

## **MENOPAUSE SUPPORT FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS**

### **CODE OF PRACTICE**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This code of practice statement sets out the University's commitment to staff and students who are experiencing perimenopause or menopause, in recognition that these can, for a period of time, have a significant impact on health, wellbeing, and comfort at work or study.

The menopause is defined as occurring 12 months after the cessation of menstrual periods (12 consecutive months without a period). Menopause is often experienced in terms of symptoms, which can range from mild to debilitating. Symptoms are varied and usually start to occur before the menopause, a period of time known as the perimenopause, and continue on after the menopause. Symptoms may go on for many years.

For the purpose of this code of practice statement, the term menopause will also include the perimenopausal period.

#### **1.1 Purpose**

**1.1.1** The University is committed to being an equitable and inclusive employer and provider of Higher Education and associated services. As part of this commitment, the University aims to develop an environment in which those experiencing menopause are supported.

**1.1.2** The University will promote a culture in which:

- a) individual colleagues feel comfortable to talk about the impact of their menopause at work;
- b) individual students can approach their Academic Mentor or Student Experience and Support Officer in student services to talk about the impact of their menopause on their study;
- c) staff and students can continue to achieve in work and study.

### **1.1.3** Specifically, this code of practice:

- a) reinforces the University's commitment to ensuring that there is no discrimination, harassment, or victimisation in relation to menopause.
- b) defines responsibilities for colleagues and students in relation to menopause.

**1.1.4** The [Equality Act 2010](#) requires the University to foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities, to advance equality of opportunity, and to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation based on protected characteristics, including sex, disability, and age.

**1.1.5** Menopause can adversely impact an individual's health, safety, and welfare as defined by the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Those experiencing menopausal symptoms may require workplace adjustments to ensure a good quality of working life.

**1.1.6** Where menopause results in a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, i.e. where menopause might be considered a disability, the University has an additional duty, under the Equality Act, to provide reasonable adjustments.

## **1.2** Scope

**1.2.1** This code of practice applies to all University staff and students and sets out the commitments and expectations in support of those experiencing menopause symptoms.

**1.2.2** It does not include information on menopause symptoms nor suggestions for self-help or reasonable adjustments. However, further guidance is available on the HR Health and Wellbeing intranet webpages and student services webpages.

**1.2.3** It does not cover wider expectations relating to staff or student bullying, discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, nor does it cover specific policy and procedures for sickness absence or support to study. All related policies and associated procedures are outlined in section 4.

## **2. CODE OF PRACTICE**

**2.1** The University recognises its duties under both equality and health and safety legislation and its duty of care for staff and students.

**2.2** It is recognised that many staff and students have undergone, or will go through, the menopause whilst employed or studying at Keele. It is important

to the University and, its collective success, that those staff and students, where they require it, are supported appropriately in a fair and consistent manner.

**2.3** It is also recognised that all experiences of menopause will be different and that support needs will vary from person to person.

**2.4** Where staff are absent due to illness, related to the menopause, this will be managed through the relevant sickness absence policy and procedure.

### **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **3.1 All Colleagues and Students**

Are expected to:

- a) Contribute to an inclusive and supportive culture.
- b) Respect and support others, including respecting the privacy of those, who have disclosed that they are going through the menopause, or who might be assumed to be going through the menopause. Jokes or remarks at the persons' expense and generally insensitive behaviour are unacceptable.

#### **3.2 Line managers**

Are expected to:

- a) Exercise a duty of care for all staff and be familiar with the University's menopause online guidance and resources.
- b) Ensure staff are aware of all relevant resources and cascade any new or updated information as appropriate.
- c) Create a safe working environment where staff feel able to discuss issues including those that relate to their general health and wellbeing.
- d) Ensure sufficient opportunity for staff to discuss any concerns about the menopause, and to actively consider workplace adjustments as necessary. This may also include referring staff for Occupational Health support.
- e) Ensure staff are aware they can arrange to speak to another person (e.g. HR Advisor or Occupational Health Nurse), in the first instance, if they feel uncomfortable speaking directly to their line manager about any health or wellbeing problems.
- f) Be aware that menopause can be a subject of sensitivity to anyone who is experiencing it. Additional factors that may impact how a person feels about menopause, beyond clinical symptoms, include where menopause

results from medical treatment or where it impacts young women, trans men, or non-binary people.

