

Policy Title: Pregnancy and Breastfeeding at Work

Descriptors: 1) Pregnancy 2) Breastfeeding 3) Discrimination
4) Pregnant

Category:

[Intent](#)

[Organisational Scope](#)

[Definitions](#)

[Policy Content](#)

[References](#)

[Contact Information](#)

1. Intent

The University provides employees who are pregnant or breastfeeding with appropriate support arrangements to ensure that they may continue their employment.

This policy describes the mutual responsibilities of the University and employees in taking all reasonable steps to accommodate women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

2. Organisational Scope

All University staff.

3. Definitions

‘Discrimination’ Means treating someone unfairly or unequally simply because they belong to a group or category of people. Equal opportunity laws prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, pregnancy, family responsibility, family status, race, religious or political convictions, gender history, impairment, age or sexual orientation.

4. Policy Content

4.1 Edith Cowan University recognises the important role of women in all of its operations and does not tolerate any unlawful discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or breastfeeding.

4.2 ECU supports women employees in the performance of their duties whilst they are pregnant or breastfeeding and will take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment is safe. The University recognises that accommodations in addition to normal safe work procedures and practices may be required when women employees

are pregnant or breastfeeding. Such provisions are made in accordance with ECU's collective agreements and relevant University policies.

4.3 The University, supervisors, and individual employees all have mutual responsibilities in seeking to accommodate women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. The attached Guidelines include further details regarding these mutual responsibilities. The Guidelines also summarise potential health and safety considerations for those who are pregnant or who are breastfeeding.

4.4 The University also provides a range of leave entitlements for employees who are either a primary and secondary care-giver of a child. These provisions are as outlined in the relevant collective agreements and University policies.

5. References

Policy Code:	hr174 PL233	File No: SUB/31221
Policy Owner:	Pro-Vice Chancellor (Engagement, Equity and Indigenous)	
Approved by:	Vice-Chancellor	
Date Approved:	11 August 2011	
Revision Date:	August 2014	
Amendments:	August 2011 – <i>Pregnancy and Work and Breast Feeding</i> policies revoked and combined into this policy.	
Related Policies/Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines for Pregnancy and Breastfeeding at Work • Hr013 Prevention of Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination • ECU Equity Statement of Commitment • Edith Cowan University: Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan 2009 – 2011 • Academic Staff Union Collective Agreement 2009 • General Staff Union Collective Agreement 2009 • HR006 Flexible Working Hours • HR156 Parental Leave 	

6. Contact Information

Contact Person:	Raymond Bernstein
Telephone:	08 6304 2937
Email address:	r.bernstein@ecu.edu.au

GUIDELINES

Guidelines Title: Pregnancy and Breastfeeding at Work

Linked to: Pregnancy and Breastfeeding at Work Policy

[Intent](#)

[Organisational Scope](#)

[Definitions](#)

[Guidelines - Content](#)

[References](#)

[Contact Information](#)

1. Intent

These Guidelines detail the mutual responsibilities of the University and of individual employees in seeking to accommodate women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

These Guidelines also summarise potential health and safety considerations for those who are pregnant or who are breastfeeding.

2. Organisational Scope

All University staff.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of these Guidelines the following definitions are used:

Supervisor	Means the person with managerial responsibility for an employee.
Manual tasks	Means any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain a person, animal or thing.
Hazardous substances	Means a substance which is listed on the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission's List of Designated Hazardous Substances, or has been classified as a hazardous substance by the manufacturer or importer in accordance with the National Occupational Health and Safety Commissions Approved Criteria for Classifying Hazardous Substances.

Ionising radiation	Ionising radiation means high-energy radiation capable of producing ionization in substances through which it passes. This type of radiation can cause cancer, genetic defects and illness in humans. Exposure to ionising radiation can occur from a number of natural and artificial sources. The most common artificial sources are x-ray devices and devices that utilise radio waves.
--------------------	--

4. Guidelines Content

The below points clarify the respective responsibilities of individual employees, supervisors, and ECU in helping to ensure appropriate support arrangements are established and maintained for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Employees:

- 4.1 On becoming pregnant employees should speak with their doctor about the kind of work that they do and discuss any potential areas of concern.
- 4.2 If there is a need to provide workplace adjustments as a result of illness, risks arising out of pregnancy or hazards connected with the work assigned to the employee, employees must notify their supervisor as soon as possible.
- 4.3 Employees may be required to provide current medical documentation to support and/or clarify specific medical and/or occupational safety and health issues.
- 4.4 Employees can request that information about their pregnancy is kept confidential.
- 4.5 Employees have a responsibility to notify the University of any current or potential safety and health issues during their pregnancy or when they are breastfeeding.
- 4.6 Employees need to discuss leave entitlements, including anti-natal leave and parental leave, with supervisors and/or HR Account Managers as required by relevant collective agreements.
- 4.7 Employees may utilise the Employee Assistance Program for professional counselling services if required.

Supervisors:

- 4.8 Supervisors should provide access to information about options to help employees achieve a safe pregnancy and balance breastfeeding and work as required. They may seek assistance from their HR Account Manager.
- 4.9 Supervisors should consult with employees who are pregnant or breastfeeding and negotiate appropriate workplace modifications as necessary.
- 4.10 Supervisors may request medical documentation from employees to support and/or clarify requests for modifications to the work environment; and/or alternative duties and/or variation to hours as required. When considering requests for modifications supervisors also need to take into account the operational objectives and requirements of the work unit.

4.11 Supervisors must consider appropriate workplace modifications where employees may be required to undertake manual tasks or to work with hazardous substances, animals, or ionising radiation. Relevant occupational safety & health policies and HR staff can provide further information to assist supervisors in this regard.

4.12 Supervisors should inform employees of available support mechanisms, including the Employee Assistance Program.

ECU:

4.13 The University will, where practicable, provide access to suitable facilities to breastfeed and/or express and store breast milk.

4.14 The University will provide reasonable flexibility for mothers to take lactation breaks during their workday, where individual circumstances require expressing milk or on-site breastfeeding.

5. References

Policy Code:	hr174 PL233	File No: tbc
Policy Owner:	Director, Human Resources Services Centre	
Approved by:	Director, Human Resources Services Centre	
Date Approved:	11 August 2011	
Revision Date:	August 2014	
Amendments:	August 2011 – <i>Pregnancy and Work and Breast Feeding</i> guidelines revoked and replaced by these Guidelines.	
Related Policies/Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hr081 Occupational Safety and Health Policy • Hr116 Hazardous Substances • Hr100 Manual Handling • Academic Staff Union Collective Agreement 2009 • General Staff Union Collective Agreement 2009 • List of Designated Hazardous Substances National Occupational Health and Safety Commission: 10005 (1994)] • HR006 Flexible Working Hours • HR156 Parental Leave • HR099 Employee Assistance Program 	

6. Contact Information

Contact Person:	Raymond Bernstein
Telephone:	08 6304 2937
Email address:	r.bernstein@ecu.edu.au