



Guidance document for Students/Applicants with children

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Introduction and Purpose

1. This document signposts to resources and support available to applicants and current students who are parents or have caring responsibilities for a child. Whilst this guide was initially created for postgraduate international students planning to bring their dependants and children to the UK whilst they study at The University of Manchester, we recognise that there will be Home (UK) students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, who may be relocating from other parts of the UK and might find the guidance helpful.

1.2 The document provides a brief outline of relevant considerations and should be read alongside the accompanying detailed guidance which is available via the linked web pages and documents.

1.3 This is a peer-to-peer resource which was initially designed by a former postgraduate research (PGR) student and an international student officer to support applicants with dependants to enable them to complete their studies whilst also being a parent. However as per point 1 above, we have recognised that there will be applicants at all levels of study who may find this guide will be useful. We have marked sections that will be relevant to both Home and/or International Students as appropriate.

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1.0 Educational Advisors – (Help with your application)

The University of Manchester have contracted Educational Advisors in multiple countries. These agents can assist prospective students with their application to study, as well as a visa application.

Please follow the contacts section link below to check if there are Educational Advisors in your home country:

- <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/international/country-specific-information/>

If your country is not listed, you can email international@manchester.ac.uk for assistance.

2.0 Visas

Subject to meeting the required criteria, international postgraduate students can study here in Manchester accompanied by their dependants, including spouses, partners, and children.

Please click the below link for more information:

- <https://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/immigration-and-visas/visas-and-applications/student-visa/dependants/>
- <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Dependants>

For further enquires, kindly contact the Student Immigration Team by emailing visa@manchester.ac.uk for specialised immigration advice regarding student visas.

3.0 Housing

The University offers accommodation suitable for couples at [Horniman House](#). Spaces are limited and you should contact accommodation@manchester.ac.uk for more information. Please note that Horniman House is not suitable for couples with children.

Further information about accommodation for students with families can be found at the following link:

- <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/international/accommodation/students-with-families/>

Manchester Student Homes is a University-run service that offers assistance with finding private accommodation that is suitable for families and children. They also offer advice if you choose to rent privately through another agency or private landlord. This team is based in Manchester Students Union, located here: <https://goo.gl/maps/rmrNyNVVZL4apY2Y8>

Please follow the link below for more information:

- <https://www.manchesterstudenthomes.com/Accommodation>

4.0 Nurseries/Childcare/Schools (Home and International Students)

If you require childcare for infants or young children while you study, there are two registered nurseries directly connected to the University. These are [Echoes](#) and [Dryden Street](#). Please contact them to enquire about spaces. Nurseries can be popular, so we recommend adding your name to the waiting list if no space is available immediately.

Other childcare providers are available, and Manchester City Council keeps an up-to-date record of registered childcare providers. Childcare is generally available Monday to Friday between 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM but check with your provider as hours can vary. Some providers allow you to book half days if needed. You will need to contact nurseries and childminders directly to find out about spaces and costs. The daily charges usually cover meals, nappies and general costs while your child is in attendance. There may occasionally be additional costs for activities such as extracurricular trips, but the provider will give advance notice of this.

Please see this link to search for providers:

- <https://www.manchester.gov.uk/childcare>

You can view a filtered list of nurseries based in the M13 postcode (near the University) here:

- https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/results.page?term=&sorttype=relevance&directorychannel=1-2-7&location_postcode_outcode=M13&directorychannel=1-2-7

5.0 Paying for childcare (Home and International Students)

This link has information on possible partial funding from the University to assist with paying for childcare, but it is only valid for the Echoes or Dryden Street Nurseries.

Please see the link below for more information:

<https://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/finances/funding-opportunities/all/extra-support-for-those-with-dependents/>

5.1 Free childcare for 2-year-olds

If you are a non-UK citizen who cannot claim benefits and your immigration status states that you have 'no recourse to public funds', you may still be entitled to free childcare for your 2-year-old. However, you must live in England and your household income must be no more than:

- £26,500 for families outside of London with one child
- £34,500 for families within London with one child
- £30,600 for families outside of London with two or more children
- £38,600 for families within London with two or more children.

