

POLICY ON THE ALLOCATION OF RADCLIFFE DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE (RDM) SPONSORED NURSERY PLACES

Introduction

This policy is designed to outline the Radcliffe Department of Medicine's approach to managing its sponsored nursery places, and to give guidance on how these places will be advertised and how applications can be made.

The policy is non-contractual, and the department reserves the right to amend it at any time.

Background

The University has a number of nurseries in Oxford, as well as a number of places at other nurseries in and around Oxford. Demand is exceptionally high, and places are provided for students and employees of the University.

The University currently allocates places according to the following priorities:

1. Parents or children with a disability;
2. Lone parent;
3. Those with a sibling already using University nursery provision;
4. Those who have been nominated under the sponsored places scheme (including the RDM sponsored places);
5. Parent of child is an Oxford University student;
6. Applicants who do not fall into one of the above categories.

The University has a scheme that enables colleges and departments to nominate staff or students for a priority place on the nursery waiting list (called a "sponsored place"). **An RDM "sponsored place" therefore moves the child of an employee from category 6 to category 4 within the University's prioritisation process. A sponsored place does not guarantee a nursery place, and recipients of sponsored places will be liable to pay all nursery fees.**

Within each of the above categories, priority is given to those who have been on the University's nursery waiting list for the longest period of time.

RDM sponsored nursery places

RDM has a limited number of sponsored places (for 2025-2027 two places have been allocated to RDM). This enables the Department to nominate a current academic or academic-related or member of support staff for a priority place on the nursery waiting list, thereby elevating them to a significantly higher point on the waiting list.

It is, however, important to note the following in relation to the Department's sponsored places:

- a. Should the beneficiary parent be fortunate enough to be granted a sponsored place by the Department, and therefore be nominated to the priority list in category 4, this does not guarantee them a place within a University Nursery;
- b. In addition, should the beneficiary parent subsequently achieve a place within the University Nursery, they will be liable to pay all nursery fees;

The following general points are also relevant:

1. The Department's sponsored places will not normally be offered to students, as students who are parents of a child are already prioritised under the University's criteria.
2. Should an RDM sponsored place be given to an individual who subsequently leaves the Department's employment (for whatever reason), the individual must inform University Childcare Services of their change in circumstances. The sponsored place will then be automatically made re-available to the department, so that it can be offered to another individual.

For more detail about the circumstances in which this may occur, please refer to the Appendix.

3. Applications for an RDM sponsored place can be made at any point after an individual knows that they (or their partner) are pregnant, or have received confirmation that their legal adoption of a child has been approved. This is on the proviso that the parents have already applied to Childcare Services to join the waiting list for University nursery provision.
4. RDM sponsored places are not linked to a specific University nursery placement – they are instead linked to the applicant's position on the University's waiting list.
5. Subject to the provision in point (2) above, RDM sponsored places, once allocated, normally remain with a child until they leave the University nursery system (whether withdrawing from the University nursery provision, or waiting list). This can often mean a period of up to 4 years (i.e. until the child reaches school age).

Advertising of sponsored places

RDM will draw to the attention of employees the existence of its sponsored places by using appropriate media such as the Intranet, noticeboards, periodic emails, information provided to parents who are expecting a baby, or who are prospective adoptive parents, etc.

How to apply for a sponsored place

Applications should be made by completing the form on the RDM Website and sending it to RDM Strategic rdm-strategic-hr@rdm.ox.ac.uk. Applications will normally be held on file until the employee informs the Department that they no longer require a sponsored place.

Sponsored places will only be allocated to those who have formally notified RDM in writing of their interest in being considered for a sponsored place. In the event that an employee has not formally applied for an RDM sponsored place (regardless of whether they are on the University's waiting list) and one becomes available, the

employee will not be considered, and the sponsored place will instead be offered to someone who has formally applied and is already in the Department's waiting 'pool'.

Once an employee has formally applied for an RDM sponsored place, their application will be considered to have been received on the date on which it was received by the Departmental Administrator.

Eligibility for a sponsored nursery place

The Department will only allocate a "sponsored place" to those parents who are, at the time of application, employees of the Department, or who have signed a contract to take up employment. If applications exceed vacancies, (which is likely) applicants will be placed in a waiting 'pool' and will be automatically re-considered (alongside any other applicants also in the waiting pool) when a "sponsored place" becomes available once more.

To apply for an RDM "sponsored place" an employee must have already applied to use University nursery provision with Oxford University Childcare Services.

