Pregnancy & Other Related Conditions

Krista Anderson, Systemwide Title IX Coordinator

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Agenda

1. Title IX Intro
2. Title IX Pregnancy Protections
   • Student Protections
   • Employee Protections
3. Other Related Laws
4. Unique Cases
5. Hypotheticals & Examples
6. Documentations and Case Management
Title IX (Educational Amendments of 1972) prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Anyone participating in or attempting to participate in educational programs or activities.
Title IX

Sex Discrimination
Sexual Harassment
Retaliation

How Does Pregnancy Fit In?
Title IX also prohibits discrimination based on pregnancy and other related conditions…

Statistics

• Student-Parents are **10x less likely** to graduate college on time than their peers without children.

• **Without a degree**, women (who make up nearly 60% of all U.S. college students) could face long-running financial losses.

• Women with a **bachelor’s degree** earn an average of **$450,000 more** in median lifetime earnings than their peers with a **high school degree**.

Title IX prohibits discrimination based on a **student** or **employee’s** “actual or potential” status:

Schools **must** give students who might be, are, or have been **pregnant** **equal access** to school programs and extracurricular activities.

Supporting the Academic Success of Pregnant and Parenting Students, U.S. Department of Education (OCR), 2013

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**Equal Participation**

An institution shall not discriminate against any student or exclude any student from its education program or activity, including any class or extracurricular activities, based on such student’s pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy or recovery therefrom, unless the person **voluntarily participates** in a separate program or activity of the institution.

Title IX 34 CFR § 106.40(b)(1)
An institution which operates a portion of its education program or activity \textit{separately} for pregnant students, admittance to which is \textit{completely voluntary} on the part of the student as provided in paragraph (b)(1) of this section \textit{(Equal Participation)} shall ensure that the separate portion is \textit{comparable} to that offered to non-pregnant students.

Title IX 34 CFR § 106.40(b)(3)

Examples of Student-related Impacts & Needs

- Class Attendance & Participation
- Excused Absences
- Make-up Coursework
- Tutoring Accommodations
- Breast Milk Expression
- Extracurricular Activities
- Intercollegiate Sports
- Scholarship Status

Supporting the Academic Success of Pregnant and Parenting Students, U.S. Department of Education (OCR), 2013
The school must excuse a student's absences due to pregnancy or any related conditions for as long as their doctor says it is medically necessary for the person to be absent.

A student cannot be penalized for pregnancy or other related conditions.

There must be an equal opportunity given to earn credit from missed classes/assignments due to pregnancy.

The school cannot require a student to submit a doctor’s note unless the school requires a doctor’s note from all students who have a physical or emotional condition requiring treatment by a doctor, or for being hospitalized for other conditions.
Leave of Absence

In the case of an institution which does not maintain a leave policy for its students, or the case of a student who does not otherwise qualify for leave under such a policy, an institution shall trust pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, and recovery therefrom as a justification for a leave of absence for so long a period as it is deemed medically necessary. 

Title IX 34CFR§ 106.40(b)(5)

Make-up Coursework & Reinstated Status

The school must allow the student to return to the same academic and extracurricular status as before their medical leave began, which should include giving the student the opportunity to make up any work missed while out.
Jin, a second-year undergraduate student, is in her third trimester and is due at the end of the semester. Jin has been missing classes continually due to medical issues from the pregnancy and frequent doctor’s appointments as a result.

Jin isn’t sure how to handle her absences or what accommodations are available.

Examples of Make-up Coursework and Academic Alternatives

- Flexible Attendance
- Extensions on Coursework Deadlines
- Reschedule Exam(s)
- Re-weigh Curriculum Coursework %
- Alternative Assignments
- Independent Study
- Extra Credit Coursework
- Remote Participation (Zoom/Teams)
- Change Course to Pass/Fail Status
- Reduced Courseload Status
Jin is due at the end of the semester. Jin has missed classes and assignments continually due to ongoing medical issues from the pregnancy. Jin’s professors have all provided Jin with multiple opportunities to make-up assignments and exams.

