

POLICY: Student Pregnancy and Parenting Students Modifications Policy
Issued By: Title IX Office and Disability Resource Center
Effective Date: June 27, 2022 Updated: January 5, 2024 Updated: August 20, 2024

PURPOSE: To provide guidance for pregnant and parenting students.

I. GUIDELINES

Rockhurst University (“Rockhurst”) is committed to providing reasonable access to its programs and classrooms to all students based on pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy related conditions, as well as parenting students. The University will provide students with reasonable modifications in accordance with state and federal law.

The University prohibits any action that discriminates against or excludes a student from any of its programs or activities on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy related conditions.

A student who becomes pregnant or has a pregnancy related condition is strongly encouraged to notify Rockhurst’s Disability Resource Center (hereinafter, the “Disability Resource Center”) as soon as possible. This allows the student and Rockhurst to collaborate and develop an appropriate individualized plan for the continuation of the student’s education in light of the unique nature of Rockhurst’s programs and any clinical requirements, as well as particular challenges and needs the student may face while pregnant, when recovering from childbirth, or when experiencing a pregnancy-related condition. However, the choice to declare a pregnancy or pregnancy related condition is voluntary, and a student is not required to disclose this information to Rockhurst.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to Rockhurst’s education programs or activities, including but not limited to admissions, academic and educational programs, extracurricular activities, and athletics.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Student” for the purposes of this policy means a person who is enrolled as a student at the University.
- B. “Parent, Guardian or other authorized legal representative” for purposes of this policy means a parent or guardian or other authorized legal representative to act on behalf of a student.
- C. “Medical Necessity” means a health care provider’s determination of a student’s need for reasonable modifications related to pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions.

- D. “Pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy related conditions” means pregnancy, childbirth, other conclusion of pregnancy, or lactation; medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth; or recovery from pregnancy, childbirth.
- E. “Reasonable modifications” for purposes of this policy are reasonable changes or adjustments in the academic environment or typical operations that enable a pregnant student or student with a pregnancy-related condition to continue to pursue studies and have the same access to school programs and educational opportunities.

- F. “Student with a disability” means a student who is an individual with a disability covered under Missouri and/or federal law.

IV. PROVIDING INFORMATION

When any University employee is informed of a student’s pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition by the student or a parent, guardian, or other person who has a legal right to act on behalf of the student, the employee must promptly provide the student with the name and contact information of the Disability Resource Center so that the student can contact the Disability Resource Center for assistance. The employee will also inform the student and/or the student’s representative that the Disability Resource Center can coordinate specific actions to prevent sex discrimination and ensure the student’s equal access to the University’s education programs or activities.

When the Disability Resource Center is notified of a student’s pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition, the Disability Resource Center will discuss with the student the following information:

1. The University’s policies which prohibit sex discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions;
2. Options regarding reasonable modifications based on pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy related conditions;
3. Options, if any, on a voluntary basis to participate in any available separate and comparable portion of the University’s education program or activity;
4. Options regarding a voluntary leave of absence;
5. The availability of lactation spaces (if applicable); and
6. Grievance procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of sex discrimination, including discrimination based on pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions.

The Disability Resource Center is also available to answer any questions that a student or a parent, guardian, or other person who has a legal right to act on behalf of the student may have about this policy or the options that are available to a student.

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.

V. REASONABLE MODIFICATIONS

- A. Rockhurst does not require a student to limit studies or participation in Rockhurst activities due to pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, including off-campus assignments and clinical rotations.
- B. The University will treat pregnancy or related conditions, or temporary disability resulting from pregnancy or related conditions, consistent with the University's policies regarding temporary medical conditions.
- C. 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.
- D. Students seeking reasonable modifications are to complete a **Pregnancy or Parent Adjustment Request for Students Form** noting the requested modifications. Specific modifications or adjustments will be handled on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the circumstances, including but not limited to, the student's individualized medical needs, and academic requirements involved.
- E. Once the **Pregnancy or Parent Adjustment Request for Students Form** is completed, the form will be routed to:

Disability Resource Center
drc@rockhurst.edu
Van Ackeren 200 F- within the Learning Center
Office 816-501-4037
- F. In certain situations, pregnancy-related complications or disabilities may make it appropriate for Rockhurst to provide additional reasonable modifications. You can find more information on requesting modifications for pregnancy-related disabilities at <https://www.rockhurst.edu/disability-resource-center/modifications> or contact the Disability Resource Center.
- G. Any records or information obtained by the University as part of the modification process that reflect diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of a student's medical condition are kept confidential. Such records will be shared only with those University employees who have a need to know and will not be released externally except as required by law.
- H. The Disability Resource Center will consult with the student and relevant faculty and staff (including deans where appropriate or necessary) and conduct an individualized assessment to determine what modifications are reasonable. The Disability Resource Center will make this assessment.
- I. Students are encouraged to also work with their advisors and faculty members to reschedule course assignments, lab hours, examinations, or other requirements, and/or to reduce their overall course load, as appropriate, once authorization is received from the Disability Resource Center.

