Policy and Procedure on risk assessment in pregnancy

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1. POLICY

It is the policy of Loughborough University to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees, including particular measures to protect the health and safety of those who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

The University will fulfil its obligations by carrying out risk assessment for such staff and by putting appropriate measures in place to protect their health and that of their unborn child(ren).

The legislation pertaining to this is The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) which put a specific responsibility on employers to assess and control the risks on new and expectant mothers. The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) also applies, as discrimination on grounds of pregnancy (including a failure to conduct risk assessment under health and safety regulations) will be considered as unlawful sex discrimination.

This policy also covers students (undergraduate or postgraduate) who become pregnant during their studies. Although there is no specific statutory requirement to risk assess in these cases there is a duty of care not to expose them to undue risk. Risk assessments will allow identification of any areas of concern.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the university guidelines on maternity pay and leave, for staff, which can be found at [http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/personnel/Maternity/Maternity.htm](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/personnel/Maternity/Maternity.htm)

2. PROCEDURES / GUIDANCE

2.1 Staff

An initial risk assessment will be carried out by Human Resources, at the same time as discussion concerning maternity leave, maternity pay etc. Employees are encouraged to advise Human Resources of their pregnancy at an early stage, particularly if there may be health and safety concerns due to the nature of their work. To facilitate the process of risk assessment, employees are encouraged to look at the risk assessment document in advance (see appendix 1) and to identify the hazards which may apply to them.

Risk assessments will be reviewed by the Health, Safety and Environment section (H&S) (usually by the Occupational Health Adviser, but alternatively by either the Health and Safety and Environment Manager, or the Deputy Health and Safety and Environment Officer). Where there are particular risks identified (e.g. regarding exposure to toxic substances, substantial manual handling or work with radiation) a more detailed risk assessment will be carried out by H&S, including discussion with the individual, visit to the workplace etc, as appropriate.

As part of the risk assessment, Human Resources and/or H&S will identify any necessary control measures. These will be reported back to the line manager, who will have responsibility for ensuring that they are implemented and that the situation is kept under review as the pregnancy progresses.

The risk assessment will need to be reviewed if the employee returns to work within 6 months of the birth of her baby, or if she is still breast feeding when she returns to work.

Control measures may involve making temporary changes to an individual's job or working conditions. Appendix 2 gives examples of the possible hazards and of changes that may be introduced to mitigate the risk. In some cases, this may involve changes to an individual's role. In extreme cases, where suitable safe work can not be found, the law requires that the employee be suspended on full pay; it is extremely unlikely that this situation will arise within the university due to the wide span of alternative work available.

Appendix 3 shows a flow chart indicating the responsibilities of individuals at various stages of the risk assessment process.

Wendy Jones – February 2009

This document forms part of Loughborough University Health and Safety Policy.
2.2 Students

It is the responsibility of students to alert the university to the fact of their pregnancy as soon as possible, particularly if there may be particular hazards associated with their course. This is most likely to be an issue for students in areas such as Art and Design, Chemistry and Materials where there may be particular chemical or physical hazards.

Undergraduate students should alert their personal tutor, postgraduates should raise the issue with their supervisor. The tutor or supervisor should then carry out risk assessment, in discussion with the individual and with the H&S office, if particular concerns arise.

The tutor or supervisor may also, at this stage, need to contact academic registry to discuss issues relating to sitting exams, potential impact on performance etc.

The risk assessment document can be found at Appendix 1.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The employee should:-

- notify Human Resources and their line manager of their pregnancy at the earliest opportunity. If they do not wish to involve the line manager initially they can arrange a confidential discussion with Human Resources, or alternatively, can contact Occupational Health confidentially, to discuss concerns; and

- comply with any measures identified through risk assessment which are necessary to reduce the risks to their health and that of their unborn child (ren); and

- advise their manager or Human Resources if the risk assessment needs to be reviewed during pregnancy due to changes in their health or to their role; and

- notify Human Resources and/or their line manager, in writing, if they return to work within 6 months of the birth of the baby, or if they are still breast feeding when they return to work.

The Human Resources Officer should:-

- carry out risk assessment in discussion with the individual; and

- recommend control measures as appropriate to reduce risk; and

- record these on the appropriate form, and copy this to H&S, the individual and the individual’s line manager; and

- refer to H&S regarding any areas of concern.

