

Frequently Asked Questions for Students Who Are Pregnant Or Experiencing Related Conditions

Under the Department of Education's Title IX guidance and regulations, an institution that receives federal funding, like McDaniel, may not discriminate against any student or exclude any student from its education program or activity, including any class or extracurricular activity, on the basis of such student's **pregnancy or related conditions**. Institutions must provide reasonable modifications to ensure the student's equal access to the College's education program or activity.

More information about the Title IX regulations related to pregnancy and related conditions may be found in the U.S. Department of Education's October 2022 pamphlet titled *Discrimination Based on Pregnancy and Related Conditions: A Resource for Students and Schools*.

What are pregnancy related conditions?

Pregnancy related conditions include, but are not limited to, childbirth, loss of pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, lactation, or related conditions, including recovery therefrom.

Does the College have to provide special services to pregnant students?

The College must provide the same services to pregnant students that it provides other students with temporary disabilities, as long as it does not centrally alter the nature of academic programs or requirements.

Am I required to tell anyone about my pregnancy status?

Students are not required to inform faculty and staff about their pregnancy or related conditions unless they are seeking modifications and support. Information shared with the Title IX Coordinator is considered private and will be shared only to the extent necessary to provide reasonable modifications. All medical information will remain confidential.

What kind of support and reasonable modifications are available for pregnant students and those experiencing related conditions?

The support and reasonable modifications available vary based on a student's individual need to maintain their educational plans and fully participate in their academic programs. The Title IX Coordinator is the point of contact for a student who would like to discuss and/or request reasonable modifications.

Based on an individualized assessment of the circumstances and knowledge of the context in which the support is sought, modifications may include:

- shifting assignment and exams dates
- excusing absences
- taking an incomplete in a class
- submitting work after a deadline or providing alternatives to make up missed work
- tutoring
- incomplete grades
- offering remote learning options when possible
- requesting a leave of absence
- temporary parking location
- housing-related modifications
- access to elevators
- furniture modifications, like a larger desk
- breaks during class, as needed

The services and modifications provided to pregnant students will be no less than those provided to students with temporary medical conditions. Documentation from a student's healthcare provider may be needed for some, but not all, requests for reasonable modifications and support.

How do I request support and reasonable modifications?

A student who would like to request reasonable modifications should contact the Title IX Coordinator: Liz Towle at etowle@mcdaniel.edu. Her office is located in the Office of Human Resources on the second floor of Winslow Hall.

What does having a meeting with the Title IX Coordinator entail?

Meeting with the Title IX Coordinator is an opportunity for the student to request reasonable modifications and learn more about McDaniel's obligation to:

- Prohibit sex discrimination
- Provide reasonable modifications
- All access, on a voluntary basis, to any separate and comparable portion of the institution's education program and activity
- Allow a voluntary leave of absence
- Ensure access to lactation space
- Maintain a resolution process for alleged discrimination
- Treat pregnancy as comparable to other temporary medical conditions for medical benefit, service, plan or policy purposes

What should a student do if experiencing pregnancy-related disabilities?

Students with pregnancy-related disabilities, like any student with a short-term or temporary disability, are entitled to reasonable accommodations so that they will not be disadvantaged in their courses of study and may seek assistance from the Student Accessibility and Support Services Office (SASS). Examples of pregnancy-related disabilities may include, but are not limited to: severe morning sickness, prenatal or postnatal care, need for bed rest, gestational diabetes, pregnancy-induced hypertension, preeclampsia, post-partum depression, lactation conditions such as mastitis, etc.

Pregnancy and related conditions may necessitate absences. Will those absences be excused?

Yes, absences resulting from pregnancy and related conditions will be considered excused absences. Students are still responsible for completion of academic assignments and course content related to the missed classes. While some faculty members have attendance requirements, absences due to pregnancy and related conditions are handled separately from those guidelines.

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

In general, students are encouraged to communicate directly with their instructor about the missed academic content and assignments. Instructors will work with students to determine alternatives to making up missed work, including credit for missed class participation, and/or allowing the student extra time to complete assignments, even beyond the completion of the semester. Depending on the nature of the course, making up the exact assignment may not be possible. The makeup work does not need to be the same as the missed work but needs to be reasonably equivalent.