In addition, you cannot have more than £16,000 in savings or investments.

If unsure about eligibility, contact your childcare provider or [check with your local council](#). Please see this link for more information:

- [Help paying for childcare: Free education and childcare for 2-year-olds - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

5.2 15 hours free childcare (Home and International Students)

If you have a child/children aged three or four, they will be eligible for the UK government's 15-hour free childcare offer, regardless of immigration status.

Note: The childcare must be provided through an approved, registered provider (e.g., one found on the Manchester City Council website).

Please see this link for more information:

- <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>

Once you have a nursery or childminder offer confirmed, the staff should be able to advise you on how to apply for the 15 hours and how it will work with their systems, If not, please make enquires.

5.3 Help with Childcare Costs (Undergraduate Home Students)

If you are in a full-time higher education, and eligible for student finance, you can receive up to 85% of your childcare costs for children under 15 (under 17 if they have special needs). This grant is means-tested and does not have to be repaid.

Please be aware that this grant is only payable if the childcare provider is registered with Ofsted – [find a registered childminder](#). If you are starting or continuing a course from August 2019, you may apply for the grant as part of your student finance application.

Click here for more information:

- [Read more about the Childcare Grant](#)
- [Students with parenting responsibilities | Undergraduate | UCAS](#)

6.0 Schools (Home and International Students)

Children over a certain age will need to attend school while you are in the UK. Younger children will need to attend Primary School, and older children will need to attend Secondary/High School.

You can view information about applying for school places here:

- <https://www.manchester.gov.uk/education>
- <https://www.manchester.gov.uk/admissions>

An address is needed in order to apply for a place, so once your accommodation address is confirmed, you can use the postcode to apply for local school places on the Manchester City Council website. There are a number of primary and secondary schools close to the University, but no matter where you live there will be range of schools in that area.

It is important to carry out research before committing to a rental property. We recommend that you check the postcode against the school list on the Council website to get an idea of how many schools are in that area, and then use Google Maps to check walking or public transport times between the postcode of the school and the rental property postcode.

While applying for a school place, ensure to include important information such as transport needs (e.g. needing to be able to walk to school, or to be based close to your rental home or the University depending on what would work best for your schedule). However, providing this information does not guarantee a place in the first choice of school, but it will help the council in placing your children.

7.0 Support for Pregnant students (Home and International Students)

Students are unique in both their experience of university and life generally. However, becoming pregnant while studying can be overwhelming and might lead to consideration of interrupting your studies. The University has a [policy relating to pregnancy](#), and other [resources online](#) that might be helpful.

The first step is to register with a GP. If you are not already registered, you can find the nearest surgery on the [NHS website](#). Also, there are additional resources for students with caring responsibilities on the [Student Support Website](#).

The Equality Challenge Unit has produced a document, '[Student pregnancy and maternity: implications for higher education institutions](#)' which you may find useful. For further information, contact the Equality and Diversity Office at:

- Email: equalityanddiversity@manchester.ac.uk

7.1.1 Benefits if you are Pregnant (Home and International Students)

If you are an international student and your visa states that you have 'no recourse to public funds', then you are still able to claim free prescriptions and NHS dental treatment as this is not counted as 'public funds'.

- Free prescriptions
- Free NHS dental treatment

To claim the above entitlements, speak to your midwife, GP or health visitor. They can complete the maternity exemption certificate application for you and send it off to the relevant health authorities. You'll be sent a maternity exemption certificate (MATEX) that lasts for 12 months after your due date. You must have a valid exemption certificate to claim free prescriptions and dental care.

All prescriptions and NHS dental treatment are free while you're pregnant and for 12 months after your baby's due date. Children also get free prescriptions until they're 16.

For more information, please visit: [Maternity and paternity benefits and leave - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

7.2 Statutory Maternity Leave (Home and International Students)

Students may be entitled to take up to 52 weeks Statutory Maternity Leave. The leave will be unpaid unless they are entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay. You do not have to take 52 weeks, but you must take 2 weeks leave after your baby is born.