The following factors may increase the likelihood of an RDM "sponsored place" being offered:

- a. The allocation of a sponsored place is in line with the academic and/or strategic needs of the Department (including any commitments to furthering specific Equality objectives);
- b. the employee's child has already been born (such individuals will typically be given priority over employees whose child has not yet been born);
- c. the other parent is also an employee or student of RDM, and therefore does not have access to another sponsored place or other workplace nursery scheme;
- d. the employee already has other significant caring responsibilities at home (e.g. elderly relative);
- e. the employee has other personal circumstances which make it extremely difficult for them to return to work at the Department without a nursery place for their child;
- f. extenuating circumstances which mean that an employee (or prospective employee) did not join the University's nursery waiting list earlier, and that their position on the University's nursery waiting list therefore makes it unlikely that they will be able to return to, or take up, employment with the Department when the time comes (e.g. those who are coming newly to Oxford to take up employment);
- g. the length of time the employee has been on the University's nursery waiting list.
- h. Length of service may be used as a criteria to decide between applications that are otherwise indistinguishable

Due to the limited number of Department-sponsored nursery places, applicants for these places are encouraged to actively explore all alternative options for securing a sponsored or subsidised nursery place (such as assistance from the employer of a spouse/ partner) before applying for an RDM sponsored nursery place.

Applicants who have not explored alternative options will typically be given lower priority than those who have explored alternative options but have been unsuccessful in obtaining a sponsored or subsidised nursery place.

Accordingly, the Department reserves the right to consider other factors when assessing applications, including (but not limited to):

- i. applicant would already be prioritised for a sponsored place by other established criteria (see 'Background' above);
- j. employee is a joint appointment between RDM and another Department or College within the University which has a sponsored place or other workplace nursery scheme;
- k. employee has a partner who is an employee of the University of Oxford (but not employed by RDM) and whose Department or College has a sponsored place or other workplace nursery scheme;
- l. employee has a partner who is not employed by the University, but who has access to a workplace nursery scheme with their employer;

If any situation arises that does not fall within one of the above criteria, it should be raised with the Head of Administration and Finance (HAF) in writing at the time of application (or as soon as possible thereafter) so that the matter can be considered accordingly.

If one of the Department's sponsored places becomes vacant, the HAF will present current applications to the RDM sponsored nursery places panel* for evaluation as appropriate. There will be no right of appeal against the Committee's decisions.

In line with its strategic objectives at the time, the Department reserves the right to keep one of its "sponsored places" vacant, whether or not there have been applications, and whether or not there are employees in the waiting 'pool'.

Changes of circumstance

If you hold a sponsored place, you must contact both the RDM Strategic Team rdm-strategic-hr@rdm.ox.ac.uk and University Childcare Services immediately if your circumstances change such that you no longer need the sponsored place. The Department can then reallocate it accordingly.

*Membership RDM Sponsored Nursery Places Panel

Dr Jane Sherwood, Head of Administration and Finance, RDM
Dr James Brown, Laboratory Manager, CVM
Dr James Davies, Postdoctoral Researcher, WIMM-NDCLS
Prof Anne Goriely, Professor of Human Genetics, WIMM-NDCLS
Miss Jo Hovard, Business Manager, IMD
Mrs Charlotte Kelly, Deputy Administrator, OCDEM

APPENDIX

List of circumstances where a sponsored place may no longer be available to an individual if they leave the employment of RDM:

1. If an employee is allocated one of our sponsored places and the child already has a University nursery placement, but the employee then leaves the employment of the Department and University completely, they will no longer be eligible to use University nursery provision (regardless of whether the child is already in the Nursery). As such, we would be able to reclaim the sponsored place and allocate it to another employee;
2. If an employee is allocated one of our sponsored places and the child already has a University nursery placement, but the employee then leaves the employment of the Department but stays within the University (i.e. employed by another Department, College or the central University), their child will - at the discretion of Childcare Services – normally remain within the nursery. However, the employee must advise Childcare Services of their change in circumstances, who will then release the sponsored place back to RDM so that it can be allocated to another employee;
3. If an employee is allocated one of our sponsored places but the child has not yet secured a University nursery placement (i.e. they are still on the University's nursery waiting list), in the event that the employee leaves the employment of the Department but stays within the University (i.e. employed by another Department, College or the central University), it will be for their new Department/College to make an application for them to have a sponsored place from their own allocation. Otherwise, the individual will revert to being on the University's nursery waiting list (i.e. without a priority).

The employee must also advise Childcare Services of their change in circumstances, who will then release the sponsored place back to RDM so that it can be allocated to another employee;

4. If an employee is allocated one of our sponsored places but the child has not yet secured a University nursery placement (i.e. they are still on the University's nursery waiting list), in the event that the employee leaves the employment of the Department and University completely, they will no longer be eligible to use University nursery provision. As such, we would be able to reclaim the sponsored place and allocate it to another employee.