Email to students who are parents

This message is for students who are parents or have caring responsibilities.

Dear students,

We realise that juggling childcare, homeschooling, and other caring responsibilities can be challenging alongside your studies at the best of times, and particularly at the moment we recognise that this may have an impact on your academic life. To try and support you through this, we have pulled together a summary of the help which is available:

Academic support

Extensions & Deferring Assessment (undergraduate and postgraduate taught students)
You may wish to request an extension to your assessment, and you can do this via the usual channels in your department - either by emailing seaswelfare@sheffield.ac.uk, or by completing the online Extenuating Circumstances Form. We will consider all requests as flexibly as possible, whilst using our knowledge of upcoming work to avoid bunching work at a later date. In some cases you may find that it is recommended to defer an assessment to summer: this is called Not-Assessing module(s). The student support team within your department(s) will discuss the most appropriate actions with you.

It may be that you don’t need a specific extension now, however you may wish to let your department know the impact the current situation has had on your academic work by completing an extenuating circumstances form - again, by either by emailing seaswelfare@sheffield.ac.uk, or by completing the online Extenuating Circumstances Form. You don’t need to request a specific action as part of this, you can complete the form so that the Exam Board is aware of your situation and can take this into consideration, particularly if your degree is borderline between classifications.

More generally, the university has committed to a number of actions to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on your studies, and you can find more details here: www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/course/mitigating-covid-19-impact.

Financial support
You can submit an application for financial support due to the impact of Covid-19 through a dedicated application form: www.sheffield.ac.uk/funding/student-covid-19-support-fund. For example, you may wish to apply to the funds for unexpected childcare costs, or additional costs for increased internet usage. We also understand things can change and if you have already applied to the fund and your circumstances have since changed, for example internet issues, childcare responsibilities, you can apply again.

If you need specific support for IT Equipment, then please find a support web page and application here: www.sheffield.ac.uk/funding/it-equipment-support.

Peer support
We understand the value of having support from people navigating similar circumstances to your own, and there are two Facebook groups you may find useful:

- A group for students with childcare responsibilities link: www.facebook.com/groups/sheffieldsu.studentparents
- A group for mature students too: www.facebook.com/groups/sheffieldsu.maturestudents

**Postgraduate Research Students specific support groups**
The Parent-PGR network aims to bring together postgraduate researchers who are also parents, or about to be parents, or who are thinking about becoming parents. They aim to discuss issues, share strategies and resources, and campaign for greater awareness of the challenges of balancing doctoral study with parenthood, and work in partnership with the broader Parents@TUoS network. You can join the network for further information on forthcoming events by following this link: www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/ecr/wellbeing/networks

**Study space**
If you are able to leave your home, and don’t have appropriate working space, then additional bookable space has opened recently on campus, and can be accessed and booked via Resource Bookings through MUSE. Informal study space is now also available at the Students’ Union in Uni Central (Level 4). This is available on a drop-in basis in addition to Inox Dine (Level 5), from 9am-6pm every day, including weekends. PGR student access to the Graduate Research Centre (Dainton Building) has recently been updated, further details can be found here. Read the full list of study spaces here: www.sheffield.ac.uk/learning-spaces.

**Support services**
Finding time to look after yourself can be one of the biggest challenges at the moment, and there are lots of support services available. If you feel you’d benefit from some advice and support, then the Wellbeing Service is a great starting point, and you can find details of blogs, tips and one to one appointments here - www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/wellbeing.

**Other ways we can help**
We are looking into other support we could specifically offer to you, as well as closely keeping an eye on any changes to government advice regarding school places for children (currently key workers only). As a University, we are also looking into developing a dedicated and facilitated support session run by our Wellbeing Advisers, and we are also really keen to hear from you about other ways we can help to support you. Please feel free to email artsstudentexperience@sheffield.ac.uk with any suggestions.