Resources will also be contacted by Health and Safety and given an opportunity to discuss any workplace issues that may affect the pregnancy. Post-graduate research Students who work with potentially hazardous materials may also be contacted.

Staff and Students who are breastfeeding and returning to work/study should also advise their Personal Tutor or Line Manager of this so that the risk assessment may be reviewed, if it identifies that they work with potentially harmful materials.

10. EQUALITY ASSURANCE

Every effort must be made through the risk assessment to support individuals so they are treated equally. However, in some instances, there may be a requirement to treat 'New and Expectant Mothers' differently in order to safeguard themselves and the unborn or newborn child from potential adverse impacts of the workplace. In such circumstances the person affected will be involved in the assessment and where required, advice of Health and Safety will be sought.

It is noted that health and safety risk assessments should be used as a mechanism to enable Staff and Students to undertake their tasks safely and not as a mechanism to prevent an activity simply because an element of risk exists. Every effort should be made to support Staff and Students to enable them to undertake their tasks in the same way as their peers.

The purpose of the assessment is to seek to assure the safety of both the mother and child and sometimes an alternation to workplace activities is required.

11. FURTHER INFORMATION AND PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Further information on the University's controls to ensure the safety of new and expectant mothers and child is available through the Health and Safety, Human Resources and Student Services websites as applicable.

12. REVIEW AND AUDIT PROCEDURES

Health and Safety will carry out general and periodic audits to assess compliance against this Policy Standard and legislation in general.

Colleges / Professional Services must periodically review their own procedures to ensure the requirements of this Policy Standard are implemented, suitable and effective.

In addition, the University's Health and Safety Committee may from time to time review the effectiveness of the University's system for new and expectant mothers.

End.