

Recommendations and Regulations: Balancing Studies and Family Life at Universität Hamburg

Ratified on 18 April by the Executive University Board of Universität Hamburg
Revised version dated 28 January 2019, Department 3: Studies and Teaching, and the Family Office

Universität Hamburg promotes equality and is a family-friendly university. This means that combining study or work with family life is an integral aspect of university culture, which recognizes the special needs of those who care for either children or relatives.

As a state institution, the University is subject to these principles in accordance with the Basic Law (Grundgesetz, GG), the Framework Act on Higher Education (Hochschulrahmengesetz, HRG), and the Higher Education Act (Hochschulgesetz, HmbHG). Section 3 subsection 7 HmbHG stipulates that the special needs of students with children be taken into account. In addition, families have special protection pursuant to Art. 6 GG, and parents in particular are entitled to special support from the community.

The following information provides an overview of the ways Universität Hamburg supports students responsible for providing care for children or sick or elderly relatives.

I. Organizing your studies

Contacts:

The Campus Center can answer the following questions about organizing your studies in a manner compatible with family life (www.uni-hamburg.de/en/campuscenter).

Admission

Applicants may apply for admission within the hardship quota if they provide care for children under 18 or similar family circumstances apply, for example, if they provide care for elderly or sick relatives and are therefore bound to Hamburg as the place of study. When you submit your general application, you can also submit a hardship application (www.uni-hamburg.de/en/campuscenter/bewerbung/bachelor-staatsexamen/sonderantraege).

The time following the acquisition of the higher education entrance eligibility (e.g., Abitur) is considered as waiting period if a student does not enroll during this time. Thus, when calculating the waiting period, periods of time when a student is pregnant or looking after or providing care for a child under 18 or a sick or elderly relative are taken into account. However, this applies only to the admission to the first subject semester.

Applicants who are offered admission, but are not able to enroll because they are looking after or providing care for a child or an elderly or sick relative, may submit an application for preferred admission if they enroll within the two university place allocation procedures immediately following their caregiving responsibilities. This guarantees a place at university.

Enrollment

Students who withdraw from their studies to provide care for a child or sick or elderly relative can re-enroll without applying for readmission for up to three years following withdrawal provided they re-enroll no later than two semesters after the reason for withdrawal ceases to be valid.

Semester re-enrollment

Problems due to pregnancy, childbirth, childcare, or the care of a sick or elderly relative may be taken into account as reasons for late re-enrollment. The fees charged for late re-enrollment are detailed in the current fee table.

Academic Leave

Periods of parental leave and providing care for a sick or elderly relative for up to three years or six semesters are accepted as reasons for taking academic leave. Statutory maternity leave or pregnancy may also be accepted as valid reasons for academic leave if health reasons limit or make it impossible for the student to study. If the reason for academic leave arises in the current semester, students may apply for academic leave at the time, even if semester re-enrollment deadlines have passed. Students who can prove sufficient grounds, for example, chronic illness of a child, may apply for further semesters of academic leave. Semesters of academic leave do not count toward the subject semesters required to complete your degree in the regular period of study or other deadlines. Academic leave is not granted for the first subject semester.

During a semester of academic leave, students may:

- repeat examinations not passed in the previous semester;
- finish coursework and examinations begun in the previous semester.

Further information: www.uni-hamburg.de/en/beurlaubung

Part-time-study

Students with children or sick or elderly relatives can apply to study part-time (www.uni-hamburg.de/en/teilzeitstudium). Generally speaking, deadlines specified in the university examination regulations are extended in a part-time degree so that one subject semester is equivalent to two semesters. Further details are set out in the university examination regulations; see also the [handout on studying part-time at Universität Hamburg](#) (PDF, in German only). Applications for part-time study must be submitted together with either your application for admission or your semester re-enrollment for two consecutive semesters. You may submit repeat applications.

Should your circumstances change such that there are no longer grounds for part-time study, for example, if due to a separation you no longer look after a child, you must inform the University immediately.

Part-time students are not eligible for the federal student loan scheme (Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz, BAföG). For more information on part-time study and BAföG, please contact [Studierendenwerk Hamburg](#).

II. Studies

Contacts:

For all matters relating to your field of study, your departmental academic office is the first point of contact: www.uni-hamburg.de/en/campuscenter/beratung/weitere-beratungseinrichtungen/studienbueros.html.

Classes

Obligatory:

Similar to the terms for employees, a child's illnesses are equivalent to periods of your own illness and must be accepted as reasons for absences or delays in completing courses or examinations. When relevant documentation is submitted (e.g., written confirmation from the pediatrician or childcare facility / caregiver), unavailability of care for children or sick or elderly relatives must be accepted as the reason for the delay.

Female students must be granted leave for doctor's appointments required for pregnancy and maternity.

During the first twelve months after childbirth, nursing mothers should be granted breaks as needed to breastfeed.

If pregnant or nursing women miss classes with mandatory attendance, their absence shall be excused if they submit the relevant documentation.

Recommended:

If adequate reasons are provided, students with family obligations should be offered the possibility to make up missed sessions so that they can achieve the qualification objective of the module.

When planning the curriculum, particularly required classes, instructors should take the special needs of students with children or other caregiving tasks into consideration. These students should receive preference for the classes that take place in a time slot that suits them.

The faculties should make greater use of e-learning opportunities as these give students with families greater flexibility in organizing their studies.

Examinations

Obligatory:

The university exam regulations must take the special needs of students with children into account (cf. Section 60 subsection 2, clause 16 HmbHG).

The provisions of the protection of mothers at work and during training or studies act (Gesetz zum Schutz von Müttern bei der Arbeit, in der Ausbildung und im Studium, MuSchG) shall also apply to students who are pregnant or nursing (for more information, see handouts [no. 16](#) and [no.17](#) (PDF, in German only) issued by Department 31: Quality Management and Legal Affairs).

Female students must be granted leave for doctor's appointments required for pregnancy and maternity.

During the first twelve months after childbirth, nursing mothers should be granted breaks as needed to breastfeed.

Similar to the terms for employees, a child's illnesses are equivalent to periods of your own illness and must be accepted as reasons for an extension or withdrawal from an examination. When relevant documentation is submitted (e.g., written confirmation from the pediatrician or childcare facility / caregiver), unavailability of care for children or sick or elderly relatives must be accepted as the compelling reason for the extension or withdrawal.

Recommended:

If examination dates are scheduled exclusively outside the normal opening hours of childcare facilities, students who do not have childcare available should, if possible, be offered an alternative date. In addition, please inform students about the [flexible childcare options offered, for example, by Studierendenwerk Hamburg](#).

According to the regulations for statutory maternity leave, students who miss an examination can be offered an alternative date.

III. Advising services

The [academic offices](#) are the first point of contact for students with questions or concerns about studying with family.

In case of difficulties or discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy, parenting, or family care responsibilities during your studies, the following offices serve as the second point of contact: the [Family Office](#) at Universität Hamburg, the [Center for Academic Advising and Psychological Counseling](#), the student initiative [UniEltern](#), and [social counseling provided by Studierendenwerk Hamburg](#).