Students may contact the Title IX Coordinator to ask if it is possible to receive the class notes that correspond to the missed class.

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

Students may not be penalized for absences known to be due to pregnancy and related conditions. If grades are based on attendance and participation, a pregnant student can anticipate that reasonable modifications will be made to course attendance policies due to pregnancy or related conditions.

Can faculty prevent a pregnant student from attending class?

In general, the College will not prevent a student from participating in classes and extracurricular activities while pregnant. If there are potentially dangerous activities or

chemicals utilized within a course, the student should consult with their medical professional to determine what is safe or unsafe for participation in their pregnancy and coordinate with faculty when alternative assignments are necessary.

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

Yes, pregnant students cannot be excluded from college-related off-campus programs, such as internships, clinicals, off-campus activities, College-sponsored activities, and other extracurricular activities.

What does a student do if their pregnancy or related conditions impact on their ability to participate in a clinical placement, lab or other similar academic experiences?

In situations such as clinical placements, performances, labs and similar academic experiences, McDaniel will work with students to devise an alternative path to completion, if possible. In progressive curricular and/or cohort-model programs, medically necessary leaves may be sufficient cause to permit a student to shift course order, substitute similar courses, or join a subsequent cohort when returning from leave.

What does a student do if their pregnancy or related conditions impact on their ability to fulfill the requirements of their campus employment, including work-study positions?

Student employees are entitled to reasonable accommodations during their work hours under the current Student Worker Handbook, section VI.

Additional Resources

The Pregnant Scholar – Title IX Basics

<https://thepregnantscholar.org/title-ix-basics/>

U.S. Department of Education -Supporting the Academic Success of Pregnant and Parenting Students

www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf

National Women's Law Center – Pregnant & Parenting Students

<https://nwlc.org/issue/pregnant-parenting-students/>

Frequently Asked Questions for Faculty Related To Students Who Are Pregnant Or Experiencing Related Conditions

What do I do if a student tells me they're pregnant?

Provide them with the information about pregnancy and related conditions found on the Title IX webpage and contact the Title IX Coordinator to notify them of the information. If appropriate, ask the student if they need any modifications related to your course.

What do I do if a student tells me they need to miss class due to a pregnancy?

Federal law requires that students be excused, without penalty, for all medically necessary absences for pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery. This includes medical appointments. Students should be referred to the Title IX Office for the purpose of verifying and documenting medical needs. Faculty should not ask students directly for medical notes or documentation.

What do reasonable modifications for a pregnant student look like?

The support and reasonable modifications available vary based on a student's individual need to maintain their educational plans and fully participate in their academic programs. The Title IX Coordinator is the point of contact for a student who requests modifications and for faculty and staff if they have questions about a specific student's circumstances.

Based on an individualized assessment of the circumstances and knowledge of the context in which the support is sought, modifications may include:

- shifting assignment and exams dates
- excusing absences
- taking an incomplete in a class
- submitting work after a deadline or providing alternatives to make up missed work
- tutoring
- incomplete grades
- offering remote learning options when possible
- requesting a leave of absence
- temporary parking location
- housing-related modifications
- access to elevators
- furniture modifications, like a larger desk
- breaks during class, as needed

The services and modifications provided to pregnant students will be no less than those provided to students with temporary medical conditions. The Title IX Coordinator will request that a student provide documentation from a healthcare provider if it is needed in support of a request for modifications and support.

Can I request medical documentation from a student who tells me that they are pregnant?

Faculty cannot ask students for medical documentation or any other proof of pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions. Please refer the student or direct questions to the Title IX Coordinator for support and for assistance requesting modifications.

How many absences should I be allowing for a student who is pregnant or experiencing a related condition?

There is no set number of allowable absences. If a faculty member has questions related to an individual student, they are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator to discuss the circumstances.

What do I need to do for a pregnant student who missed assignment deadlines and now wants to turn in the completed work?

Instructors are expected to make academic modifications for students who are pregnant or experiencing related conditions. This may include determining alternatives to making up missed work, including credit for missed class participation, providing class notes, and/or allowing the student extra time to complete assignments.

Ideally, a student communicates directly with their professor regarding missed assignments and modified due dates are determined ahead of time.

Additional Resources

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