

## **PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENT FAQ**

Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in an education program. Among the types of gender discrimination covered by this statute, Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. Protection extends to students who are pregnant or who have either had a false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, have gone through childbirth, or are recovering from any of those conditions. Title IX regulations also prohibit a school from applying any rule related to a student's parental, family or marital status that treats students differently based on their sex. Below are some frequently asked questions and their answers about the University's compliance with this aspect of Title IX.

### **Where can a student seek assistance for pregnancy-related accommodations?**

Pregnant students may contact the Title IX Office to request assistance with accommodations. Examples of accommodations include, but are not limited to, rescheduling tests or exams, excusing absences, submitting work after a deadline, providing alternatives to make up missed work, or retaking a semester. The Title IX Office may facilitate communications with the student's professors or assist with other University resources.

### **Pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions may necessitate absences. Will those absences be excused?**

Yes. Absences due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions must be excused and cannot be treated or penalized like unexcused absences. Depending on the length of the absence and area of instruction, it may be academically necessary for the student to take a leave of absence. Professors must provide a leave of absence for pregnant students for as long as it is deemed necessary by their medical doctor. Professors may require a doctor's note for pregnancy-related absences only if a doctor's note is required to excuse other medically-related absences.

### **What happens when a pregnant student misses assignments, tests, exams etc. due to an excused absence?**

After an excused absence due to pregnancy, childbirth, or any related medical conditions, professors must allow a reasonable time for the student to make up missed assignments and tests. This is true regardless of the professor's typical makeup assignment policy. Depending on the nature of the course, making up the exact missed assignment might not be feasible. The makeup work does not have to be exactly the same as the missed work, but needs to be reasonably equivalent.

**Can pregnant students be penalized for their absence if grades in a class are based on attendance or participation?**

A student may not be penalized for absences known to be due to pregnancy, childbirth, or other related medical conditions. A professor cannot reduce a pregnant student's grade because of attendance or participation points that the student missed during excused absences due to her pregnancy-related conditions. The professor must give the student a reasonable opportunity to earn back the credit missed due to pregnancy.

**Can a professor prevent a pregnant student from attending class?**

No. Under Title IX, the University cannot exclude someone from class based on their pregnancy. The University can only require a pregnant student to provide a doctor's certification of fitness to continue in an education program or activity if the same requirement is imposed on all other students with medical conditions requiring a doctor's care.

**Can a pregnant student participate in internships and other off-campus programs?**

Yes. Pregnant students cannot be excluded from University-related off-campus programs, such as internships, off-campus activities, University-sponsored activities, and other extracurricular activities. A professor cannot require a doctor's note to show fitness to participate unless it is required for all students in the program.

**Does the University have to provide special services to pregnant students?**

The University must provide the same services to pregnant students that it provides to other students with temporary disabilities.

**What if a student or professor makes an offensive or inappropriate remark about a student's pregnancy?**

The University will not tolerate gender-based harassment, including harassment based on pregnancy and related conditions. If a pregnant student experiences harassment based on her pregnancy, she should let the Title IX Office know immediately. If a faculty or staff member witnesses or learns about harassment of a pregnant student, they should immediately notify the Title IX Office so that it can take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end pregnancy-related harassment, prevent its recurrence, and eliminate any hostile environment created by the harassment. The same grievance procedures applicable to complaints of sexual misconduct also apply to discrimination based on pregnancy or parental status.

Title IX prohibits a school's retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint or raising concerns about the rights of a pregnant and parenting student.

**Can a pregnant student lose her scholarship due to her pregnancy?**

As long as the student remains in school and in good standing when the student is not medically required to be absent, the student will not lose the scholarship. Pregnant students will keep their status as a student for up to one year. If a student wants to take off more time than their doctor says is medically necessary, the student should contact the Title IX Office.

**Does the University have designated areas for mothers to breastfeed, pump milk, or address other needs related to breastfeeding throughout the day?**

Yes. The University has designated lactation rooms. For a list of the designated lactation rooms, see <http://hr.ua.edu/work-life-resources/new-parent/lactation-support>.

**Does the University have other resources for parenting students?**

Yes.

- The Parent Resource Library is located at the Child Development Resource Center. The library contains books on parenting, breastfeeding, and other resources for parents.
- The Parenting Assistance Line (866) 962-3030 is a toll free number providing support on many parenting topics. For more information about PAL and to obtain resources online, see <http://www.pal.ua.edu/>.
- Graduate School Parent Support <https://graduate.ua.edu/current-students/graduate-parent-support/> supports students who have children. This program coordinates events with parents, provides opportunities for professional development, institutes programs and services to address the needs of student parents, and works to foster an environment that is receptive to children and their student parents.

**Is a GTA/GRA who is pregnant or experiencing pregnant-related conditions entitled to reasonable accommodations in the workplace?**

Yes. To request reasonable accommodations, contact the Title IX Office, who will recommend reasonable accommodations and work with the department in implementing them.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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