If you are an international student, **it is unlikely that you will be entitled to maternity benefits.**

For more information, please visit:

- [Maternity pay and leave: Leave - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave)
- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/maternity-and-parental-rights/check-your-maternity-and-parental-rights/maternity-leave-and-pay/maternity-pay-what-youre-entitled-to/>

It is vital to speak to your School or Department about your pregnancy and to discuss the options available.

8.0 Flexible working support for PGR Students (Home and International Students)

The university recognises that completing a research programme is different to any kind of study and of course brings its unique challenges as well as opportunities. Though every case will differ, there are workable options for the PGRs to consider during their degree programme:

- a) PGRs can request formally for their programme to move to part-time study (currently offered at 50%, 60% and 80% - funder terms and conditions permitting).
- b) Within each study mode (50%, 60%, 80% or 100%), PGRs should discuss and agree with their supervisors the working patterns and arrangements that best suit their personal circumstances and the nature of their research¹.
- c) Supervisors should be sympathetic to the individual circumstances of each PGR and, considering the ability of the PGR to complete within their funded period, and deliver on any specific research activities, be open to flexible arrangements such as working compressed hours, from home and flexitime. **These must be in line with the funder's policies, and it is the responsibility of the PGR to understand the terms of the funding.** The funder's constraints should be understood before applying to change the PGRs mode of attendance.
- d) Any agreed working patterns may need to be reviewed if a PGR's circumstances change and the **PGR would be expected to start these conversations with their supervisors.**
- e) eProg milestones (especially the annual/continuation review) are in place to safeguard PGRs and ensure they are coping with the workload and progressing well. They also provide an opportunity for PGRs to raise any serious issues they are experiencing with their research and workload (such as childcare) and are a chance to discuss/review whether a change to mode of attendance, or an adjustment to working arrangements, would be appropriate. [eProg is the University's interactive online tool for PGR's support and key progression monitoring system.](#)
- f) PGRs are entitled to 8 weeks annual leave that could be used at these times.
- g) PGRs should note that the children's school holidays would not be sufficient mitigating circumstances for an extension or interruption.

¹ Note that in exceptional circumstances this request can be dealt with by the PGR office without supervisor sign-off.

- h) If a PGR is unable to work for any length of time (greater than 1 month) then they should consider, alongside their supervisors, whether an interruption/extension is required.
- i) Any PGR who finds they are unable to research due to a sudden but brief (less than 1 month) change to their personal circumstances (be it child-care, a sick dependant, a flooded apartment, the death of a close relative, etc.) should let their supervisors and local PGR support team know as soon as possible so that potential short-term extensions to any immediate deadlines (eProg or otherwise) can be considered locally.
- j) PGRs may find the [Student Support Form](#) a useful guide to discussion when making arrangements and adjustments during a student's pregnancy and/or maternity.
- k) PGRs are a key component of the University of Manchester's strategic vision and the code of practice with central reference document for policies, procedures and good practice for both full-time and part-time modes of study can be found here:
<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/rbe/rdrd/code/>
- l) The policy which deals with mitigating circumstances affecting Postgraduate Research students and governing "Change of Circumstances for PGRs" is the Policy on the Circumstances Leading to Changes to Postgraduate Research Study. See [Change of Circumstances for PGRs](#) to access details which apply to all doctoral and masters level postgraduate research degrees at The University of Manchester.

9.0 Social Groups/Networking/Events (Home and International Students)

9.1 PGR Parents Group

Completing a PhD is a huge task and raising children at the same time can be draining. The University of Manchester is home to a large number of PGRs who balance their time between young family and research, but such dedication to two such important causes can feel isolating. Without knowing someone in a similar position, the struggle can be lonely. Therefore, the PGR Parents, Carers and Guardian Support Network was established, an inclusive group welcoming all in a variety of circumstances. The network is a safe space for members to share experiences, support one another through navigating the University's policies and systems, and to feel empowered while sharing experiences with other PGR parents as a source of support.

