



Pregnancy and Pregnancy-Related Discrimination Policy for Students

1. Purpose

This policy provides the process for Saint Mary's University of Minnesota ("the university") to comply with state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination against pregnant women who may be students at the university.

2. Policy Statement

2.1. The university is committed to maintaining a community where students enjoy freedom from discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

2.2. This policy provides for the protection and equal treatment of students who are pregnant, have pregnancy-related conditions, and/or have recently given birth to a child. This policy applies to all aspects of the University's programs, including but not limited to admissions, educational programs and activities, extracurricular activities, and leave.

3. General Definitions

3.1. Fundamental Alteration – Any academic accommodation, adjustment/auxiliary aid, or service that would fundamentally affect or change the nature of a program or course being taught or that fundamentally alters the essential requirements of instruction or course requirements is not considered a reasonable academic accommodation. The University is not required to alter or modify a course or program to the extent that it changes the fundamental nature of that course or program.

3.2. Instructor – University employee responsible for teaching classes or supervising academic work, including, but not limited to, program directors, faculty, and adjunct faculty.

3.3. Medical Necessity—A determination made by a health care provider of a student's or employee's choosing.

3.4. Pregnancy and Pregnancy-Related Conditions – pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, any medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation, or recovery from pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, or related conditions. Examples of pregnancy-related conditions include: disorders directly related to pregnancy, such as preeclampsia (pregnancy-induced high blood pressure), placenta previa, gestational diabetes, symptoms such as back pain, complications requiring bed rest, and the after-effects of a delivery, including postpartum depression.

3.5. Pregnancy Discrimination – Treating a woman affected by pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition less favorably than similar individuals not so affected. It includes a failure to provide legally mandated leave or accommodations.

3.6. Reasonable Accommodations—Changes in education or workplace activities that enable a pregnant woman or woman with a pregnancy-related condition to continue to pursue her studies and/or occupation and enjoy equal benefits of the University.

3.8. Undue Burden/Hardship – Any accommodation, adjustment/auxiliary aid, or service that would result in a significant financial or administrative burden or expense constitutes an undue burden/hardship and is not considered a reasonable accommodation.

4. Reporting

4.1. Any university employee who is informed of a student's pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition should provide the student with the Title IX Coordinator's contact information and inform the student that the Title IX Coordinator can coordinate specific actions to prevent sex discrimination and ensure equal access to the university's educational programs or activities.

4.2. Any member of the university community may report a violation of this policy to any supervisor, manager, or to the Title IX Office. Supervisors and managers are responsible for promptly forwarding such reports to the Title IX Coordinator.

4.3. A student alleging pregnancy discrimination may file a complaint with the Title IX Office.

5. Privacy

5.1. Information about a pregnant student's requests for accommodations will be shared with university employees only to the extent necessary to provide reasonable accommodation. University employees will regard all information associated with such requests as private and will not disclose this information unless necessary.

6. Student Support Services and Advising

6.1. Students who are pregnant or expect to become new parents are encouraged to notify their instructors and/or supervisors so they can collaborate on a plan to continue educational progress. However, the choice to declare a pregnancy is voluntary, and a student is not required to disclose this information to the university.

6.2. Students are encouraged to consult with academic advisors as soon as practicable and before finalizing requests for academic modifications or a leave of absence.

7. Student Rights and Accommodations

7.1. The university and its employees shall not require pregnant students, solely because of the student's status as a pregnant individual or due to issues related to the student's pregnancy, to:

- a. Take a leave of absence or withdraw from the student's degree or certificate program;
- b. Limit the student's studies;
- c. Change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or
- d. Refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the university;

7.2. The university will provide reasonable modifications to a pregnant student, including modifications that are no less than those provided to students with temporary medical conditions. Reasonable modifications may also be granted if they are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child.

7.3. The university will do the following, for reasons related to the student's pregnancy, childbirth, or any resulting medical status or condition:

- a. Excuse the student's absence

- b. Allow the student to make up missed assignments or assessments;
- c. Allow the student additional time to complete assignments in the same manner as the university allows for a student with a temporary medical condition; and
- d. Provide the student with access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures from classes for which the student has an excused absence under this section to the same extent that instructional materials and video recordings of lectures are made available to any other student with an excused absence.

7.4 The university will allow a pregnant student to take a leave of absence and, if the student is in good standing at the time the student takes a leave of absence, return to the student's degree or certificate program in good academic standing without being required to reapply for admission.

