

Maternity & Paternity Policy

Maternity & Paternity Leave

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK has a policy on Maternity and Paternity Leave for Scholars who are:

1. PhD Scholars (undertaking a doctoral degree at a UK university)
2. Split-site PhD Scholars (undertaking a doctoral degree outside the UK but who are attending a component of their studies in the UK)

Maternity Leave

Section 1: Where a Scholar intends to give birth in the UK:

PhD Scholars

1. **Subject to the agreement of the Scholar's university*** a PhD Scholar, not on fieldwork, may have **up to a maximum** of 17 weeks paid Maternity Leave and up to a further 35 weeks of unpaid leave in the UK.
2. **To qualify for Maternity Leave the Scholar must notify the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Secretariat in writing by the 26th week of pregnancy of:**
3.
 - a) the Expected Date of Delivery
 - b) the date the Scholar proposes to start the Maternity Leave
 - c) the amount of unpaid leave the Scholar proposes to take (if any); the unpaid leave must immediately follow the paid leave.
4. In addition, the Scholar must forward to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Secretariat written confirmation of:
 - a) the Expected Date of Delivery from the Scholar's General Practitioner or Midwife **and**
 - b) the UK university's agreement to maternity leave, giving the agreed dates of leave from the university
5. The Maternity Leave must start no earlier than 11 weeks before the expected date of delivery and no later than the date the baby is born.
6. If a Scholar develops a maternity-related illness within 4 weeks of the expected date of delivery, the Maternity Leave starts on the first day of absence.

7. In the event the baby is born before the date the Scholar proposes to start the Maternity Leave, the Maternity Leave commences on the date the baby is born.
8. Maternity Leave will only be paid to Scholars on award in the UK.
9. If a scholar decides to travel home after a period of paid maternity leave, then they will need to cover their own costs, including visa and IHS costs.
10. Maternity Leave will be paid at the rate the Scholar received the month before commencing Maternity Leave.
11. A copy of the baby's birth certificate must be submitted to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Secretariat as soon as it is available.
12. Illness during Maternity Leave, whether paid or unpaid, does not qualify for use of the exceptional extension policy.
13. Maternity Leave automatically stops if a Scholar requests resources, say, to attend a conference.
14. If the NHS decides to charge the Scholar for ante-natal and/or maternity care the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission will not reimburse the charges.
15. **Maternity leave must start within the 36-month tenure of an award.**

Section 2: Where a Scholar intends to return to their home country to give birth:

1. **Subject to the agreement of the Scholar's university*** a PhD Scholar may receive a CSC funded flight to return home to give birth. Stipend will be suspended for the duration that the Scholar is out of the country, and the period of suspension will be added to the award tenure. If the scholar needs to apply for a new visa to return to the UK, the CSC will cover the cost of the visa and IHS cost.
2. **To qualify for Maternity Leave Fare the Scholar must notify the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Secretariat in writing by the 26th week of pregnancy of:**
 - a) the Expected Date of Delivery
 - b) the date the Scholar proposes to return home
 - c) the date the Scholar intends to return to the UK

In addition, the Scholar must forward to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Secretariat written confirmation of:

 - a) the Expected Date of Delivery from the Scholar's General Practitioner or Midwife with confirmation that they can fly on the intended date that the Maternity Fare has been requested; **and**
 - b) the UK university's agreement to maternity leave, giving the agreed dates of leave from the university
3. If the Scholar develops a maternity-related illness and is unable to travel, or if circumstances change and the Scholar no longer intends to return home to give birth, the provisions under Section 1 will apply.
4. A copy of the baby's birth certificate must be submitted to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Secretariat as soon as it is available.

5. **The first leg of the maternity leave must be taken within the 36-month tenure of an award.**

Split-site PhD Scholars

1. **Subject to the agreement of the Scholar's university***, a split-site PhD Scholar may have **up to 6 weeks** paid Maternity Leave if the baby is due during the period of study in the UK;
2. However
 - a) if the baby is due within 13 weeks of the start of the period of study in the UK, it is recommended that the Scholar delays her arrival for 19 weeks [subject to the agreement of the Scholar's university]
 - b) if the baby is due within 13 weeks of the end of the period of study in the UK, it is recommended that the Scholar goes home 19 weeks sooner than originally agreed with the CSC and returns for 19 weeks the following year [subject to the agreement of the Scholar's university]
3. To qualify for Maternity Leave the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Secretariat must be notified in writing by the 26th week of pregnancy of:
 - a) the Expected Date of Delivery
 - b) the date the Scholar proposes to start the Maternity Leave
4. In addition, the Scholar must forward to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Secretariat written confirmation of:
 - a) the Expected Date of Delivery from the Scholar's General Practitioner or Midwife **and**
 - b) the UK university's agreement to maternity leave, giving the agreed dates of leave from the university
5. The Maternity Leave must start no earlier than 4 weeks before the expected date of delivery and no later than the date the baby is born
6. If a Scholar develops a maternity-related illness within 4 weeks of the expected date of delivery, the Maternity Leave starts on the first day of absence.
7. In the event the baby is born before the date the Scholar proposes to start the Maternity Leave, the Maternity Leave commences on the date the baby is born.
8. Maternity Leave will only be paid to Scholar's on award in the UK.
9. If a scholar decides to travel home after a period of paid maternity leave, then they will need to cover their own costs, including visa and IHS costs if they intend to return to the UK.
10. Maternity Leave will be paid at the rate the Scholar received the month before commencing Maternity Leave.
11. A certified copy of the baby's birth certificate must be submitted to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission Secretariat as soon as it is available.
12. Illness during Maternity Leave does not qualify for use of the exceptional extension policy.

13. Maternity Leave automatically stops if a Scholar requests resources, say, to attend a conference.
14. If the NHS decides to charge the Scholar for ante-natal and/or maternity care the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission will not reimburse the charges.

Paternity Leave

PhD Scholars and split-site PhD Scholars may have 2 consecutive weeks of paid Paternity Leave subject to the agreement of the Scholar's university*. The Paternity Leave must be taken either during the last 11 weeks of the pregnancy of the award-holder's partner or within 13 weeks of the birth of the baby.

For paternity leave to be authorised, the scholar intending to claim paternity leave should, prior to the birth of the baby, forward confirmation of the due date from the GP/midwife and written confirmation from the university that the paternity leave has been authorised.

** UK visa regulations mean that it is at the discretion of the institution sponsoring a Scholar's visa whether they support an absence from studies for 'maternity/paternity leave' and for how long a period of leave will be granted.*

We recommend that you speak with an International Student Adviser at your university as soon as possible to discuss your options and obtain immigration advice before contacting the CSC regarding your eligibility for an extension on the grounds of maternity/paternity.