



University of  
**Strathclyde**  
**Glasgow**

# Fertility Policy

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## 1. Introduction

We want to support staff who are experiencing fertility challenges and/ or are undergoing investigations and treatment. We understand it can be a really difficult time, not only emotionally, but also physically and often financially. We also recognise it can be a very difficult subject to talk openly about, so we want you to know that wherever you are in your fertility journey, we will do what we can to ensure you feel supported.

In this policy you'll find information on how we'll support you if you, or your partner, co-parent or surrogate is experiencing fertility challenges. You'll also find what time off is available for receiving and recovering from the effects of treatment and to attend or accompany your partner, co-parent or surrogate to fertility-related appointments and investigations.

Managers and colleagues supporting team members can also refer to our [Fertility Guidance](#) (staff login required) for practical advice about what you can do to assist colleagues, including those who are partners, who are experiencing fertility challenges and/or are undergoing investigations and treatment.

Please note, if this policy refers to additional guidance, FAQs, online forms, or training, these are accessible to University colleagues on our [People Hub](#) (staff login required).

## 2. Who is Covered by This Policy?

This policy applies to all University employees experiencing fertility challenges and/ or are undergoing investigations and treatment. This includes partners and co-parents of those receiving treatment and investigations, as well as staff who are conceiving through a surrogate or who are surrogates themselves.

And just so you know, we recognise that fertility treatment isn't just about IVF (in-vitro fertilisation). There are other types of treatment, and our policy also covers these.

### 3. How We Will Support You

We understand that everyone's situation is different and know that your fertility journey is personal to you. For example, we recognise that treatment will vary depending on several factors including the nature of the fertility issue(s) faced, availability and funding options of treatment in different areas of the country/ overseas, and choices of the individual or couple undergoing treatment.

While there is, of course, no need to tell anyone at work if you don't want to, do know that support is always available to you if you need it. We won't assume to know what you're going through or what support you might need, but we do hope that you'll feel able to discuss whatever you need with your manager. Please be assured that they'll handle things sensitively, confidentially and signpost you to further support and advice as needed. They are also the best person to discuss, suggest and agree any support or adjustments you might need at work.

If you'd prefer not to discuss things with your manager, you can instead speak to someone from [Human Resources](#) or [Occupational Health](#). But please keep in mind that if you need reasonable adjustments and/or time off work, your manager will need to be informed of this and the reasons for it.

We understand that your fertility journey is likely to be both physically and emotionally challenging. Any treatment, investigations or counselling may leave you feeling fatigued, drained, or upset, sometimes unexpectedly. For example, you may not feel able to return to work straight after an appointment. We also know that sometimes medication needs to be self-administered during the working day. You should talk to your manager about what support you need and if you need time away from work, or more flexible working arrangements. More information can be found below.

If you're struggling emotionally because of fertility challenges or coping with infertility, you can always contact our Employee Assistance Programme. This is a free and completely confidential service, and no information is shared with the University. They can put you in contact with a trained counsellor if this is appropriate for you. Details of our EAP and a range of other wellbeing resources can be found on our [Wellbeing Hub](#).

## 4. Time Off and Pay

### Leave for You

If you're undergoing **investigative tests** and need time off for appointments associated with these, this will be supported in line with our [Time Off for Medical and Dental Appointments Policy](#).

If you're undergoing **fertility treatment**, we'll give you up to 5 days paid leave in a 12-month period. This leave can be used to receive and recover from treatment, and to attend appointments specifically associated with the process. For example, consultant appointments, collection of eggs, monitoring tests and so on.

If you need more time off, including for further treatment or because of the side effects or impact of fertility treatment, this will be supported through our [Sickness Absence Policy](#) or the [Time Off for Medical and Dental Appointments Policy](#).

### Leave to Support a Partner, Co-Parent, or Surrogate

We know how important it is to ensure the partners of those going through treatment are also supported to balance the demands of work with the requirements of fertility treatment. If you wish to support a partner undergoing investigations or treatment, you can take up to 2 days paid leave in 12-month period. This time off is also available to staff who have a surrogate or co-parent undergoing treatment.

In all cases, agreed fertility leave will be pro-rated for part-time staff.

### Multiple Treatment Cycles

Sadly, fertility treatments are not always successful, so we recognise that you and/or your partner, co-parent or surrogate may decide to have more than one cycle of fertility treatment. If you do, these time off entitlements will apply for up to a maximum of 5 days in a 12-month period, and 15 days in total.

## 5. Requesting Time Off

If you know you'll need time off for fertility treatment or investigations, and/or to accompany your partner, co-parent, or surrogate to their appointments, talk to your manager or Human Resources as soon as you can.

We know that appointments may be required at short notice, so managers will be as flexible as possible. Where you can, try and arrange appointments towards the start or the end of the working day.

## 6. Workplace Adjustments

We encourage you to talk to your manager if you, or your medical practitioner, feel you need additional support at work and about what support and adjustments might work best for you.

Your manager may talk to you about a referral to Occupational Health (OH) for further advice and guidance on the types of adjustments most appropriate. Adjustments could include:

- more regular rest breaks during the working day
- a temporary change to your start and/or finish times
- a temporary increase in home working (where your role allows)
- a temporary reduction in hours
- a temporary reassignment of certain duties and responsibilities

For more information about OH referrals, please read our [Occupational Health Guidance for Staff](#) (staff login required).

## 7. Embryo Transfer and Pregnancy

It's important to remember that if you're receiving fertility treatment, you have pregnancy rights immediately after embryo transfer (when a fertilised egg has been implanted in your uterus), even though your pregnancy may not be confirmed for a few weeks.

You do not have to tell your manager or HR at this stage but, if you do, then you'll be entitled to time off for ante-natal appointments and any pregnancy-related sickness will be recorded as such.

In the unfortunate event that fertility treatment is not successful, your pregnancy rights will continue for a further two weeks.

If the transfer is successful and your pregnancy is confirmed, then your pregnancy rights will continue. Please do not feel pressured to tell your manager or HR that you're pregnant until you're ready (so long as you tell us no later than the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before your baby is due). However, keep in mind that informing us allows you and your manager to conduct a risk assessment and agree on any necessary adjustments to support your wellbeing and the health of your baby. When the time is right, you may want to read our [Maternity](#) and [Paternity](#) policies to find out more about taking time off following the birth.

Sadly, we know that the risk of miscarriage after embryo transfer is high. If you, your partner, surrogate, or co-parent suffer a miscarriage, we have a dedicated [Pregnancy and Baby Loss Policy](#) which outlines the support available to you.

## 8. Further Information and Support

Your manager, Human Resources and Occupational Health are here to listen and support you and answer any questions you may have. On this page you'll also find links to our Wellbeing Hub and to several other organisations which offer support and advice.

And remember, our free and independent Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), can also provide confidential support. Visit our [Wellbeing Hub](#) for more information.

## 9. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed by Human Resources on a regular basis. To see when the next review is due, please see our [Policy Review Schedule](#) (staff login required).