

<b>MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY</b>					
Policy #:	03-0009 / 02-0019				
Name of Policy:	Pregnancy Modifications Policy				
Date of Last Revision:	August 2024	Initial Date of Approval:	Unknown	Initial Effective Date:	June 2017
Policy Owner	Dean of Students/Title IX Coordinator				
Policy/Chapter Sections	Definitions Student Pregnancy Disclosure Options After Pregnancy Disclosure Reasonable Modifications for Students Reasonable Modifications for Employees Lactation Stations & Information Questions or Concerns				
Date of Next Review:	August 2027				

## **1.0 PURPOSE**

The University is committed to providing all students and employees with the opportunity to pursue and attain their individual goals as it relates to the University’s admissions, employment, and educational programs or activities. This commitment includes the University’s students and employees who are pregnant, parenting, or experiencing pregnancy related conditions.

## **2.0 SCOPE**

The University prohibits differential treatment or discrimination against students and employees based on the student or employee’s current, potential, or past parental, family, marital status, or pregnancy or related condition.

## **2.0 POLICY**

### **Definitions**

“Pregnancy or related conditions” means:

- Pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation;
- Medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation;  
or
- Recovery from pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, or related medical conditions.

“Parental Status” means a person who is a biological parent; adoptive parent; stepparent; foster parent; legal custodian or guardian; in loco parentis with respect to a person; or a person who is actively seeking custody, guardianship, visitation, or adoption of a person.

## **Student Pregnancy Disclosure**

A student who is, or becomes, pregnant or has a related condition is strongly encouraged to notify the Title IX Coordinator as soon as possible. By doing so, the student and the Title IX Coordinator can collaborate and develop an appropriate plan for the continuation of the student's education considering the unique nature of the University's programs and requirements, as well as particular challenges the student may face while pregnant or while experiencing a pregnancy related condition.

If a University employee is informed of a student's pregnancy or related condition by a student or a person who has a legal right to act on behalf of the student, the employee must provide the student or the student's representative with the Title IX Coordinator's contact information for further assistance, unless the employee reasonably believes the Title IX Coordinator has already been notified.

Contact information for the University's Title IX Coordinator is as follows:

Dr. Tamika Harrel  
Dean of Students/Title IX Coordinator  
Billingsly Student Center Suite 347  
Joplin, MO 64801  
417-625-3032  
[Harrel-t@mssu.edu](mailto:Harrel-t@mssu.edu)

The employee will also inform the student or the student's representative that the Title IX Coordinator can coordinate specific actions to prevent sex discrimination and ensure the student's equal access to the University's education programs or activities. However, the choice to declare a student's pregnancy is voluntary, and students and employees are not required to disclose this information to the University.

After being notified by a student or the student's representative of the student's pregnancy or related condition, the Title IX Coordinator will do the following:

- Inform the student about the University's prohibition on sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment.
- Provide the student with the option of reasonable modifications due to the student's pregnancy or related conditions.
- Allow the student voluntary access to any separate and comparable portion of the University's education programs or activities.
- Allow the student a voluntary leave of absence for medical reasons and reinstatement for the student upon return from leave.
- Provide the student with a private, clean space for lactation that is a space other than a bathroom and is shielded from view and free from intrusion from others.

The University will not require students to submit supporting documentation for the above items, unless the documentation is necessary and reasonable for the University to determine the reasonable modifications to make, or whether to take additional, specific actions. Situations where supporting documentation is not necessary may include, but are not limited to, when the student's need for a specific action is obvious, such as when a student who is pregnant needs a bigger uniform; when the student has previously provided the University with sufficient supporting documentation; when the reasonable

modification at issue is allowing a student to carry or keep water nearby and drink, use a bigger desk, sit or stand, or take breaks to eat, drink, or use the restroom; when the student has lactation needs; or when the requested action is available to other students for reasons other than pregnancy or related conditions and such students are not required to submit supporting documentation.