In one of her classes, Jin has only completed about 25% of the coursework, even with the opportunities offered by the professor to allow Jin to make-up the coursework missed. There is only one week left of classes, and Jin is due for delivery at the end of the week. Jin says she is unable to make-up the remaining coursework by the end of the semester and asks for an incomplete for the course so she can make-up the remaining work next semester.

The professor typically only considers giving incompletes when the student has completed more than half (>50%) of the coursework, and is unsure what to do.

End of Semester Academic Options

- Dropping the Course (w/o academic penalty)
-Withdrawal from All Classes (w/o academic penalty)
-Incomplete Grade (w/ instructor’s approval)
**After the Semester Ends**

**Retroactive Options**

- **Retroactive Drop**
- **Retroactive Withdrawal**

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**Employee Protections Based on Pregnancy or Related Condition**

**Title IX** prohibits sex discrimination of employees in education programs or activities, including pregnancy or related status.

**Title VII** as amended by the **Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA)**, which prohibits employment discrimination based on:
- Current pregnancy
- Past pregnancy
- Potential or intended pregnancy
- Medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth
Examples of Employee-related Impacts & Needs

- Work-related Accommodations due to pregnancy or related needs
- Excused Work Absences (Paid or Unpaid Leave)
- Changes in the Work Environment
- Alternative Participation Options
- Breast Milk Expression

Employees: Family Medical Leave (FML)

FML is a benefit that provides eligible employees **up to 12 workweeks of unpaid leave a year** and requires group health benefits to be maintained during leave, as if employees continued to work instead of taking leave.

Employees are entitled to return to their **same or an equivalent job** at the end of their FML.
Avery, a staff member in the School of Music, is pregnant. As her pregnancy progresses, Avery finds it difficult to fit at her office desk and concentrate.

Avery requests a larger chair and larger desk as a temporary accommodation. The Dept Supervisor isn’t sure if the Dept budget can afford this unexpected expense.

ADA/Section 504
Federal law prohibits disability discrimination and requires institutions to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with a disability. Applicable for students and employees.

A disability under ADA/504 is
1. A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
2. A person who has a history or record of such an impairment; or
3. A person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

Pregnancy itself is not a disability, but complications from pregnancy or childbirth may qualify.
A reasonable accommodation is a change in the workplace or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to apply for a job, perform a job’s essential functions, or enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.

An employer may only deny a reasonable accommodation to an employee with a disability if it would result in an undue hardship (an action requiring significant difficulty or expense).


ADA/EEOC Reasonable Accommodations (Employee-Related Examples)

- Redistributing marginal functions (i.e. non-fundamental/non-essential job duties).
- Altering how a job function is performed (e.g. modifying standing, lifting, climbing, or bending requirements).
- Modifying workplace policies.
- Purchasing or modifying equipment or devices (e.g. foot stool, larger desk).
- Modifying work schedules.
- Temporary assignment to a “light duty” position.
Temporary Disability Policies

An institution shall treat pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination or recovery therefrom in the same manner and under the same policies as any other temporary disability with respect to any medical or hospital benefit, service, plan or policy which such institution administers, operates, offers, or participates in with respect to students admitted to the institution’s educational program or activity.

Title IX 34 CFR § 106.40(b)(4)

ADA Temporary Disability Accommodations (Student-Related Examples)

- Scribe for Exams
- Notetaking Assistance
- Audio Recorder for Lectures
- Extended Test Time
- Computer for Essay Exams

With required documentation indicating the following:

- Type of temporary disability
- Severity
- Limitations
- Prognosis
- Estimated duration of the disabling condition
Revisit **Academic Alternatives and Options?**

- Flexible Attendance
- Extensions on Coursework Deadlines
- Reschedule Exam(s)
- Re-weigh Curriculum Coursework %
- Alternative Assignments
- Independent Study
- Extra Credit Coursework
- Remote Participation (Zoom/Teams)
- Change Course to Pass/Fail Status
- Reduced Courseload Status
- Dropping the Course (w/o academic penalty)
- Withdrawal from All Classes (w/o academic penalty)
- Incomplete Grade (w/ instructor’s approval)

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**Unique Student Cases**
An institution may require such a student to obtain the certification of a physician that the student is physically and emotionally able to continue participation so long as such certification is required of all students for other physical or emotional conditions requiring the attention of a physician.