Any reasonable modifications or adjustments that have been agreed upon by both the University and the student will be documented in an Education Plan and signed by the student and the Disability Resource Center. A leave of absence may also be available if a student chooses. (*See, Sec. VII., below*).

J. Reasonable modifications may include, but are not limited to:

- Providing modifications/adjustments requested by a pregnant student to protect the health and safety of the student and/or pregnancy (such as allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from hazardous substances or being excused from strenuous activities, unless providing the modification would fundamentally alter the essential nature of the education program or activity).
- Providing reasonable breaks during class to express breast milk, breastfeed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or a pregnancy related condition, including eating, drinking, or using the restroom.
- Providing access to online or homebound education where appropriate and available.
- Provide changes in schedule or course sequence where appropriate and available.
- Allowing a student to sit or stand or carry or keep water nearby.
- Providing closer parking.
- Providing elevator access.
- Receiving appropriately sized uniforms (where applicable)
- Allowing changes in physical space or supplies (for example access to a larger desk or a footrest).
- Providing reasonable extensions of deadlines and/or allowing the student to make up tests or assignments or other work missed for pregnancy-related absences (for example intermittent absences to attend medical appointments).
- Alternative Assignments: If a medically necessary absence for a student who is affected by pregnancy, childbirth or pregnancy related conditions prevents a student from completing an in-class assignment, providing the student an alternative assignment of equivalent value for the student to complete.
- Excusing medically necessary absences.
- Granting leave or implementing incomplete grades for classes that will be resumed.

The Disability Resource Center and the Title IX Coordinator are available to advise pregnant students of the impact of any reasonable modifications on the student's ability to complete the student's educational program or activity.

VI. LACTATION SPACES

The University provides lactation space for students. These spaces provide a private, clean area where students are shielded from view and free from intrusion. Dedicated lactation space may be found in Arrupe 115 and Sedgwick 117. Please contact the Disability Resource Center with any questions on how to access these rooms.

Students who wish to request alternative spaces should contact the Disability Resource Center or Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Students.

VII. ACADEMIC LEAVES OF ABSENCE

- A. Rockhurst does not require a student to take a leave of absence or withdraw from or limit their studies due to pregnancy or pregnancy related conditions. Rockhurst will excuse a student's absences from a program or activity due to pregnancy or pregnancy related conditions, for as long as the student's licensed health care provider deems the absences to be medically necessary.
- B. Students seeking a leave of absence should consult with the Disability Resource Center. In assessing requests for extended periods of absence, the Disability Resource Center will consider the degree program a student is enrolled in, program timelines, graduation timelines, applicable licensing and accreditation requirements, and other relevant factors.
- C. A student will be informed of any impacts to financial aid, scholarships, or grants prior to the authorization of a withdrawal or course drop and be permitted to determine how they would like to proceed. Approved academic leaves of absence supersede any school or instructor-based attendance policies regarding allowable numbers of absences or ability to make up for missed academic work.
- D. When the student returns from approved leave, the student will be reinstated to the academic status and the extracurricular status, that the student held when the voluntary leave began.

VIII. MODIFIED ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PARENTING STUDENTS

- A. Students with parenting responsibilities who wish to remain engaged in their coursework while adjusting their academic responsibilities because of the birth or adoption of their child, placement of a foster child, or other extraordinary parenting responsibilities may request an academic modification period of up to two weeks beginning with the first six months of either the child entering the home or when the extraordinary circumstances arose. Extensions may be granted where additional time is required due to medical necessity or extraordinary parenting responsibilities.
- B. Students seeking a period of modified academic responsibilities should consult with the Disability Resource Center to discuss appropriate academic modification requests.
- C. During an approved academic modification period, the student's academic requirements will be reasonably adjusted, and deadlines postponed as deemed appropriate by Rockhurst.
- D. The Disability Resource Center staff will communicate all approved modifications under this policy to the student's faculty and coordinate modification-related efforts with the student's advisors. Students are encouraged to work with their advisors and faculty members to reschedule course assignments, lab hours, examinations, or other requirements, and/or to reduce their overall course load, as appropriate once authorization is received from the Disability Resource Center. Any reasonable modifications that have been agreed upon will be documented in an Education Plan and signed by the student and the Disability Resource Center.

