



Menopause Policy

Responsible Office	Human Resources
Responsible Officer	Equalities Officer
Approving Authority	Senior Leadership Group
Date of Approval	November 2022
Effective Date	November 2022
Related Procedures	- Flexible Working
Related University Policies	- Equality Policy
Amended (if applicable)	
Supersedes	
Next review due	November 2025

1. Introduction

Bath Spa University is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment for its staff and students and aims to be a menopause-friendly University.

- 1.1 Menopause is a stage of life but may not be an easy transition. With the right support, it can be so much better, and that can often start in the workplace.
- 1.2 Menopause is often seen as taboo or hidden. At Bath Spa University we want to be able to talk about and be aware of menopause just as we are everything else.
- 1.3 For staff and students experiencing symptoms it may be a difficult and stressful time, and this policy sets out guidelines on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work and within education.
- 1.4 We understand that many people (including and not limited to: trans and non-binary folk) may experience menopause-type symptoms and our aim is to be a fully inclusive organisation and help all members of our university community be at their best.

This policy aims to

- Foster an environment in which members of the Bath Spa Community can openly and comfortably speak about the menopause.
- Ensures that members of our community understand what the menopause is and are aware of the symptoms and its potential impact on working and studies; and feel comfortable to have confidential, constructive conversations.
- Ensure that those experiencing menopause symptoms feel confident to discuss it and ask for support and any reasonable adjustments they may need.

This policy applies to all members of the University community: our staff and students

2. Definitions

- 2.1 According to the NHS, Menopause is: 'When your periods stop due to lower hormone levels. This usually happens between the ages of 45 and 55. It can sometimes happen earlier or later. Some medical procedures or treatments can instigate early menopause.
- 2.2 Perimenopause is when you have symptoms before your periods have stopped. You reach menopause when you have not had a period for 12 months.
- 2.3 Post menopause is when you have been without a period for more than 12 months. Often during this time symptoms of menopause become milder or go away.

3. Symptoms

- 3.1 Menopause can affect people in many ways, and it is different from person to person. They can also manifest both physically and psychologically. The following are symptoms that could occur and it is important to note that not every individual will notice or experience every symptom.
 - Hot flushes
 - Poor concentration
 - Headaches
 - Panic attacks
 - Heavy/light periods

- Anxiety
- Loss of confidence
- Difficulty sleeping and night sweats
- Feeling tired and lacking energy
- Mood swings
- Taking longer to recover from illness
- Aches and pains including muscle and joint stiffness
- Urinary problems
- Noticeable heartbeats
- Skin irritation
- Dry eyes
- Putting on weight.

- 3.2 Employees and students may not feel comfortable disclosing their menopausal or perimenopause symptoms. And those who take time off because of symptoms may also not tell their line manager/ tutor why they need that time off.
- 3.3 For some, particularly where symptoms come unexpectedly or early in life this could cause stress, upset and shock and employees and students may need extra support or flexibility.
- 3.3 This can be because they feel as though their symptoms are a personal matter, it might be embarrassing for them to talk about. They do not know their line manager/ tutor well enough, or they are wary of their line manager/ tutor not understanding or would never experience menopause themselves.
- 3.4 Another worry could be that they may not take the employee/students' symptoms seriously and do not want it to affect their career development and opportunities.

4. Symptom Support and Reasonable Adjustments: Staff

- 4.1 In the first instance it is recommended that the employee should seek medical advice from their GP, where symptoms are prolonged, severe or causing particular distress.
- 4.2 Where employees suffer from severe symptoms, they may have to take time off for sickness absence.
- 4.3 If an employee symptoms are severe, they have a significant impact on a person's ability to do normal daily activities, and the symptoms may last for at least 12 months, menopause symptoms may be classified as a disability under the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.4 Employees are encouraged to speak to their line manager if they are experiencing menopausal symptoms. If they are uncomfortable about speaking to their line manager they can also talk with a trusted colleague or another manager. They can also speak to their HR Business Partner, a trade union representative or the Equalities Officer.
- 4.5 Where adjustments as listed below are unsuccessful or if symptoms are proving more problematic the Line Manager may go to Occupational Health. Or use the wellness action plan.
- 4.6 Occupational health:

The role of Occupational Health is to:

- Carry out a holistic assessment of individuals as to whether or not menopause may be contributing to symptoms/wellbeing, providing advice and guidance in line with up-to-date research.
- Signpost to appropriate sources of help and advice.
- Provide support and advice to HR and Line Managers in determining and agreeing on adjustments, if required.

4.7 Symptoms and Simple Adjustments

Hot flushes

- Request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk (where possible a USB-connected desk fan to ensure it is environmentally friendly) or moving near a window, or away from a heat source.
- Easy access to drinking water.
- Able to adapt clothing if required, such as by removing a jacket.
- If available, have access to a rest room for breaks if their work involves long periods of standing or sitting, or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush.

