




**WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY  
STUDENT PREGNANCY  
POLICY**

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# Policy on Student Pregnancy

<b>Sponsor division</b>	<b>Student Development and Support Services</b>
<b>Responsible Department</b>	<b>Residences Unit</b>
<b>Related WSU policies</b>	
<b>Policy name</b>	<b>Policy Name</b>
<b>Room Allocations Policy</b>	
<b>WSU General Prospectus</b>	
<b>Change History</b>	
<b>Approval authority</b>	<b>Council</b>
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<b>Effective date</b>	<b>1 September 2015</b>
 ----- <b>Chairperson of Council</b>	

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>STUDENT PREGNANCY POLICY</b>		
<b>POLICY NO:</b>	SA: 09	<b>APPROVED BY</b>	COUNCIL
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<b>CUSTODIAN OF THIS POLICY:</b>	Executive Director: Student Development and Support Services		
<b>REFER QUESTIONS TO:</b>	Executive Director: Student Development and Support Services		

## Key Policy Elements

### 1. Title

The Title of this Policy shall be: WSU Student Pregnancy Policy

### 2. Preamble

WSU is experiencing serious challenges in providing assistance to students who give birth during awkward times when clinic staff is not available after hours. Such situations may leave the institution open to litigation when accidents related to pregnancy occur within our premises.

### 3. Purpose

The purpose of the Policy is to provide guidelines that clearly stipulate the process and procedure to be followed if a student falls pregnant while residing in WSU Residences.

The Policy also seeks to address risk issues that the University cannot be held liable for in the event where a fatal event happens to a pregnant student while residing in our residences.

### 4. Scope

The Policy is applicable to WSU students seeking admission into WSU residences while pregnant and those that fall pregnant while residing in our residences.

The scope of this document is also to inform students, in particular resident students, residence management and student leaders what procedures to follow in the case of suspecting a pregnancy, what their rights are and what the implications of their possible actions may be.

The document would further inform all parties regarding what resources and support systems are available to them on campus and particularly in Student Affairs.

## **5. Definitions of Key Words or Concepts**

- 5.1 Pregnancy: Pregnancy is the physical condition of a woman carrying unborn offspring inside her body from fertilization to birth.
- 5.2 First Tri-mester: First 3 Months of the pregnancy
- 5.3 Second Tri-mester: Months 4-6 of the pregnancy
- 5.4 Third Tri-mester: Months 7-9 of the pregnancy
- 5.5 TOP: Termination Of Pregnancy
- 5.6 SDSS : Student Development and Support Services

## **6. PREVENTION OF UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES**

Most of the pregnancies that occur amongst the students on campus are unplanned and are accompanied by severe emotional trauma. Thus the biggest focus would be on prevention of unplanned pregnancies through the following action steps:

- 6.1 Compulsory first year orientation talks provided by the Campus Health Service regarding all sexual health issues.
- 6.2 Ongoing awareness regarding contraceptives, safe sex choices and decision making. This will be done in the form of flat talks, hostel campaigns, pamphlets and poster distribution to all residences.
- 6.3 At least two other residence campaigns regarding pregnancy prevention and options available.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS WHEN SUSPECTING A PREGNANCY

7.1 Pregnant students are recommended to report their situation to the following people or departments:

- Campus Health Service to assist with all physical care that the student may need or refer her to the relevant services according to her decision regarding the pregnancy
- Student Counselling for counselling and emotional support
- Either the Residence Officers or House Committee Members for ongoing support and room arrangements while away with confinement
- Her parents and the father of the baby, for emotional and other support during and post delivery, should she choose to keep her pregnancy

The aim of the above voluntary consultation is to reduce any negative impact that the pregnancy could possibly have on the furtherance of the respective student's studies.

7.2 A student will never be discriminated against on the basis of her pregnancy.

7.3 All shared information will be kept in confidence and only divulged to another person on the **written consent** of the pregnant student.

7.4 The student will be informed that the University has no obligation to make such special arrangements as moving the pregnant student to another room on lower levels, in the case of the student living on a top floor.

7.5 In the case where a student is sharing a room, it is recommended that she informs her roommate. If the roommate indicates that she is unwilling to share a room with a pregnant person, that roommate will be referred for counselling and provided with health education regarding pregnancy and procedures to follow in case of labour.

7.6 Students will be recommended to leave the residences at 28 weeks for delivery before the due date in accordance with medical advice but can still attend classes.

- 7.7 The student will be advised to consult with the relevant Dean and/or Faculty Officer to make the necessary arrangements for loss of lecture time and writing of special examinations.
- 7.8 Should a student of her own accord not leave the residence within the set 28 weeks, she must be clearly informed that the University, Residences staff or Management cannot be held responsible for complications and/or organising transport.
- 7.9 In all instances the University and Student Residences cannot be held liable by the student or parents/guardian of any misfortune the student might experience during her pregnancy.
- 7.10 The Student must be made to understand that the baby cannot be brought back to residence after delivery.
- 7.11 The student will be allowed to return to residence after delivery of the baby, on the condition that the student has made the necessary arrangement for her room to be reserved for her return prior to leaving the residences.
- 7.12 The student will be liable for fees during her absence.
- 7.13 All students will annually sign a relevant document indicating that they are aware of these guidelines that form part of all residence guidelines.

## **8. Policy Content and Guiding Principles**

### Residence Allocation Process for Pregnant Students

- 8.1.1 All students (new and returning) who need accommodation while pregnant need to report their pregnancy to Residence Officers when allocated a room. They also have to produce a letter from a doctor indicating their gestational period.
- 8.2 Students who wish to have their room reserved while waiting for confinement have to arrange with the Residence Officers.

## **9. Statutory structure to approve, adjust and review the policy**

The first structure responsible for the approval of this policy is the Student Services Council.

Once approved the Policy will be forwarded to the Institutional Forum for recommendation to Council.

The review process of the Policy will start with the SDSS consulting the Student Representative Council and follow the same route outlined above for recommendations and approval

## **10. Administration of Policy**

The policy should be administered by Residence Officers together with the Campus Health Services as the primary personnel to implement the Policy. SDSS Directors in various campuses should monitor the implementation of the policy. The Internal Audit Office should oversee the process of implementation.

Matters of concern about the policy or the implementation thereof should be submitted to the SDSS Directors.

## **11. Custodianship of Policy**

The Policy is a SDSS Residences Unit Policy led by the Executive Director SDSS. Residence Officers, Campus Health Services and the SDSS Directors are the primary custodians of the Policy.

## **12. Effective Date of Policy**

The Policy shall be effective upon the finalization of the review process as signed by Council.

## **13. References**

The following documents were used to develop the policy:

- The WSU general prospectus
- The SDSS Handbook for students
- The Residences Brochure
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, second edition, October 2004.
- Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act nr. 92 of 1996 as amended
- Management of Pregnant Students in the Residences at NMMU

