



**5 GENDER EQUALITY**

**Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

### 5.6.3. Maternity Policy Framework Supporting Women in Higher Education



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## Policy Document for Maternity

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### SDGs Directly Supported:

- **SDG 5 – Gender Equality**
- **SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being**

### Indirectly Supported:

- **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities**
- **SDG 1 – No Poverty**
- **SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth**



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## **Maternity Policy**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this Maternity Policy is to provide a supportive and enabling environment for women faculty, staff, and students of St. Peter's Institute of Higher Education and Research (SPIHER) by ensuring equitable opportunities for work-life balance and promoting the active participation of women in academic and professional settings. This policy is designed to address the needs of pregnant employees, mothers, and those returning to work after maternity leave, as well as provide guidance on the Institute's commitment to ensuring a supportive and non-discriminatory environment for women.

### **Objectives of the Policy**

- To provide sufficient leave and workplace support for female employees and students during and after pregnancy.
- To create an environment where women can continue their professional and academic careers without being disadvantaged by their role as mothers.
- To ensure that pregnancy, childbirth, and maternity leave do not affect women's opportunities for career advancement, academic success, or workplace participation.

### **Implementations of the Policy**

This policy applies to all female employees and women students who are enrolled full-time in degree programs at SPIHER. Maternity leave is available to women who have worked at SPIHER for a minimum of 12 months prior to the birth of their child. Maternity leave will be granted for a period of 26 weeks (6 months) in total. Flexible leave arrangements are also available for the faculty (12 weeks before the delivery and 14 weeks after) if mutually agreed upon with their department head or supervisor. The Institute also permits extension of maternity leave if a faculty requires additional time to care for her newborn, maternity leave may be extended upon submission of a medical certificate from a registered healthcare provider. Faculty who adopt a child under the age of 3 years or use surrogacy services will also be entitled to the same maternity leave as natural mothers.

The Institute provides flexible working hours during pregnancy to help accommodate medical appointments or to alleviate physical discomfort including access to more comfortable seating, reducing physical strain, or limiting exposure to harmful substances. Depending on the need, the faculty can also work online if it is more comfortable for them.

The Institute also supports in returning to work in a phased manner with part-time working hours, flexible work arrangements or a reduction in duties for a couple of months.

Female students who are enrolled in degree programs and are expecting a child are entitled to maternity leave for up to 6 months without affecting their academic schedule and any arrangements needed for exams, assignments, or practical courses. The students can request academic flexibility, including extensions for assignments, rescheduled exams, or additional leave during the maternity period. The Institute also provides alternative learning opportunities or deferred assessments to the students. Academic advisors and counselors assist the student in adjusting to their coursework after their return. The Institute also offers additional tutoring, counseling, or online resources to help students catch up with missed coursework.

The Institute also ensures that no faculty or student will be discriminated against or subjected to unfair treatment due to pregnancy or maternity leave including Job status, educational progress and will be entitled to return to their previous position or an equivalent position with the same terms and conditions of employment. The Institute ensures a zero-tolerance policy toward harassment or discrimination related to pregnancy or maternity status.

The Institute is committed to promoting a supportive and inclusive environment where women can fully participate in academic, professional, and campus life, regardless of maternity or family responsibilities. This policy reflects the commitment of the Institute towards gender equality, supporting the well-being of women, and enabling their continued success in both their careers and academic pursuits.

**01.02.2024**



**REGISTRAR**



Registrar  
St. Peter's Institute of Higher Education and Research  
(Deemed to be University U/S 3 of the UGC Act. 1956)  
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SPIHER's maternity policy reflects its deep commitment to SDG 5—achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The institution recognizes that supporting women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period is essential not only for their health and well-being but also for ensuring equal opportunities in education and employment. By providing a strong, compassionate, and practical maternity policy, SPIHER helps women balance their academic or professional responsibilities while taking care of their growing families.

The policy ensures that pregnant students and staff members are treated with respect, dignity, and understanding. It provides maternity leave in accordance with national regulations, allowing mothers the time needed to rest, recover, and bond with their newborns without fear of losing academic progress or job security. Flexible academic arrangements, such as adjusted deadlines, attendance considerations, and support from faculty, help pregnant students continue their studies smoothly. For staff, maternity leave, job protection, and a supportive return-to-work process foster an inclusive work culture where women feel valued and protected.

SPIHER also emphasizes the importance of health and well-being during maternity. The institution encourages regular medical check-ups, access to counselling services, and awareness programs on maternal health and nutrition. This approach ensures that women receive holistic support—physically, emotionally, and socially—throughout the maternity period. The policy further promotes safe and inclusive spaces on campus, such as rest areas and private rooms for lactation, helping new mother's transition comfortably into their responsibilities.



### **Empowering Mothers with Compassionate Support**

Aligned with SDG 5, SPIHER's maternity policy works to remove barriers that could limit women's participation in education or the workforce. By creating a nurturing and equitable environment, the institution champions gender equality and empowers women to

pursue their aspirations without interruption. Through continued commitment to inclusive practices, SPIHER sets an example of how educational institutions can strengthen gender-responsive policies and build a more supportive future for all.

## **Conclusion**

SPIHER maternity policy stands as a powerful affirmation of the institution's dedication to safeguarding women's rights, promoting gender equality, and ensuring that motherhood never becomes a barrier to academic or professional growth. By offering comprehensive support ranging from maternity leave and flexible arrangements to health guidance and safe campus facilities the policy creates an environment where women can thrive with confidence and dignity.

Grounded in the principles of SDG 5, this policy not only protects the well-being of pregnant students and staff but also strengthens SPIHER culture of inclusion, respect, and equal opportunity. Through its continued commitment to nurturing a supportive academic and workplace ecosystem, SPIHER empowers women to pursue their ambitions while balancing the responsibilities of motherhood, setting a meaningful example for other institutions to follow.