- E. Students can request modified academic responsibilities under this policy regardless of whether they elect to take a leave of absence.

IX. ACADEMIC LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR PARENTING STUDENTS

- A. A student's absences due to medical necessity of health of a child or extraordinary parenting issues, such as caring for a sick child, may be excused as deemed appropriate by Rockhurst.
- B. Students seeking a leave of absence should consult with the Disability Resource Center to determine appropriate requests. As appropriate and depending on the student's academic plan, faculty will work with students (and the Disability Resource Center to determine how to best make up missed work and points. Approved academic leaves of absence supersede any school or instructor-based attendance policies regarding allowable numbers of absences or ability to make up for missed academic work.

X. HEALTHCARE PROVIDER DOCUMENTATION FOR PARENTING STUDENTS

Rockhurst may require necessary and reasonable documentation, as determined by Rockhurst, before granting academic modifications or leaves of absence to parenting students. Once sufficient medical or other documentation is received and there has been a full discussion of the student's request(s), the Disability Resource Center will determine reasonable modifications.

Any records or information obtained by the University as part of the modification process that reflect diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment are kept confidential. Such records will be shared only with those University employees who have a need to know and will not be released except as required by law.

XI. STUDENT ATHLETES

The University's athletic department will not exclude a student from participation in athletic activities based on pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy related conditions. Students will be permitted to fully participate on an athletic team, including all team-related activities, unless the student-athlete's physician or other medical provider certifies that participation is not medically safe.

XII. STUDENT EMPLOYEE REQUESTS FOR EMPLOYMENT MODIFICATIONS

Students seeking modification to their student-employment because of pregnancy, childbirth, and/or pregnancy related conditions will be referred to the Director of Human Resources/Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Employees to discuss reasonable modifications in the workplace under the University's Employee Pregnancy modification Policy. *See [Employee Handbook/policies](#)*. Student employees who are seeking modifications in the academic setting will work with the Disability Resource Center under this policy. Thus, student employees may need to work with both concurrently if they are seeking modifications in the academic and workplace setting.

XIII. REVIEW OF DETERMINATIONS REGARDING MODIFICATIONS

A student who believes that the Disability Resource Center or designee did not follow established procedures in making a determination regarding a modification or failed to consider relevant information during the process

may request a reconsideration of the decision by the Vice President of Student Development within ten days of receiving the decision. The Vice President of Student Development will make an inquiry into the request for review of determination and may contact faculty or administrators that can provide information pertinent to the case.

The time for the Vice President of Student Development to review a decision regarding a modification will depend on a variety of factors, including the nature and scope of the matter. Every effort will be made to resolve the matter within fifteen (15) days or as expeditiously as possible. Throughout the process, the Vice President of Student Development will, as appropriate, keep the participants informed of the status of the process. The student will be contacted in writing with a final decision on the review. If the issue is not resolved through reconsideration, the student may request a review of the modification process by the Title IX Coordinator within ten (10) days of receiving the decision on reconsideration. The Title IX Coordinator will make an inquiry into the complaint and may contact faculty or administrators that can provide information pertinent to the case.

In the circumstances of a complaint that involves allegations of discrimination based on pregnancy or pregnancy related conditions, the student may contact the Title IX Coordinator directly without any request for reconsideration. All complaints of discrimination based on pregnancy or pregnancy related conditions will be handled under the University's Non-Discrimination Policy.

XIV. CONFIDENTIALITY

Rockhurst will endeavor to provide appropriate and reasonable modification for students while maintaining the highest level of confidentiality possible. The University will maintain the confidentiality of modifications to extent that maintaining such confidentiality does not impair the University's ability to provide the modifications in question. For example, the University will consult with relevant faculty and staff (including deans) to determine what modifications are reasonable and to effectuate the agreed upon modifications.

XV. COMPLAINT REPORTING, INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION

Any complaints of discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth, pregnancy related conditions should promptly contact the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Students. Complaints of discrimination or harassment based on pregnancy or pregnancy related conditions will be investigated and resolved under the University's Non-Discrimination Policy.

XVI. QUESTIONS

Questions about this policy may be directed to the Disability Resource Center (*supra*) or the University's Title IX Coordinator:

Kimberly Brant Schmelzle
Director of Compliance and Risk Management/Title IX Coordinator
Massman 3
1100 Rockhurst Road
Kansas City, MO 641110
816-501-4036
TitleIX@rockhurst.edu