Heavy/light periods

- Have permanent access to washroom facilities
- Be able to request an extra uniform, if required to wear a uniform for work
- Where possible, have sanitary products available in washrooms in order to obtain personal protection
- Ensure storage space is available for a change of clothing

Headaches

- Easy access to drinking water
- Offer a quiet space to work
- Where appropriate, offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices
- Have time out to take medication if needed

Difficulty sleeping

- Ask to be considered for flexible working or come in late and make time up later, particularly if suffering from a lack of sleep.

Low mood

- Agree time out from others, when required
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of the work area
- Identify a 'time out space' to be able to go to 'clear their head'
- Sign post to Lifeworks or a mental health first aider

Loss of confidence

- Ensure there are regular catch up meetings
- Have regular protected time with their manager to discuss any issues
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work

Poor concentration

- Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse and adjust working pattern/practice accordingly
- Review task allocation and workload
- Provide books for lists, action boards, or other memory-assisting equipment
- Offer quiet space to work
- Where appropriate, offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices
- Reduce interruptions

- Have agreements in place in an open office that an individual is having 'protected time', so that they are not disturbed
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work

Anxiety

- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of work area
- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques
- Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises, or going for a walk

Panic attacks

- Agree time out from others, when required
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to outside of the work area
- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques
- Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises, or going for a walk.

5. Symptom Support and Reasonable Adjustments: Students

- 5.1 In the first instance it is recommended that the student should seek medical advice from their GP, where symptoms are prolonged, severe or causing particular distress.
- 5.2 Where students suffer from severe symptoms, they may need to be absent from taught sessions for sickness absence.
- 5.3 If a student's symptoms are severe, they have a significant impact on a person's ability to do normal daily activities, and the symptoms may last for at least 12 months, menopause symptoms may be classified as a disability under the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.4 Students are encouraged to speak to Student Wellbeing Services if they are experiencing menopausal symptoms which are impacting on their studies. They can also speak to their Academic Adviser.
- 5.5 Student Wellbeing Services

The role of Student Wellbeing Services can include:

- Discussing the student's symptoms and impact/potential impact on their studies
- Signpost to appropriate sources of help and advice.
- Provide support and advice to academic staff in determining and agreeing on adjustments, if required.

- 5.6 Simple Adjustments to manage symptoms:

- Request temperature control in taught sessions, such as moving near a window, or away from a heat source.
- Easy access to drinking water.
- Able to adapt clothing if required, such as by removing a jacket.
- Have permanent access to washroom facilities
- Where possible, have sanitary products available in washrooms in order to obtain personal protection
- Have time out from taught sessions to take medication if needed

- Where possible, request a change in timetabled sessions, for example changing to a seminar group with a later start.
- Able to access support from a Student Wellbeing Adviser or Mental Health Adviser
- Ability to access the Student Assistance Programme
- Access to Student Wellbeing initiatives, such as Mindfulness sessions and anxiety management workshops
- Ability to access the exceptional circumstances procedure where menopause symptoms impact on assignment completion

6. Responsibilities

6.1 All staff, students, academic advisers and line managers are responsible for:

- Taking personal responsibility to look after their own health.
- Being open and honest in conversations with managers/ HR/ Occupational Health/Student Wellbeing Services
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working/study environment.
- Being willing to support and help staff and students
- Respecting confidentiality if another staff member/student reaches out and talks to you about their symptoms and be supportive of any adjustments they may be receiving.
- Following our equality policy and not making any judgments about what a member of staff or student is going through.
- Signposting to appropriate sources of help and advice where appropriate to do so
- Remember that menopause is not gendered, anyone who has a uterus and can bleed, including and not limited to trans and non-binary folk can also experience menopause.

6.2 All Line Managers, Academic Advisers and Student Wellbeing Advisers are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the Menopause Policy and understand the symptoms and support that can be provided for staff and students.
- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the discussion and treating this discussion sensitively and professionally.
- Agree with the individual how they can be best supported.
- Agree on adjustments (if necessary), record these adjustments, implement actions and ensure an ongoing dialogue and review dates.
- Ensure all adjustments are adhered to.
- Signposting their employee to their HR Business Partner. Who can provide advice and support on reasonable adjustments or...
 - Referring to Occupational Health, if needed and as above.

7. Resources for Further Help and Support.

[Coping with the menopause NHS - YouTube](#)

[Daisy Network \(premature menopause\)](#)

[Henpicked](#)

[The Menopause Exchange](#)

[Menopause Matters](#)

[Menopause Support](#)

[Menopause Glossary Terms](#)

[NHS](#)

[Lifeworks](#)

[Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#)

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed on a three-year cycle.