7.5. Students are encouraged to request pregnancy and pregnancy-related reasonable accommodations in advance whenever possible, which may include, but are not limited to:

- Changes to protect the health and safety of the pregnant woman and/or her pregnancy (such as allowing the person to maintain a safe distance from hazardous substances);
- Changes to the physical environment (such as accessible seating);
- Allowing the person to eat or drink during university classes and/or activities;
- Parking access and/or mobility support;
- Larger uniforms for athletes;
- Academic modifications such as extensions of academic deadlines and/or allowing a student to make up tests or assignments missed for pregnancy-related absences, alternate assignments, remote learning, note-taker and/or incomplete grades for extensions beyond the normal academic term;
- Extra breaks during class, work, or other activities to use the restroom;
- Excusal of medically necessary absences (including exceptions to class attendance requirements set by the faculty, department, or division);
- Independent Study or other department-level change, such as approval of substitute course enrollment or to join a subsequent course for time-sensitive degree completion;
- Exceptions to local withdrawal limits;

- Extension of time limit to complete a timed degree, graduate degree, candidacy, certification, or credentialing program in the amount of one year per childbirth;
- Leave of absence; and
- Allowing breastfeeding students reasonable time and space to express breast milk.

7.6. Pregnant students who wish to remain engaged in their coursework while adjusting their academic responsibilities may request a leave of absence immediately following childbirth, which can include temporary full relief from all academic responsibilities.

7.7 Upon approval of academic modifications, students remain responsible for communicating with instructors on the progress of coursework and fulfilling all applicable academic requirements consistent with the modifications.

7.8. Coursework with a grade of Incomplete must be completed within the normal time allowed per university policy. Students with a medical basis for an extension should promptly contact the university's access services office to request additional time.

8. Procedure for Students to Request and Confirm an Accommodation

8.1. Reasonable accommodations are identified and implemented through an interactive process between the university and the student seeking accommodation. The process is generally as follows:

- a. The student seeking an accommodation contacts the Title IX Coordinator. The student seeking accommodation should
 - request the accommodation in advance, if possible, or as soon as reasonably practicable;
 - identify the request as related to pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions; and
 - identify the academic expectation that needs to be modified due to pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions that give rise to the request for accommodation.
- b. The Title IX Coordinator engages in an interactive process with the students and the instructor to identify and implement reasonable accommodation(s). All parties are responsible for actively participating in the interactive process in good faith.

- c. If the instructor believes that they cannot grant an accommodation request as it will fundamentally alter the educational program or activity, reasonable alternative accommodations will be discussed and implemented.
- d. A student who believes that they have been denied reasonable accommodations may file a pregnancy discrimination complaint with the Title IX Coordinator.
- e. The university does not have to provide an unreasonable accommodation. An accommodation for pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may be unreasonable when it is requested retroactively or in an untimely manner.

An accommodation for pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may additionally be unreasonable when it compromises essential requirements of a course, program, or activity, or it goes beyond what the university provides other students with temporary medical conditions.

When a student requests an accommodation in an academic course or program, the Title IX Coordinator should consult with a group of individuals who are trained, knowledgeable, and experienced in the area before determining that the requested accommodation would compromise essential course or program requirements. Group members could include faculty subject matter experts, department leaders, or a curriculum expert. At a minimum, the group should discuss the following questions:

- What essential course or program requirement does the accommodation compromise?
- What practical function does this essential requirement serve in the academic course or program?
- Is there documentation of the essential requirement in the course syllabus, professional standards, certification requirements, or elsewhere?
- How does the requested accommodation compromise this essential requirement?
- Has the requested accommodation been provided to any other student (e.g., to a student with an illness, injury, or disability)?
- Is there another way that the student could meet the essential course or program objectives?

8.2. Should a pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition cause a temporary or permanent disability (such as anemia, gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, postpartum depression, etc.), persons are encouraged to seek additional disability-related accommodations through the access services office.

9. Lactation Access

9.1. Breastfeeding women must be granted reasonable time and space to express breast milk in a location that is private, clean, and reasonably accessible. Bathroom stalls do not satisfy this requirement. An appropriate lactation facility should be located within a reasonable distance of the person's location and be available for up to a year following childbirth. Break time should be adjusted to account for the distance to the nearest lactation facility.

Lactation rooms or Family Rooms are located in Aquinas Hall (Winona) and La Salle Hall (Minneapolis).

10. Harassment And Retaliation

10.1. Harassment based on a student's pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition or breastfeeding is unlawful and prohibited. Examples of conduct related to pregnancy status that may amount to harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual comments or denigrating jokes about a pregnancy;
- Negative stereotyping;
- Comments about an individual's intellectual or physical ability to complete coursework or commitment to their education or future profession based on their pregnancy status;
- Spreading rumors about sexual activity;
- Making sexual propositions or gestures; and/or
- Withholding or threatening to withhold benefits due to pregnancy status.

10.2. University employees are prohibited from retaliating against students or employees for exercising the rights articulated by this policy, including imposing or threatening to impose negative outcomes due to requesting leave or accommodation, filing a complaint, or otherwise exercising their rights under this policy.

Date	Action	Party Responsible
7/1/2025	Effective date of policy	General Counsel