

Information on Maternity Protection for Students

As of 01.01.2018, the Maternity Protection Act (abbreviated to MuSchG) also applies to students, provided that specific locations, dates and procedures are prescribed for participation in their degree program. The aim of the law is to ensure health protection for mother and child during pregnancy, after childbirth and while nursing, and to prevent the student from experiencing any resulting discrimination during her studies.

1 Notification of pregnancy and nursing

In order to benefit from the provisions of the Maternity Protection Act (MuSchG), it is necessary to notify the institution that you are pregnant or nursing your child. The sooner the University of Applied Sciences Erfurt is aware of your situation, the sooner effective maternity protection can be ensured for you and your child during your studies. However, you are under no legal obligation to notify us that you are pregnant or nursing.

Written notification of pregnancy or nursing is to be submitted to your program director. You will find the corresponding form under "Downloads" at <https://www.fh-erfurt.de/en/organizational-matters/downloads>. Please submit a copy of the pages of your maternity records showing the expected date of delivery as proof of pregnancy. A copy of the child's birth certificate is to be submitted as proof of nursing. In accordance with the requirements of the Maternity Protection Act and with due regard to data protection, the internal university departments involved and the relevant supervisory authority, the Thuringian State Office for Consumer Protection, will be informed.

2 Health protection and reasonable adjustments

During your studies, you or your child's health may be at risk if you are pregnant or nursing, for example while working in laboratories, workshops or greenhouses or participating in field trips. Possible risk factors may include your working conditions or work environment while at university, physical and mental stress, or hazards from chemical and biological agents.

Consequently, the program director must conduct an individual risk assessment for students who wish to continue their studies during pregnancy, after childbirth and/or while nursing. Based on the abstract risk assessment for your degree course, potential hazards for you and your child can be identified. If necessary, your further studies will be adapted, where possible, by means of appropriate reasonable adjustments (e.g., flexible modules, alternative types of examination) or protective measures. Your Examination Board shall decide on reasonable adjustments in consultation with you and the lecturer (or other) responsible for each individual examination.

3 Time constraints on academic work

In the interest of protecting the health of both the (expectant) mother and child during pregnancy and while nursing, the Maternity Protection Act foresees certain time constraints which may also affect your studies:

- Attendance of lectures and other study-related activities is limited to a maximum of eight and a half hours per day or 90 hours in a double week. Students under the age of 18 may not work more than eight hours a day or more than 80 hours in a double week as part of their degree course.

- After the last class of the day, an uninterrupted rest period of at least eleven hours must be observed.
- Pregnant and nursing students are not permitted to engage in study-related work between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. or on Sundays and public holidays.

4 Exemption from classes and examinations during the maternity protection period

Special measures are in place during the maternity protection period, which begins six weeks before the expected delivery date and ends eight weeks after birth (twelve weeks after birth in the case of premature or multiple births and babies with disabilities). During this time, you are exempt from coursework and examinations. You can withdraw from examinations yourself up to two weeks before the beginning of the examination period. After this time, the Examinations Office will unregister you from examinations on your behalf.

5 Flexible course planning and voluntary waiver of specific rights under the Maternity Protection Act (MuSchG)

If you so wish and subject to specific circumstances, you may choose to waive some of your rights under the Maternity Protection Act (MuSchG) in the interests of planning your studies more flexibly.

Thus, during pregnancy and while nursing, you may also do study-related work until 10 p.m. as well as on Sundays and public holidays, provided it is necessary for your studies and, in so doing, any potential risk from working alone is eliminated. If the student attends classes on Sundays or public holidays, she must also be granted a substitute day of rest following an uninterrupted night's rest of at least eleven hours.

If expressly requested, you also continue to have the option of doing coursework or examinations during maternity leave, including after giving birth.

For this purpose, you must submit a written declaration to the university. Please use the form "Waiver of Specific Rights under the Maternity Protection Act" and submit it to the Examinations Office. You may also submit the waiver after you have notified the university of your pregnancy, but at the latest before before you attend the course in question or before the maternity protection period begins. You may retract your declaration with future effect at any time. For examinations, an informal written statement must be submitted to the Examinations Office.

6 Time off for medical check-ups and nursing

You are exempt from coursework and examinations for the purpose of pregnancy and maternity check-ups provided for by the statutory health insurance. You will also be excused from classes for any necessary nursing breaks (at least twice a day for half an hour or once a day for one hour) during the first twelve months after birth. Please consult your lecturers in this regard.

7 Resting and nursing facilities

At the Altonaer Strasse campus, a family room is available across from the university library in room 2.E.25 for resting, nursing and changing diapers. You can obtain the key from the university library during opening hours or at the reception desk in building 7. Suitable premises are currently not available at our Leipziger Strasse and Schlüterstrasse sites.

8 Advice and information

Do you have any more questions regarding maternity protection for students?

The *Office for Equal Opportunities and Families* is happy to provide you with more information and advice on maternity protection, reorganizing your studies and any other questions you might have about studying with a family.

Contact details: Coordination Office for Equal Opportunities and Families, Altonaer Straße 25, room 7.1.13, tel. no.: 0361 6700-712, email: familie@fh-erfurt.de

Thuringian Student Services' *General Social Counselling* service can provide advice on everything regarding student grants and funding during the maternity protection period. Contact details:

Allgemeine Sozialberatung, Nordhäuser Straße 63, building 1, room 109, tel. no.: 0361 737-1811, email: asb-erfurt@stw-thueringen.de

For more information:

The Maternity Protection Act (in German): www.gesetze-im-internet.de/muschg_2018/

Guide to maternity protection, issued by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (in German): www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/leitfaden-zum-mutterschutz/73756