Title IX 34 CFR § 106.40(b)(2)

Clinical Students

- Pregnant students are allowed to continue participating in off-campus programs.
- If their program provides opportunities to work in the field, the program cannot deny participation based on pregnancy.
- Provide reasonable adjustments such as a larger desk or elevator access.
Clinical Students

• Programs cannot require a **doctor’s note** for continued participation unless the school requires the same for all students who have a **medical condition**.

• If a student’s doctor says participation is unsafe, the school must give them a chance to make-up assignment later.

• **Hospitals** that have a **contractual arrangement** formally integrating students through their education program, the hospital must also adhere to Title IX.

Clinical Students

• If a school does not have a leave policy, it must treat pregnancy and recovery therefrom as a justification for a leave of absence for so long as it is deemed **medically necessary**.

• The student must be **reinstated** to the status which was held when the leave began.
Jamie is enrolled in an accelerated dentistry program. Two months into the year-long program she finds out she is pregnant. The program has a strict absence policy based on required classes and clinicals. If a student misses more than two days of classes or clinicals, the student will be dismissed from the program.

The absence rule concerns Jamie since she has already missed 2 days of clinicals due to pregnancy-related sickness and she will need to miss a portion of her clinicals again due to additional doctor’s appointments related to her pregnancy. Jamie looked at her program’s course syllabus and there were no explicit exceptions or modifications addressed regarding pregnancy or related conditions.

Clinical Hypothetical

Student-Athletes

- A student-athlete with a pregnancy-related condition must be provided with the same types of modifications provided to other student-athletes.

- Pregnant student-athletes may continue participating in their sport or apply for a red shirt season (if pregnant).
Student-Athletes

- Student-athletes can obtain the **medical certification** of a physician that the student is physically and emotionally able to continue participation in the normal education program or activity.

- A student-athlete’s physician should make **medical decisions** regarding sports participation.

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Student-Athletes

- Pregnant student-athletes **cannot** be harassed due to pregnancy.

- **Athletic financial awards** cannot be conditioned on not becoming pregnant.

- A pregnant student-athlete’s financial award is protected during the term of award.

- A student-athlete who has taken a leave for pregnancy-related condition must be reinstated.
Participation Heavy Courses

- The school must **excuse** a student’s absences due to pregnancy or any related conditions if their doctor say it’s **medically necessary** to be absent.

- The school must allow the student an **opportunity** to make-up the coursework missed while they were out due to pregnancy or other related conditions.

Participation Heavy Courses

- If there are “specific points or grades” assigned to **attendance or participation**, a student cannot be penalized when missing classes or participation based on pregnancy or other related conditions.

- There must be an **equal opportunity** given to **earn credit** from missed participation due to pregnancy.
Zach’s partner gave birth to their child two weeks ago, and his partner is still recovering from the complications with the delivery. As a result, Zach has been missing classes to care for his partner and assist with her doctor’s appointments and the immediate check-ups necessary for the newborn. Being that he is a senior neuroscience major, many of his classes are lab focused and are heavily based on attendance and lab participation.

Due to his absences, he is at risk of failing his senior year and will be unable to graduate on time. Additionally, in attempts to talk with his professors, he was told that since he wasn’t the one physically pregnant, then there wasn’t an academic requirement that Zach’s absences allowed for make-up lab work.

Madison is a faculty member that is 5 months pregnant. After a recent doctor’s appointment, she was advised to be on bed rest due to some high-risk factors emerging in the pregnancy.

Madison informed her Dept Chair of her medical status for remaining on bed rest at this time, and the Chair was supportive of the temporary leave. Subsequently, Madison has also been granted an extension for her tenure review.

A year later (post-extension), Madison’s tenure was denied, citing there was a lack of scholarly quality and output. Madison is reclassified as clinical faculty (non-tenure), which will unlikely progress toward any faculty advancement in this new classification.
Breastfeeding Challenges

- Time
- A Safe Space
- Accommodations
- Free from Harassment
- Finding a Pump or Other Support
Many universities don’t have formal policies relating to lactation, but if a lactating student must miss class, they shouldn’t be penalized.