The Occupational Health Adviser (or H&S manager or Deputy H&S Officer) should:-

- review all risk assessments carried out by Human Resources; and

- review risk assessments carried out by academic staff if requested (in respect of students); and

- carry out more detailed risk assessment (for staff and students) where appropriate; and

- keep appropriate records of the above; and
provide general guidance on safe working during and after pregnancy; and
provide any necessary training for other staff (e.g. Human Resources Advisers/Officers) regarding pregnancy risk assessment.

The **Line Manager** should:-

- implement any recommended control measures; and
- Monitor the situation throughout pregnancy; and
- refer back to Human Resources or H&S if the risk assessment needs to be reviewed.

**Students** should:-

- inform their personal tutor or research supervisor of pregnancy as soon as possible; and
- comply with any measures recommended to control risk.

The **Personal tutor or research supervisor** should:-

- carry out risk assessment if informed by a student that she is pregnant; and
- record this on the appropriate form; and
- seek further advice from H&S as required; and
- ensure recommended control measures are implemented.
Appendix 1

Health risk assessment in pregnancy

Risk assessment Proforma
Health risk assessment in pregnancy*

Name:  ..................................................  Job title:  ..................................................

Contact tel:  ..................................................  E mail:  ..................................................

Department:  ..................................................  Manager/Supervisor:  ..................................................

EDC (date baby is due):  ..................................................  Is manager aware of pregnancy?  ..................................................

Employee Signature:  ..................................................  Date:  .....................
(signing to confirm accuracy of information given)

Human Resources Officer Signature:  ..................................................  Date:  .....................
(Supervisor for students)
(signing to confirm completion of risk assessment)

Health and Safety Adviser /OH adviser Signature:  ..................................................  Date:  .....................
(signing to confirm risk assessment is satisfactory)

H&S office to e mail manager for confirmation that manager accepts responsibility for implementation of any control measures and for ongoing review.

Date confirmation received  .....................

* this risk assessment form should also be used to assess risks for those who have given birth in the last 6 months, or for nursing mothers
Does your job involve any of the following? Mark all that apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X = No</th>
<th>✔ = Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with chemicals (or lead e.g. plumbers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with micro-organisms or infectious materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibrating equipment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to radiation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud noise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in confined areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on slippery or wet surfaces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to strong or unpleasant smells</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged sitting or standing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated bending or stretching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifting and carrying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working alone for long periods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift work or night work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in hot conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of protective clothing or uniform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work without good access to toilet and rest facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive travelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please give details (to be completed by individual, or by Human Resources in discussion with individual)

Control measures required (to be completed by Human Resources Officer - refer to H&S if unsure)

Are there any other aspects of your job which you feel may cause risk for your or your baby? ………………………………………………………………………………….

Do you have any other particular concerns about your pregnancy which you would like us to be aware of? ………………………………………………………………………………….

Remember to let us know if the risk assessment needs to be reviewed e.g. if there are changes to your health or your job during your pregnancy! You should also let us know if you return to work within 6 months of the birth of your baby, or if you return to work whilst breastfeeding
Appendix 2

