

Policy Title:	Support for Pregnant Students at MIE
Description:	The aim of this document is to outline guidelines for good practice in MIE’s support for and commitment to female students who experience pregnancy and/or their partners at any point during their time in MIE
Author (Position):	Vice President (Academic Affairs) and Registrar
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Support for Pregnant Students at MIE

1 Context

Marino Institute of Education ('The Institute', MIE) is committed to providing a community of care and compassion, where staff and students experience a sense of belonging, and feel safe, connected and supported. ([MIE Strategic Plan 2021-2026](#)).

2 Purpose

Pregnancy, whether planned or unplanned, can be an exciting time for expectant parents. The aim of this document is to outline guidelines for good practice in MIE's support for and commitment to female students who experience pregnancy and/or their partners at any point during their time in MIE.

3 Benefits

During their student life some students and/or their partners will experience pregnancy. This document is intended to outline supports available for students during pregnancy, when giving birth and during antenatal and postnatal care in order to encourage them to continue with their course of study.

4 Scope

This procedure applies to all courses with registered students in foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at MIE who experience pregnancy and/or students whose partners are pregnant at any point during their time at MIE.

5 Policy

- 5.1 If a student suspects they are pregnant, they should confirm their pregnancy with their GP, family planning clinic or the Institute's [Health Service](#), Fairview Medical Centre. A student is not obliged to disclose their pregnancy unless the course of study puts the student or their unborn baby at risk, in which case the student must disclose or opt to go off-books.
- 5.2 Students' concerns about how pregnancy may affect participation in the course are addressed here. It includes information about:

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- i. The support of the personal tutor¹;
- ii. Other supports the Institute will make available;
- iii. Absences due to pregnancy (including medical appointments, antenatal care, giving birth, and postnatal care);
- iv. Timing of school placement, work or field placement or internship;
- v. Taking exams²;
- vi. Deadlines for submission of assignments;
- vii. Financial implications in relation to tuition fees³;
- viii. External supports.

5.3 A student's personal tutor is typically the best person to approach in the first instance. The personal tutor will bring this policy and available supports to the student's attention and help them to identify a plan that will support their particular situation. The supports available include the Institute's [Health Service](#), operated by Fairview Medical Centre, and the [Counselling Service](#) operated by Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin.

5.4 Leave from your Course on Pregnancy Grounds

5.4.1 Different forms of leave will be appropriate for students depending on factors such as the parent's and baby's health, the timing of pregnancy, the programme being completed and other factors. The Institute will do its best to support students who are pregnant in meeting the demands of their course in a flexible way to accommodate each individual's needs.

5.4.2 Students who wish to go off-books for the remainder of the year because they are pregnant may do so by applying through their personal tutor¹ to the Registrar. The personal tutor forwards the request for leave plus supporting documentation to the [Registrar's Office](#). Upon review by the Registrar, the student is likely to be granted permission to go off-books; the student will be allowed to return at the next available opportunity.

¹ [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

² [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#)

³ [Student Hardship Support Policy](#)

- 5.4.3 Students who wish to take leave during the academic year can do so provided they satisfy the attendance requirements set out in the attendance policy, with pregnancy being considered to constitute mitigating circumstances. The personal tutor can advise in this regard.
- 5.4.4 Plans will vary because students and programmes vary. When a plan has been agreed between the student and their tutor, the Registrar should be informed of the proposal, either by the student or their tutor⁴.
- 5.4.5 A decision about the proposal is taken by the Registrar, in consultation with the Course Leader, as appropriate. At this time, the student is required to supply the [Registrar's Office](#) with a medical certificate confirming pregnancy and specifying the expected date of birth. Maternity leave must commence no later than two weeks before the expected date of birth and end not earlier than four weeks after the expected date of birth.
- 5.4.6 Where a course is semesterised, subject to successful completion of semester 1, students can resume the course in semester 2 of the academic year of their return. Students cannot progress to the next year of the course without successful completion of all components of the previous year.
- 5.5 School Placement – Deferral Request
- 5.5.1 Students who are pregnant may be able to defer one or more school placement sessions for the academic year in which the pregnancy falls. Students wishing to do so may apply for this with the support of their personal tutor⁴.
- 5.5.2 A request is made by the student in writing to the Dean of Education: Policy, Practice and Society, along with documentation to support the request. Upon review by the Dean, the student is likely to be granted permission to defer their placement, taking it at the next available opportunity.
- 5.5.3 Deferral requests for one school placement session can be made up during the month of June. If a deferral request is for more than one school placement session (e.g., Advanced School Placement), the student must take the school placements off-books the following academic year.

⁴ [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

5.6 Internship/Work placement – Deferral Request

- 5.6.1 Students who are pregnant may be able to defer some or all of their internship/work placement.
- 5.6.2 Students who wish to do so will typically have the support of their personal tutor in making such a request.
- 5.6.3 The request is made by the student in writing to the Course Leader along with documentation to support the request.
- 5.6.4 The Course Leader reviews the request and informs the student in writing whether the request has been granted.
- 5.6.5 Depending on the deferral request, students may have to take the internship/work placement over the summer months. These students will receive an overall grade of, ‘*ad misericordiam*’ (*ad mis*)⁵, ‘Incomplete’ (INC) or ‘Medical Cert’ (MC) on their annual examination transcripts.
- 5.6.6 Grades awarded for internship/work placement will be presented at the supplemental Court of Examiners⁶.

