

## **Pregnant Students, Childbirth, or Related Conditions**

### **A. Overview**

Mississippi College (MC) seeks to support and encourage pregnant students with access to their education programs while pregnant and/or during a related condition, including lactation. Students should meet with the Title IX Coordinator to learn how the university supports and encourages students during this time. Pregnant students anticipating a need for assistance with their education program should contact the Title IX Coordinator rather than individual faculty members. The Title IX Coordinator will work with the student and coordinate with other offices on campus to provide the student support and assistance. MC may be able to make reasonable modifications to policies, procedures and programs to assist the student. Pregnant students living in university owned or controlled residence halls or apartments will not be involuntarily removed during pregnancy.

### **B. Non-Discrimination**

MC does not illegally discriminate against students, employees, or applicants for admission or employment based on pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions. The foregoing statement should not be construed to undermine the validity and effect of the constitutional and statutory protections for religious liberty, including, without limitation, the religious organization exemption under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the religious tenant exemption to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, among others.

### **C. Notice**

When a pregnant student or someone who has a legal right to act on behalf of the student notifies the Title IX Coordinator of the student's pregnancy or related conditions, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the individual about the university's commitment to assist the student and the student's right to seek reasonable modifications, including the student's right to seek a voluntary leave of absence.

### **D. Supportive Resources**

For students experiencing pregnancy and related conditions, reasonable modifications are available for policies, practices, or procedures as necessary to ensure equal access to education programs and activities. Students seeking reasonable modifications should contact the Title IX Coordinator (see below). Modifications for students are made on an

individualized basis in consultation with the student and relevant university personnel. Modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of an education program or activity or present an undue burden to the university will not be approved.

Modifications may include, but are not limited to: breaks during class to express breast milk, breastfeed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or related conditions, including eating, drinking, or using the restroom; intermittent absences to attend medical appointments; access to online education, if available; changes in schedule or course sequence; extensions of time for coursework and rescheduling of tests and examinations; allowing a student to sit or stand, or carry or keep water nearby; counseling; changes in physical space or supplies (for example, access to a larger desk or a footrest); elevator access; access to parking spots; or other changes to policies, practices or procedures.

Students may voluntarily take a leave of absence to cover, at minimum, for the period of time deemed medically necessary by the student's licensed healthcare provider. When the student returns to the University, the student will be reinstated to the academic program. The university will attempt to return the student to the same academic status as when they left the university but there are sometimes factors beyond the university's control (e.g. programmatic changes, length of absence, accreditation, licensing) that may impact one's returning status following a period of leave. Students should contact the Title IX Coordinator who will work collaboratively with appropriate university personnel regarding the logistics of taking and returning from a leave of absence.

The University has lactation spaces on campus for students and employees. Information about the locations can be obtained from the Title IX Coordinator, the Office of Student Success, the Office of Accessibility Services, or the Dean of Students.

#### **E. Medical Documentation and Certification to Participate**

Students will not be required to provide certification from a healthcare provider or any other person to indicate the student is physically able to participate in an education program or activity unless: 1) The certified level of physical ability or health is necessary for participation in the program or activity; or 2) all students participating in the program or activity are required to submit certification. The information obtained is not used as a basis for discrimination.

#### **E. Reporting Discrimination or Harassment**

Individuals who believe they have experienced discrimination or who have information about suspected discrimination or harassment in an education program or activity based on pregnancy or related conditions can report the discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator using the contact information found in this policy. Complaints of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation may also be directed to OCR. For more information, please see <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>.

**Contact:**

**Dr. Kristena Gaylor, Title IX Coordinator**

Associate Professor, School of Business

Clinton Campus -Self Hall, Suite 308

Kgaylor@mc.edu

Office: 601-925-3415

**Joy Reger, Title IX Coordinator, School of Law**

Director of Externships, School of Law

School of Law Campus, Suite 307B

jregger@mc.edu

Office 601-925-7106