Health risk assessment in pregnancy

Guidance notes
Does your job involve any of the following? | Nature of risk in pregnancy | Control measures to consider |
---|---|---|
Work with Chemicals or lead | Some chemicals are specifically toxic to the developing foetus. Pregnant women are forbidden by law from work involving lead (e.g. some piping or lead flashings) | For low risk chemicals such as disinfectants regularly used by cleaners, the risk is relatively low and usual control measures such as wearing gloves will be adequate. If more toxic substances are involved (e.g. in the chemistry department), consider referral to H&S. |
Work with micro-organisms or infectious materials | Some diseases such as chicken pox or German measles pose particular risks for pregnant women, these are not likely to be a risk except for those working in a healthcare environment Specific control measures may be needed for those working with known microbiological hazards, GMO’s etc | For those working in a healthcare environment consider referral to H&S. For those deliberately working with biological hazards, refer to H&S. |
Vibrating equipment | Whole body vibration increases the risk of back pain High levels of whole body vibration and being bumped about can be potentially hazardous for the baby Use of tools which cause hand arm vibration increases the risk of carpal tunnel, the risk of carpal tunnel is also increased by pregnancy | Refer to H&S if this is an issue. |
Exposure to radiation | | Refer to H&S. |
Loud noise | Prolonged loud noise can increase the blood pressure and reduce growth of the baby | Refer to H&S if exposed to noise which makes conversation difficult at a distance of 2m. |
Work in confined areas | Work in small areas may increase the risk of musculoskeletal problems, particularly in later pregnancy when the body shape changes | Consider changing duties to avoid this, especially in late pregnancy. E.g. cleaners may struggle to clean toilets and shower cubicles as the bump gets large. |
Work on slippery or wet surfaces | The likelihood of falling may be higher especially in later pregnancy when the body shape changes. Falling carries a risk to mother and baby | Implement usual good practices to minimise slipping risks (e.g. clear signage, regular cleaning of wet areas). Consider referral to H&S if the risk is very high. |
Exposure to strong or unpleasant smells | This may increase nausea, especially in early pregnancy | Consider relocation from the area in early pregnancy if this is a particular issue. Consider breaks to be taken away from the area. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Risk Factors</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged sitting or standing</td>
<td>Prolonged sitting increases the risk of back pain.  Prolonged standing increases the risk of back pain, tiredness and varicose veins</td>
<td>Consider additional breaks, regular short walks, provision of a stool or chair if appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated bending or stretching</td>
<td>This may increase the risk of back pain, especially in later pregnancy and also of fatigue</td>
<td>Consider additional breaks. Refer to H&amp;S if a particular problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifting and carrying</td>
<td>The risk of back pain is increased in pregnancy due to softening of the ligaments.  This is an issue right from the beginning of pregnancy.  In later pregnancy, the risks are increased due to the changed posture.</td>
<td>Consider additional breaks. Review tasks, reduce lifting and carrying as far as possible. Refer to H&amp;S if a particular issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working alone for long periods</td>
<td>Possible increase in risk of ill-health requiring assistance</td>
<td>Review usual lone working policies, consider additional means for raising assistance if needed etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift work or night work</td>
<td>Fatigue may be an issue</td>
<td>Review working hours if this causes a significant problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtime</td>
<td>Fatigue may be an issue, growth of the baby may be reduced if working long hours or very tired</td>
<td>Review working hours if indicated, consider whether work demands are excessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work in hot conditions</td>
<td>Fatigue may be an issue, also risk of increased blood pressure.  This may be an issue even in ordinary offices in particularly hot weather</td>
<td>Consider extra breaks in a cooler area if appropriate, ensure drinking water is available. Consider alternate duties if severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of protective clothing or uniform</td>
<td>Clothing may be hot or cumbersome and increase fatigue.  Clothing may fit badly as shape changes in later pregnancy</td>
<td>Consider whether clothing is comfortable and appropriate, provide alternate style if necessary. Consider redeployment if suitable clothing can not be provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work without good access to toilet and rest facilities</td>
<td>More frequent toilet breaks may be required during pregnancy.  Fatigue may be an issue in pregnancy</td>
<td>Consider redeployment if adequate toilet facilities are not available; consider whether a rest area is required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive travelling</td>
<td>Fatigue may be an issue; nausea may be an issue in early pregnancy; carrying luggage maybe an issue on long trips (e.g. overseas); driving may be difficult in very late pregnancy due to the size of the bump</td>
<td>Consider whether travel is appropriate, ensure rest time is built into schedules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individual to inform Human Resources and line manager of pregnancy as early as possible (or to advise Human Resources or Occupational Health in confidence initially if preferred)

HR may send a copy of the Pregnancy Risk Assessment form (Appendix 1) to the individual so that they can complete the first column (identification of potential hazards)

Individual and Human Resources officer to meet and carry out risk assessment:
- Review of form, discussion of possible risks
- Identification of control measures
- Completed form to be sent to H&S and line manager; individual and Human Resources to retain a copy

H&S or OH to review risk assessment
- Contact with individual by phone/face to face if appropriate
- Identification of any additional control measures required

H&S/OH to advise line manager, Human Resources and individual if additional control measures are identified
H&S/OH to e mail line manager and seek confirmation that the line manager will implement any recommended control measures

Manager:
- To ensure control measures are implemented;
- To ensure ongoing review and refer back to Human Resources/H&S if any concerns arise
- To ensure further review is carried out if the individual returns to work within 6 months of the baby’s birth, or whilst breastfeeding