5.7 Course work – Request for extension

- 5.7.1 With advance notice and good reason, course work submission dates may be extended by the lecturer concerned at their discretion in consultation with the particular student and the Registrar, as appropriate.
- 5.7.2 Requests for an extension must be made in writing to the lecturer in advance of the submission date.
- 5.7.3 Such requests may be granted on grounds of pregnancy (pending submission of a medical certificate) or in respect of *ad misericordiam*⁵ situations (with the approval of the student’s personal tutor⁷).
- 5.7.4 In cases where an extension has been granted, the new due date and the signature of the lecturer, needs to be entered on the assignment cover sheet.
- 5.7.5 Should the student find it difficult to meet the new deadline, they may contact the lecturer to request a further extension prior to the new deadline; lecturers will try

⁵ [Guidelines on Evidence in Support of an Ad Misericordiam Appeal](#)

⁶ [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#)

⁷ [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

to accommodate such requests provided they can still meet deadlines for submitting marks for courts of examiners.

5.7.6 For the purposes of applying penalties, the revised submission date becomes the due date for submitting the assignment.

5.8 End of year written and oral examinations – Deferral Requests

5.8.1 Students may be granted permission, under *ad misericordiam*⁸ grounds, to take their annual/Christmas examinations as a first sitting at the supplemental examinations session.

5.8.2 Students wishing to do so must get the support of their personal tutor⁹. The request is made by the student in writing to the Registrar.

5.8.3 Documentation, such as a medical certificate, must accompany the request.

5.8.4 The Registrar reviews the request and informs the student in writing whether the request has been granted.

5.8.5 If the request is granted, students will receive an overall mark of “MC” or “ad mis” on their annual transcript.

5.9 Attending appointments relating to pregnancy

5.9.1 Flexibility, where practical, will be made for pregnant students and/or their partners to attend appointments they require for their health and well-being (e.g. counselling, ante-natal, medical) within the overall requirements of the [Attendance Monitoring Procedure](#). Students must fulfil all academic requirements in order to rise with their year. Students must upload documentation to MAESTRO in relation to these appointments (e.g., attendance certificate, appointment card).

5.10 Financial Implications

5.10.1 Every effort will be made by the Institute to avoid academic or financial penalties as a result of pregnancy.

5.10.2 If a student goes off-books for a semester or a year due to difficulties during pregnancy or as a result of childbirth during the course of the academic year, the Institute will endeavour to ensure that no financial penalties will be imposed. The

⁸ [Guidelines on Evidence in Support of an Ad Misericordiam Appeal](#)

⁹ [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

student should inform the [Registrar's Office](#) of the situation. The [Higher Education Authority](#) may cover fees in a repeat year where evidence of complications in pregnancy are provided – this must be pursued by the student themselves as the Institute cannot make representation on behalf of the student.

6 Process

- 6.1 Step 1: Student consults their GP or other appropriate services and considers disclosing their pregnancy to the Institute, particularly where elements of their course present risks to the health and safety of the student or their child.
- 6.2 Step 2: Student requests a meeting with their personal tutor to discuss the implications for their course of study.
- 6.3 Step 3: The Registrar, Course Leader and personal tutor, consider the implications of the pregnancy for the course of study – and ensure that any appropriate risk assessment(s) are completed for any hazardous elements of the programme of study, including school or work placement.
- 6.4 Step 4: Students explore potential implications of agreed flexibility with their tutor and other relevant members of staff (especially the Dean of Education: Policy, Practice and Society).
- 6.5 Step 5: The student or the student's tutor informs the Registrar of the proposed plan. The content of the proposal is passed on to the relevant personnel by the [Registrar's Office](#).
- 6.6 Step 6: Student, personal tutor & Registrar monitor agreement and risk assessments during pregnancy and agree further adjustment if the need arises.
- 6.7 **Helpful Websites:**
 - 6.7.1 www.dublinfamilydoctor.com/
 - 6.7.2 [www.tcd.ie/Student Counselling/](http://www.tcd.ie/Student_Counselling/)
 - 6.7.3 www.positiveoptions.ie
 - 6.7.4 www.crisispregnancy.ie
 - 6.7.5 www.cura.ie
 - 6.7.6 www.ifpa.ie

6.7.7 www.pact.ie

7 Responsibility

This responsibility for this procedure lies with the Registrar & Vice President for Academic Affairs.

8 Related Documents

- 8.1 [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#)
- 8.2 [Attendance Monitoring Procedure](#)
- 8.3 [Dignity and Respect Policy](#)
- 8.4 [Student Hardship Support Policy](#)
- 8.5 [Tutor System Policy](#)
- 8.6 [Tutor System Procedure](#)
- 8.7 [Guidelines on Evidence in Support of an Ad Misericordiam Appeal](#)