

## Information for Students: Pregnancy

This leaflet is aimed at students who are pregnant or nursing.

Pregnant and nursing women enjoy special protection by law.

The Maternity Protection Act (**Mutterschutzgesetz-MuSchG**) protects an (expecting) mother in her employment context, amongst other things from health risks at work. Following the law's reform, students are now covered by the MuSchG, too. A precondition for this is that the university dictates place, time and process of the courses or that the student is engaged in an internship which is a mandatory part of her study programme.

The following risks may occur during studies or work:

- hazardous substances
- biological agents
- physical risks
- high pressure
- physical strain
- mechanical risks

Additionally, the following limitations apply:

Prohibition of overtime or nightshifts (§ 4 MuSchG)

1. A pregnant or nursing woman is not allowed to work more than 8,5 h daily or 90 h per double week.
2. A pregnant woman may not be employed between 8pm and 6am. Only exceptionally may she work until 10pm, provided she expressly agrees to do so, a doctor's note confirms that there are no concerns in this regard and the pregnant woman is not working alone.  
This prohibition applies in kind for lectures etc. The agreement can be retraced at any time, taking effect for any future events.
3. After the end of working time, the pregnant /nursing woman has to have at least eleven hours uninterrupted time to rest.
4. The prohibition of Sunday and holiday work has to be respected as well. (§ 5 MuSchG)

### What consequences result?

As the embryo is in particular danger between the 5th and 10th week of a pregnancy, you should give notice of your pregnancy as soon as possible.

### Whom do students notify?

Notification of pregnancy cannot be passed on to third parties without the pregnant woman's consent. If the first place a student notifies of her pregnancy is a university facility (e.g. Zentrale Studienberatung = academic counselling centre / student advisory services), they are not permitted to pass the notice of pregnancy on to third parties without the pregnant woman's consent.

It is therefore the student's responsibility to notify the dean and (where applicable) the laboratory manager of her pregnancy.

The health of mother and child enjoy the highest priority; it is therefore part of the faculty's and laboratory's duty of care to undertake a risk assessment and implement protective measures.

If risks should occur which cannot be prevented / minimised through protective measures, prohibition to work has to be issued.

Having been awarded a study space, a pregnant student is entitled to take part in mandatory internships. In order to avoid disadvantages to the students, those responsible have to check whether organisational steps could be taken to allow for a completion of an internship. Another option would be to bring forward other modules and complete the internship at a later date. The dean of studies should be consulted in this matter.

During the maternity protection period („Mutterschutzfrist“, six weeks prior to birth) the mother-to-be has to be released from mandatory lectures and internships unless she expressly agrees otherwise and no unjustifiable risk applies. In such case, a written declaration has to be filed with the examinations office(“Prüfungsamt”). Such a declaration can be retracted at any time for the future. Please contact the examinations office if you have any further questions.

Eight weeks after giving birth the mother is not allowed to attend any university event unless she expressly requests this from the university. For premature births, multiple births and where after expiration of the eight week period the child is diagnosed with a disability, the protective period is extended to twelve weeks.