

# **ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

## **MATERNITY AND THE RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE DOCUMENT**

(Version 2)

This guidance has been developed to provide health and safety information to those who are pregnant, have given birth within the previous six months, or are breastfeeding. It also identifies the procedures that managers will follow to ensure that appropriate health and safety arrangements are implemented for the protection of the mother and child. The document is not intended to provide guidance on maternity pay, leave and notification arrangements for which reference should be made to the College Maternity Policy which is available from the Human Resources Department.

The maternity risk assessment process operates on the principle that the member of staff is required to advise her manager of her circumstances at the earliest opportunity. The manager will then undertake a review of existing risk assessments and, where appropriate, identify and address any specific risk-related issues which require attention.

#### **Section 1 - Notification to the Employer of Pregnancy and Risk Assessment**

An expectant mother is required to advise her line manager that she is pregnant. It is important that this is undertaken at the earliest opportunity in order that the arrangements identified in this document can be implemented as soon as possible for the protection of both the mother and child.

The manager will then convene a pregnancy risk assessment review meeting with the member of staff no later than five working days from notification. The manager will take into account any relevant medical advice provided to the College which relates to her employment. Where the member of staff and their manager feel it will help, the College Health & Safety Adviser or Deputy Health & Safety Adviser may be asked to assist with the risk assessment review process.

The pregnancy risk assessment review meeting may identify specific issues in relation to the member of staff not identified in original departmental risk assessments and which may have a bearing on her ability to undertake her duties. Wherever it is reasonable, these will be addressed at departmental level. However, should it be identified that they have a bearing on the ability of the member of staff to undertake her duties, these will be discussed with the College Health & Safety Adviser who will, where necessary, refer the matter to the College Occupational Health Physician and/or Director of Human Resources.

Before returning to work, the member of staff must notify her manager of her intention to do so at the earliest opportunity. Before re-commencing duties, the manager and member of staff will review any current medical advice, the risk assessments and identify any further action which may be required. Again, where the member of staff and their manager feel it will help, a member of the Health and Safety Office may be asked to assist with the review.

## **Section 2 - Departmental Risk Assessments and Pregnancy Considerations**

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended) require employers to assess workplace hazards and risks and take measures to protect people from them so far as is 'reasonably practicable'. They are also required to take particular account in their risk assessments of possible risks to new and expectant mothers, the definition of which is someone who is pregnant, has given birth within the previous six months, or is breastfeeding.

Risk assessments will be undertaken using the College *Guide to Conducting 'General' Risk Assessment* document and the associated Risk Assessment Form, together with such other specific assessments e.g. 'COSHH' and Manual Handling, which could pose a health or safety risk to new and expectant mothers. Appropriate remedial action will, therefore, be taken where it is identified to be necessary and it is reasonably practicable to do.

Managers must also make any identified hazards and risks and the control measures introduced, known to all their female employees of childbearing age, not just those who have informed them they are pregnant. This process is particularly important for expectant mothers as it is possible for the first 4-6 weeks of pregnancy to go undetected. Such information passing will form part of the departmental staff induction process for new employees.

For further information on the health and safety aspects of maternity, please see the Health and Safety Office WebPages.

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19/07/2011

In accordance with the College's commitment to equality and diversity, this Policy has been written and screened to avoid discrimination and promote a positive approach to race, disability and gender issues. Comments on the content of this document should be directed to the College Health & Safety Adviser.