

Information on Maternity Protection during Studies¹

The *Mutterschutzgesetz* - MuSchG (Maternity Protection Act) also applies to female students as of 01 January 2018, if the location, time and course of a class are compulsory, or if they are required to complete an internship during their university studies (§ 1(2) Item 8 MuSchG). The only activities that fall outside of the scope of the MuSchG are classes that are entirely voluntary, or not absolutely necessary for the degree course, and activities in which the female students have a large amount of say as to whether or not and how they are attended during studies (e.g. visits to libraries or participation in open lecture and sports offers).

Unlike in the past, as a general rule of principle, maternity protection must be granted, without request.

Notification of Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Periods

The notification of a pregnancy and breastfeeding periods is voluntary. However, in order to protect oneself and the child in line with the rights stipulated by the Maternity Protection Act and in order to avoid pregnant and breastfeeding students being subject to potentially dangerous conditions in practicals, laboratory work and other kinds of work, it is important to inform the university as soon as possible about the pregnancy or the breastfeeding period. The notification must be sent by the student to the Students' Registration Office or, for students of Medicine at UMG, to the *Office of the Dean of Studies at UMG* (→[Notification of pregnancy](#)).

§ 15(1) MuSchG

If the female student is a student or graduate assistant at the University of Greifswald, she must also inform the *HR Department*.

In order to be entitled to the provisions of the Maternity Protection Act during external internships/practicals and secondary employment, the female student must inform the *external employers* separately, as these are responsible for fulfilling the employer's duties pursuant to the MuSchG during the internship/practical or secondary employment.

Which rights does a female student have under the Maternity Protection Act?

- **Relative examination ban:** During the statutory maternity protection periods, female students are exempt from examinations and from classes with compulsory attendance, excursions as well as laboratory and practical activities. § 3 (1-2) MuSchG
- **Release from classes/compulsory courses for medical examinations** in connection with pregnancy and maternity, as well as **for breastfeeding** (at least twice a day for half an hour during the first twelve months after birth). § 7 MuSchG
- **Restrictions on study-related tasks** for pregnant and breastfeeding students:
 - no study-related tasks (e.g. visiting classes) between 8.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. § 5(1) MuSchG
 - Observance of an uninterrupted resting period of 11 hours after the end of a day's work § 4(2) MuSchG
 - Ban on working on Sundays and public holidays (e.g. weekend seminars) § 6(2) MuSchG
 - Ban on handling hazardous substances or fulfilling dangerous tasks pursuant to §§ 11 and 12 MuSchG.

¹ This information sheet outlines the most important regulations with regard to maternity protection during studies. Please refer to the Maternity Protection Act (MuSchG) and, in particular, the provisions cited for further information.

Waiver of rights

Female students are allowed to take part in examinations during the maternity protection period and may take part in classes being held up until 10.00 p.m. or on Sundays and public holidays during pregnancy and breastfeeding periods. They must clearly declare to the *member of teaching staff who has been named responsible by the subject area* in writing that they would like to take part in classes being held up until 10.00 p.m., and on Sundays and public holidays, for the lecture period of the respective semester. The respective members of staff must inform the Students' Registration Office if a female student has waived her rights.

The student must write to the *Central Examination Office* to explicitly declare her wish to take part in examinations.

Female students at UMG must hand in their notification to UMG's Office of the Dean of Studies. The declaration can be withdrawn at any time, with effect for the future.

§§ 3(3-4), 5(2), 6(2) MuSchG

Statutory maternity protection periods prior to and after birth

The maternity protection period begins six weeks prior to the expected date of birth. If the actual date of birth differs from that date, the period is shortened or extended accordingly. The protection period after birth is eight weeks. This period is extended to twelve weeks for premature or multiple births. If the baby is born prior to the expected delivery date, the protection period after birth is extended by the period that was not taken prior to birth. The period of maternity protection is determined by the *Students' Registration Office or the Office of the Dean of Studies at UMG* and communicated to the female student.