This group provides an opportunity for researchers to meet and hosts a calendar of family friendly events across the year. A key element of this initiative is the inclusion of children at the events, providing a space for researchers to engage their children in their place of work. The network is constantly growing as we continually invite the parents at the University and/or PGRs with caring responsibilities to [Subscribe to our group](#).

9.2 International Society

The International Society (which operates out of our Student Union) runs a Parent and Toddler group, which you can access by becoming a member. The society organises other group activities, including day trips to other cities which are also child friendly - Please see links below for more information.

For more information, please email info@internationalsociety.org.uk. More details of the International Society and the group can be found here:

- <https://internationalsociety.org.uk/activities/>
- <https://internationalsociety.org.uk/trips/>

9.3 Other Activities

The Whitworth is part of The University of Manchester and has an excellent playground next to the Gallery building, as well as a beautiful Art Garden situated at the back of the gallery where you can sit and enjoy the space. Kids events are sometimes held in this garden. Your children should be supervised at all times whilst on the playground or garden.

Art galleries are free to visit, and often have events for families and children.

- <https://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/>

Other events and activities for families and children can be found on the Manchester City Council website (for events in the city, half term holidays, libraries etc). Please click the link below for more information.

- <https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/directory.page?directorychannel=6>

9.3.1 Manchester Art Gallery

This gallery is in the City Centre, close to Metrolink trams and buses that run from Piccadilly Gardens. For more information, contact the Gallery using the link below:

- <https://manchesterartgallery.org/exhibitions-and-events/>

9.3.2 HOME

HOME is a cinema and creative event space in the city centre. They host a range of family-friendly creative activities and events.

Please see this link for the latest events:

- <https://homemcr.org/families/>

9.3.3 Sure Start Centres

Search by postcode, age group etc for events and activities for children and families. Many activities are free, or low cost:

- <https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/results.page?directorychannel=1-2-4>

9.3.4 Manchester Museum

Getting to know the objects and asking questions can help children to make sense of the world around them and spark big ideas. Being close to culture can also offer an escape from the pressures of modern life and provide a space to reflect and bond.

The museum is full of incredible stories and our free activities made for families will help you take a deep dive into some of the most fascinating objects on display. In Museum, there are free friendly family activities to play and reconnect.

- Family events can be found here; <https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/visit-us/families/>

9.3.5 The Lowry

The Lowry is a registered charity committed to using visual and performing arts to enrich people's lives. They present audiences with a diverse programme of theatre, opera, musicals, dance, music, comedy and visual art as well as events and activities targeting the local communities and young people including babies. Please click below to find out more.

- [Babies Playtime | Workshops | The Lowry](#)

10.0 Advice and Support

10.1 Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS)

The University have a dedicated team that offers an accessible and inclusive support service to a variety of different groups. DASS provides equity of services to everyone, regardless of people's age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation. They provide practical support by working with you to identify the practical adjustments you need to enable you to succeed - in your studies (including exam support), work, and the rest of your university experience.

For further information about additional support arrangements for students with a disability, contact the Disability Advisory Support Service:

- Tel: 0161 275 7512
- Email: dass@manchester.ac.uk
- Web: www.dass.manchester.ac.uk

10.2 Manchester Students' Union

The Manchester Students Union offers an advice service to help signpost students to services that can help. To request an appointment, call or email:

Tel: (0161) 275-2952
E-mail: advice.su@manchester.ac.uk

You can view details of their service here:

- <https://manchesterstudentsunion.com/contact-advisor>

10.3 UoM Student Support

Lots of information and advice can be found on the University's Student Support website:

- <https://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/>

Student Support can be contacted via email and live chat via this link:

- <https://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/taking-care/>

11.0 Counselling and Mental Health Service

The University offers confidential individual appointments with practitioners, as well as other resources such as workshops and classes, health guides and online interactive self-help tools etc to help you. Workshops are designed to be accessible to all university members.

The support takes into account your distinct experience and recognises that you may be an international student with particular pressures that come from working away from your home and family.

- For more information and to book an appointment click here: [Get Help](#)
- For advice: Call 0161 275 2864 between 9.00am - 4.30pm (Monday – Friday).