Grades cannot be lowered due to poor attendance. Lactating students must be given the chance to make up work.

If lactating students have difficulty getting excused from absences for breastfeeding, they may need to provide a doctor’s note stating that it is medically necessary for the student to pump on a certain schedule.

The Department of Education currently encourages schools to provide lactating students with a private room to pump or breastfeed, but Title IX doesn’t give further guidance on specifics of lactation room for students.

The institution cannot delegate a private room to pump or breastfeed to be a bathroom.

*Under the 2022 Title IX Proposed Regulations: A private room will be required (not just “encouraged”). Though the proposed regulations are not in effect at the time of this training.

If other students are given access to private space, refrigerators, or electrical outlets to address non-pregnancy/childbirth-related medical conditions, then lactating students should be given the same special services to address their lactation-related needs.
Accommodations

The school must accommodate any **lactation-related impairments**, such as **serious infections**, as with other **medical conditions** and accommodations.

Free from Harassment

The school must protect students from pregnancy or nursing-related harassment or other discrimination, including having **policies** that prohibit sex discrimination, and having **grievance procedures** to respond to complaints.

**Comments** that may constitute prohibited harassment include, but are not limited to:
- Making sexual comments or jokes about the person’s pregnancy;
- Calling the person sexually charged names;
- Spreading rumors about the person’s sexual activity;
- Making sexual propositions or gestures toward the person.
The Affordable Care Act requires most health insurers to cover the cost of a breast pump and counseling on breastfeeding.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) also provides pumps and other breastfeeding benefits.

finding a pump & other support

Breastfeeding Hypothetical

Celina, a graduate student, recently delivered her baby two months ago. At the beginning of the semester, Celina approached one of her professors about needing to miss class periodically due to Celina’s lactation/pumping schedule, and the professor said, “We’ll figure something out.”

Since then, Celina has missed parts of the class discussions, and two quizzes. When Celina attempted to make-up the quizzes and participation, the professor said that there will not be any make-up work, and the professor will just adjust the grading % to the other portions of coursework (e.g. research paper, end of semester exam).

Celina responds to the professor, saying that she prefers to make up the missed work instead. Since there are no academic policies regarding excusing absences for lactating students, the professor says they have discretion on how to make class accommodations, as long as it’s “fair” and “reasonable.”
Tyler, a non-binary undergraduate student, is 5 months pregnant. In one of Tyler’s classes, several of Tyler’s classmates have made speculative comments and/or used derogatory language on multiple occasions to Tyler about what Tyler’s baby will call Tyler (e.g. “Mister Mom,” etc.)

Tyler is now skipping this class to avoid these verbal comments from classmates and has missed 4 classes over the past two weeks. As a result, Tyler has missed taking a class quiz and missed a course assignment deadline. If Tyler doesn’t complete this remaining coursework, Tyler will fail the course.

**TIXC Documentation & Record Keeping - Examples**

- Professor Notifications
- Supervisor Notifications
- Doctor Documentation regarding absences that are “medically necessary”
- Any other coordinated supportive measures or assistance
Inclusive Language and Policies

- **Language** in various laws regarding pregnancy is generally **not** gender-inclusive.

- Students and employees of **many gender identities**, including cisgender women, non-binary people and transgender men, might be pregnant or have the capability to become pregnant.

- Regardless of a student or employee’s gender-identity, the person is **protected** through their status as a **pregnant person**.

Q & A
## Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Krista Anderson</th>
<th>Sean Flammer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systemwide Title IX Coordinator</td>
<td>Assistant General Counsel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Systemwide Compliance</td>
<td>Office of General Counsel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT System (Austin, TX)</td>
<td>UT System (Austin, TX)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 512-664-9050</td>
<td>Phone: 512-579-5106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:kranderson@utsystem.edu">kranderson@utsystem.edu</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:sflammer@utsystem.edu">sflammer@utsystem.edu</a></td>
</tr>
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