§ 3(1-2) MuSchG

Breastfeeding period

The respective breastfeeding period comprises the first twelve months after birth. § 7(2) MuSchG

Proof of pregnancy

Upon request from the Students' Registration Office or UMG's Office of the Dean of Studies, proof of pregnancy must be submitted, for example if it is not obvious. A medical certificate, a copy of the *Mutterpass* (pregnancy record) or a certificate from a midwife are generally sufficient proof. It is important that it indicates the expected date of delivery, in order to be able to calculate the maternity protection periods. The University is entitled to demand additional proof, but must then carry any of the related costs.

§ 15(2) MuSchG

Forwarding of information within the university

The Students' Registration Office forwards the information about the pregnancy to the *person responsible in the subject area and to the Central Examination Office*. **The Central Examination Office automatically deregisters the student from the examinations during the period of maternity protection, unless the student submits an explicit declaration to the Central Examination Office in which she states that she would like to take part in the examinations.** The *Office of the Dean of Studies* at UMG is responsible for deregistering the students from examinations at UMG.

§§ 3(1), 10(1) Item 2 MuSchG

General and individual health risk assessment

A general health risk assessment was created for all degree courses in 2018. This aims to ensure that any necessary protective measures can be taken as soon as the female student notifies the university of her pregnancy.

An individual health risk assessment will be created following receipt of the notification of pregnancy in order to determine whether it will be necessary to introduce special protective measures or to compensate disadvantages resulting from the pregnancy or breastfeeding periods.

§ 9, 10(1-2), 14 MuSchG

Compensation for disadvantages

Disadvantages resulting from the pregnancy, delivery, or breastfeeding period shall be avoided or compensated. The students may therefore be entitled to compensation for disadvantages. This comprises e.g. the completion of substitute work for practicals, or the granting of breastfeeding breaks during examinations or classes with compulsory attendance. The student must request the compensation for disadvantages from the *Central Examination Office, the Office of the Dean of Studies at UMG, or the State Examination Office* if it affects an examination and/or marked coursework.

§§ 1(1), 9(1) MuSchG

§ 24 General Examination Regulations – RPO

Notification of the supervisory authority

The Students' Registration Office or the Office of the Dean of Studies at UMG must inform the *LAGuS M-V* as the supervisory authority of every notification of pregnancy and every instance of a student waiving the ban on work after 8.00 p.m. and on Sundays and public holidays.

§ 27 MuSchG

Resting and breastfeeding facilities

Breastfeeding rooms are located in the Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn-Str. 15a, and at UMG, on Corridor 2, Room E.0.24. Further breastfeeding rooms are available at [other locations throughout town](#).

Duty to inform

The University of Greifswald informs the students of their rights pursuant to the MuSchG in central information offers including a flyer and the webpages of the Family Service. The subject areas must also inform the students of their rights to protection, e.g. at subject-specific advisory sessions, in introductory classes, and, in particular, prior to potentially dangerous activities (laboratory work, practicals, excursions).

Contacts

- Information on the compatibility of family responsibilities and studies:
Family Service, Tel.: +49 3834 420 1236, familienservice@uni-greifswald.de
- Notification of the pregnancy and administration of the further procedure:
Students' Registration Office, Tel.: +49 3834 420 1296, studsek@uni-greifswald.de and at UMG: **Office of the Dean of Studies**, Tel.: +49 3834 86 5007, studekan@uni-greifswald.de
- Risk assessment/ health and safety:
Health and Safety Officer, +49 3834 420 1313, sicherheitsing@uni-greifswald.de
- Compensation for disadvantages, waiver of relative examination ban:
Central Examination Office, +49 3834 420 1278, zpa@uni-greifswald.de and at UMG: **Office of the Dean of Studies**, Tel.: +49 3834 86 5007, studekan@uni-greifswald.de