

Studying and Exam Information for Parents-to-Be and Students with Children

Parents-to-be and students with children studying at HFU will get special support. This leaflet is intended to inform you about your possibilities at HFU during pregnancy, maternity protection and parental leave. It should also help you with the decision for or against taking one or more study leave semesters.¹ Additionally, it offers our students initial information on their rights during pregnancy and nursing.

We recommend that expectant mothers and students with children plan their studies in close cooperation and consultation with HFU. Please notify the examinations office („Prüfungsamt“) of your pregnancy / the fact that you are a nursing mother as soon as possible and submit your „Mutterpass“ (mother passport). Only then are we able to take the necessary steps to ensure that you can exercise your rights. Additionally, following steps are recommended:

- Get in touch with your course director to arrange, if possible, an individual curriculum.
- Contact the „Rentenstelle“ (national pension scheme office) and, if applicable, the BAföG (German government education grant) counselling service and the Ausländerbehörde (foreigners' office) to find out about specific provisions applicable to your situation.
- Make an appointment with HFU's Zentrale Studienberatung (general academic counselling) for a confidential consultation to get the best out of the counselling services at HFU (you will find contact details on the last page).
- If you are studying physiotherapy please contact your programme coordinator to explore your individual options during pregnancy, „Mutterschutz“ (maternity protection) and „Elternzeit“ (parental leave). There are additional regulations applying to students on the physiotherapy programme.

With regard to your bonus / „malus“ points account, the study and examination regulations (SPO) apply. Please check Studi-Portal regularly to ensure that you are indeed registered / de-registered for exams as per your request.

„Mutterschutzgesetz“ (German Law on Maternity Protection) – Important Regulations regarding Studies and Examinations

The German law on the protection of working mothers (Mutterschutzgesetz – MuSchG) applies in kind to you as a pregnant or nursing student in as far as the university makes binding provisions regarding place, time and procedure of educational activities. It also applies to you if you are completing an internship which is a mandatory part of your university education². Amongst other things, the Mutterschutzgesetz provides:

1. Protective Periods prior to and after Giving Birth

The maternity protective period starts six weeks prior to giving birth and ends eight weeks thereafter. In certain circumstances this period will be extended (early birth, child's disability, premature or multiple births). (§ 3 Abs. 1 and Abs. 2 MuSchG)

¹ Please note: While great care was taken with the translation of the information contained herein, mistakes may still occur. In case of any conflict or inconsistencies with the original German version „Merkblatt für werdende Eltern und Studierende mit Kind zu Studium und Prüfungen“, the German version will prevail.

² Furtwangen University is required by law to notify the relevant authority with regards to pregnancy / nursing (§27 MuSchG).

2. Attending Lectures during Protective Periods

During the maternity protection periods you only have to take part in lectures, exams, internships or laboratory work if you expressly agree to do so (§ 3 Abs. 3 MuSchG). Please alert the examinations office regarding your pregnancy / nursing as you will otherwise automatically be registered for exams.

3. Night Work

As a pregnant or nursing student, the university may not allow you to participate in lectures / laboratory work and internships between 20h and 6h. Exceptionally, you are allowed to operate until 22h, provided you have expressly agreed to do so, can submit a doctor's note which raises no obstacles and are not working on your own. You can retract your agreement at any time with regard to any future events (§ 5 Abs. 2 MuSchG)

4. Work on Sundays and Public Holidays

As a pregnant or nursing student, the university may not allow you to work on Sundays or public holidays unless you expressly agree to do so. Further requirements are that participation at that time is necessary for academic purposes, that each week following such event you will be granted an interrupted night's rest of at least eleven hours' duration and that you are not the only person working at the time. (§ 6 Abs. 2 MuSchG)

5. Health Issues of Mother and Child

It is up to the university to assess whether the conditions of study could pose a health risk for you as a pregnant / nursing woman / your child. This means that we have to compile a risk assessment („Gefährdungsbeurteilung“) and, if applicable, take the necessary precautions (§ 10 MuSchG). Please notify the examination office and the head of your faculty (dean) with regard to your pregnancy / nursing. Where applicable, please additionally inform the head of any laboratory concerned. While compiling the risk assessment, it will also be discussed whether you wish to / may work nights until 22h / during Sundays and public holidays. To avoid any risks to you and your child, please take note of the ["Information for Students: Pregnancy"](#) leaflet.

6. Leave for Medical Exams and Nursing

You are entitled to leave for certain medical pregnancy and maternity exams. You are also entitled to leave for nursing (at least 30 minutes twice a day or 60 minutes once a day). (§ 7 MuSchG)

Graded and Non-Graded Assessments („Studien- und Prüfungsleistungen“) during Pregnancy, Maternity Protection as well as during Parenting and Child Care Periods

Due to legal provisions or options there are some special rules for sitting graded and non-graded assessments. A specific exception is the maternity protection period, also with regard to course attendance. An application for a leave of absence can be submitted on the basis of pregnancy, maternity protection as well as for parenting and child care reasons amongst others. Without a leave of absence, the „HFU-Elternzeit“ (parenting time) gives you options for making parenting and studying more compatible on an individual basis.