- g) Ensure all conversations are handled sensitively and reassure staff that their concerns relating to the menopause will be treated seriously and confidentially.

Line managers are not expected to offer expert advice on menopause. However, they are expected to know where to signpost individuals for further support and advice. This would include the [guidance which is available on the Health and Wellbeing intranet webpages](#). Where colleagues need specialist help or are reluctant to talk with the line manager, they should be referred to Human Resources or Occupational Health as appropriate.

### **3.3 Staff with Student Responsibility**

**3.3.1** Those with responsibility for students including, Academic Mentors, staff in academic schools, Student Experience and Support Officers and Student Services staff have a particular duty of care for students and are expected to be aware of:

- a) University's menopause online resources for students;
- b) Item 3.2 (f), above, and
- c) hold any conversations relating to a student's menopause in accordance with 3.2 (g), above.

**3.3.2** Staff are expected to recognise that menopause may, in some cases, adversely impact study and can be considered as an Exceptional Circumstance (EC), under the category "*Worsening of an ongoing illness or disability, including mental health conditions*" which should be managed as with other ECs. Where there is a longer-term impact on study, menopause may require reasonable adjustments for students, for example in assessments.

As with Line Managers, staff are not expected to offer expert advice on menopause. However, they are expected to know where to signpost individuals for further support and advice, via Student Services.

### **3.4 University**

The University will:

- a) Raise awareness of the impact of menopause on staff and students.
- b) Provide online menopause guidance and links to resources (further information, suggestions for self-help and reasonable adjustments and links to external organisations) for staff and students.

- c) Provide Human Resource and Occupational Health Support where required for staff.
- d) Provide support, where required, for students.
- e) Provide appropriate policies, procedures and means to follow those procedures for staff or students who are experiencing menopause (see section 4).

## **4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**4.1** For staff and students this code of practice should be read in conjunction with:

- a) Health & Safety Policy

**4.2** For staff this code of practice should be read in conjunction with:

- a) Dignity & Respect Policy & Procedure
- b) Flexible Working Policy & Procedure
- c) Staff Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure
- d) Supporting Attendance Policy & Procedure for Operational Staff

**4.3** For students this code of practice should be read in conjunction with the University's:

- e) Academic Mentoring Code of Practice
- f) Bullying & Harassment Policy and Procedure (Students)
- g) Exceptional Circumstances Code of Practice
- h) Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students
- i) Student Attendance and Engagement Policy
- j) Support to Study Policy

## **5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION**

**5.1** As a general principle, the code of practice will be reviewed by Human Resources, in consultation with recognised Trade Unions after three years or where operational and/ or legislative requirements change. Any revisions will be approved in accordance with UEC procedures, where applicable.

**5.2** This code of practice is not contractual and is not intended to be incorporated into individual terms and conditions of employment. It may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawal.

**5.3** This code of practice will be published on the University policy zone web page and will also be accessible via the Human Resources web pages.

**5.4** Equality issues have been taken into account during the development of this code of practice and all protected characteristics have been considered as part of the Equality Analysis undertaken.

## 6. ANNEXES

Not applicable.

## 7. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

<b>Document Name</b>	Menopause Support for Staff and Students – Code of Practice
<b>Owner</b>	Chief People Officer, Human Resources
<b>Version Number</b>	1.0
<b>Equality Analysis Form Submission Date</b>	4 May 2023
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<b>Date for Next Review</b>	October 2026
<b>Related University a Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Health &amp; Safety Policy</li><li>b) Dignity &amp; Respect Policy &amp; Procedure</li><li>c) Flexible Working Policy &amp; Procedure</li><li>d) Staff Sickness Absence Policy &amp; Procedure</li><li>e) Supporting Attendance Policy &amp; Procedure for Operational Staff</li><li>f) Academic Mentoring Code of Practice</li><li>g) Bullying &amp; Harassment Policy and Procedure (Students)</li><li>h) Exceptional Circumstances Code of Practice</li><li>i) Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students</li><li>j) Student Attendance and Engagement Policy</li><li>k) Support to Study Policy</li></ul>
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