Additionally, the University will not require a student who is pregnant or has a related condition to provide certification from a healthcare provider or any other person that the student is physically able to participate in the University's class, program, or extracurricular activity unless:

- The certified level of physical ability or health is necessary for the student's participation in the class, program, or extracurricular activity;
- The University requires such certification of all students participating in the class, program, or extracurricular activity; and
- The information obtained is not used as a basis for discrimination.

### **Options After Student Pregnancy Disclosure**

Once a student has voluntarily disclosed a pregnancy or related condition to the University, the student has the following options:

#### **Continue in the Program**

- If a student decides to continue in the program and desires to have any modifications to the University's education programs and activities due to the pregnancy or related condition, the student should contact the faculty and/or department chair to discuss any reasonable modifications that may be necessary for the student to continue in the program. Such modifications, if any, are discussed in Section V below, and will be documented in the form in Addendum A which will be signed by both the student and a University representative.
- The University will also allow a student to voluntarily access any separate and comparable portion of the University's education program or activity.

#### **Voluntary Leave of Absence**

- Students have the option to take a leave of absence due to pregnancy or related condition. However, such a leave of absence is not required. Should a student choose to take a leave of absence, a student is permitted to do so based on the medical recommendation of the student's licensed healthcare provider.
- A leave of absence due to pregnancy or related condition may be for various amounts of time depending on a student's particular circumstances and the period deemed medically necessary by the student's licensed healthcare provider. Such a leave may be extended if deemed medically necessary by the student's licensed healthcare provider.
- Students are encouraged to communicate with faculty and supervisors regarding plans for leave to ensure a smooth return to campus.
- International students are further encouraged to contact their international advisor immediately, as a leave could require the student to leave the country.

- When a student returns from a leave of absence, the student will be reinstated to the same academic status and, where applicable, extracurricular status, that the student held prior to their leave of absence. This includes the opportunity to make up any work the student missed while on leave.
- If taking a leave of absence due to a pregnancy or related condition, the Education Plan in Addendum B will be discussed and signed by the student and a University representative.

### Withdraw from the University

- The student may, in their sole discretion, determine that they must withdraw from the University for an indefinite period or permanently due to their pregnancy or related condition. Existing University withdrawal procedures, and readmission procedures (if applicable) apply.

### Reasonable Modifications for Students

The University will treat pregnancy or related conditions, or temporary disability resulting from pregnancy or related conditions, consistent with the University's policy on temporary medical conditions.

Reasonable modifications for pregnancy or related conditions will be provided to students based on their individualized needs. Such reasonable modifications will be identified through an interactive process with the student; however, a modification is not reasonable if it fundamentally alters the nature of the University's education program or activity.

Reasonable modifications may include, but are not limited to:

- Breaks during class to attend to any necessary medical or lactation needs
- Access to online education
- Excused absences to attend medical appointments
- Schedule or course changes
- Test rescheduling
- Time extensions for coursework
- Counseling
- Physical space or supply changes
- Elevator access
- Other appropriate policy, practice, or procedure modifications

Students may accept or decline each reasonable modification offered by the University.

### Reasonable Modifications for Employees

The University will treat employee pregnancy or related conditions as any other temporary medical condition for all job-related purposes and will provide accommodations as appropriate. The University will further adhere to its leave policies for employee pregnancy or related conditions.

### Lactation Stations & Information

The University provides lactation stations across campus for breastfeeding students and employees. These spaces provide a private, clean area where students and employees are shielded from view and free from intrusion.

The University will also allow reasonable break time for employees to express breast milk or breastfeed as needed.

### **Questions or Concerns**

A student who has questions about this policy or who is concerned about its implementation should contact the Title IX Coordinator using the contact information listed in Section III of this policy. Employees with questions about the policy or concerns about its implementation should contact HR at:

[HR@mssu.edu](mailto:HR@mssu.edu)

417-625-9505

### **4.0 HISTORY**

This policy may be revised, edited, changed, or removed at any time with or without notice to applicable individual.

January 2024 – updated to new format.

August 2024 – Major Revisions (DoE Title IX Regulations)

### **5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Sex Discrimination and Sex Based Harassment Policy

Employee Handbook – FMLA Leave