If you do not take a study leave semester, the following will apply:

During pregnancy

During pregnancy, i.e. up to the beginning of the maternity protection, the normal study and examination regulations (SPO) apply. If you are registered for an exam for the first time, you can simply deregister in the normal way. You may also deregister (for the semester in question) from an exam presenting a doctor's note. (SPO §11 (1)-(3))

During maternity protection

If you wish to exercise your maternity protection period rights at HFU, the examinations' office requires your notification. As soon as the notification is received, the following applies: Sitting exams during the maternity protection period is possible – but you have to notify the examinations' office in writing (using the "Registration (for exams)" form).³ This rule applies for any whole semester(s) which are affected by the maternity protection period (SPO § 31a (2)). Unless you are completing an internship semester or study semester abroad, the „Belegung“ (registration) form for sitting an exam has to be completed and submitted to the examinations office ("Prüfungsamt") no later than the last week of lectures. Any exams taking place prior to the examinations' period have to be registered prior to the date of the examination.

During „HFU-Elternzeit“ (parental leave)

In parallel to the legal provisions, HFU offers you the option of taking „Elternzeit“ (parental leave) to raise and take care of your children (cf. §15 BEEG). This will allow you to organise your studies more flexibly and to suit your individual needs – up to your child's third birthday. A share of up to 24 months may be taken between the child's third and eighth birthday. Both parents may apply for parental leave for the same or different periods of time. In order to take advantage of parental leave, you will have to submit the „Mitteilung Mutterschutz und/oder Elternzeit“ form (notification of maternity protection and/or parental leave). It should be completed and submitted to the examinations office no later than four weeks prior to the date on which you wish to start your parental leave. The Examinations Office will forward this notification to the Dean of Studies. The HFU-Elternzeit will start at the agreed date. If it ends during a given semester, you will be able to enjoy the ensuing benefits (see below) for the rest of the semester in question. During parental leave the following applies:

- Parental leave does not count in the calculation of deadlines for accumulation of credits (SPO §5 (3)). You will not receive any missed deadlines notifications during parental leave.
- You will automatically be registered for exams. You have to deregister from any exam no later than the day before the exam in question by notifying the examinations office. No reasons need to be given, neither is a doctor's note required. If you are receiving a German government education grant (BAföG) we recommend to contact Studierendenwerk.

If you take study leave, the following will apply:

During pregnancy, maternity protection and parental leave you are entitled to take one or more study leave semesters. To apply for a study leave semester, submit the completed form "Application for Leave of Absence" to the examinations office no later than the start of the lecture period of the semester in question. During a study leave semester the following applies:

- Study leave semesters are not considered when calculation the deadlines for completing graded and non-graded assessments (SPO §5 (3)).
- During a parenting or child care study leave semester, you are able to sit exams and attend courses. The same applies for maternity protection periods in as far as no legal provisions say otherwise (Mutterschutzgesetz).
- There will be no automatic registrations for scheduled exams. You may, however, sit exams, if you register for them with the examinations' office no later than the last week of lectures.

To Apply for a Study Leave Semester or Not? – Things to Consider in Your Decision-Making-Process:

³ For the participation of pregnant / nursing students during events taking place after 20h as well as during Sundays / public holidays, special rules apply. These have to be discussed as part of the risk assessment. Please also inform us during the risk assessment if you wish to take part in any mandatory courses.

Graded and Non-Grades Assessments (Studien- und Prüfungsleistungen): Considering the effort involved in registering and de-registering for exams, the following is advisable: If you intend to complete the majority of graded / non-graded assessments scheduled during your pregnancy / time taken for raising children, „Elternzeit“ (parental leave) is the easier option. If you plan to take few or no assessments, study leave will mean less organisational effort.

Financial Aspects: Interrupting your studies or taking a study leave semester may have financial repercussions. This applies in particular to those receiving BAföG. BAföG is fairly accommodating with pregnant or nursing students and students with children who do not take a leave of absence but rather continue their studies at least partially. Thus in many cases, a formal leave of absence may not even be necessary. Please make sure that you seek the BAföG-office's advice in good time.

International Students: Non-EU students holding a residence permit for study purposes, risk the loss of this permit when taking a study leave semester. Please make sure you contact your Ausländerbehörde (foreigners' office) PRIOR to applying for a study leave semester.

Advice for Parents-to-Be and Students with Children

Zentrale Studienberatung – HFU (general academic counselling)

- information and advice regarding the SPO (study and examination regulations) in connection with pregnancy, birth and parental leave
- help with identifying the correct people to speak to

Victoria Reineck, phone: 07723 920-2430, email: studienberatung@hs-furtwangen.de

Stabsstelle Familiengerechte Hochschule – HFU (family-friendly university office)

- information and advice regarding HFU services for students with children

Katharina Lupfer, phone: 07723 920-2937, email: lupf@hs-furtwangen.de

Sozialberatung - Studierendenwerk Freiburg

- information and advice regarding financial aid for students with children, e. g. Kindergeld (child support)
- Arbeitslosengeld II and Social security payments during leave of absence
- assistance with the search for childcare

Barbara Toth, phone: 0761 2101-233, email: sozialberatung@swfr.de

Opening hours at the HFU campuses can be found online at www.swfr.de

BAföG Advice (German government education loans) – Studierendenwerk Freiburg

- information regarding BAföG (education loans available mostly for German nationals only), e.g. possibilities of extending support payments beyond the regulation period for reasons like pregnancy / child care)

Contact and office hours for all three HFU campi online at www.swfr.de

Rentenstelle - Deutsche Rentenversicherung (German pensions office)

- Information regarding study leave semesters and German pensions
- Information as to how maternity protection and parental leave periods can be credited under the German pension scheme

A German pension office near you can be found online at: www.deutsche-rentenversicherung.de