

A. POLICY STATEMENT

Stephens College is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals enjoy freedom from discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of sex, as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX). Sex discrimination, which can include discrimination based on pregnancy, marital status, or parental status, is prohibited and illegal in educational programs and activities.

Under the Department of Education's (DOE) Title IX regulations, an institution that receives federal funding "shall not discriminate against any student, or exclude any student from its educational program or activity, including any class or extracurricular activity, on the basis of such student's pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom." According to DOE, appropriate treatment of a pregnant student includes granting the student leave "for a period of time as it deemed medically necessary by the student's physician," and then effectively reinstating the student to the same status as was held when the leave began.

Therefore, Stephens College will provide pregnant students opportunities to make up missed work wherever possible. Extended deadlines, make-up assignments (e.g. paper, quizzes, tests, and presentations), tutoring, independent study, online course completion options, and incomplete grades that can be completed at a later date should all be employed in addition to any other ergonomic and assistive supports. To the extent possible, Stephens will take reasonable steps to ensure that pregnant students who take a leave of absence or medical leave return to the same position of academic progress that they were in when they took leave, including access to the same course catalog that was in place when the leave began. The Title IX Coordinator has the authority to determine that such accommodations are necessary and appropriate, and to inform faculty members of the need to adjust academic parameters accordingly.

Information about pregnant students' requests for accommodations will be shared with faculty and staff only to the extent necessary to provide the reasonable accommodation. Faculty and staff will regard all information associated with such requests as private and will not disclose this information unless necessary. Administrative responsibility for these accommodations lies with the Title IX Coordinator, who will maintain all appropriate documentation related to accommodations.

In situations such as clinical rotations, performances, labs, and group work, the institution will work with the student to devise an alternate path to completion, if possible. In progressive curricular and/or cohort-model programs, medically necessary leaves are sufficient cause to permit the student to shift course order, substitute similar courses, or join a subsequent cohort when returning from leave.

Students are encouraged to work with their faculty members and Stephens' support systems to devise a plan for how to address the conditions as pregnancy progresses, anticipate the need for leaves, minimize the academic impact of their absence, and get back on track as efficiently and comfortably as possible. The Title IX Coordinator will assist with plan development and implementation as needed.

B. PURPOSE

To ensure the protection and equal treatment of pregnant students, students with pregnancy-related conditions and new parents.

C. SCOPE

This policy applies to all aspects of Stephens College's programs, including, but not limited to, admissions, educational programs and activities, and extracurricular activities.

By contractual agreement, all on-campus vendors will follow this policy.

D. DEFINITIONS

- a) Caretaking: caring for and providing for the needs of a child.
- b) Medical Necessity: a determination made by a health care provider (of the student's choosing) that a certain course of action is in the patient's best health interests.
- c) Parenting: the raising of a child by the child's parents in the reasonably immediate post-partum period.
- d) Pregnancy and Pregnancy-Related Conditions: include (but are not limited to) pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, conditions arising in connection with pregnancy, and recovery from any of these conditions.
- e) Pregnancy Discrimination: includes treating an individual affected by pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition less favorably than similar individuals not so affected, and includes a failure to provide legally mandated leave or accommodations.
- f) Pregnant Student/Birth-Parent: refers to the student who is or was pregnant. This policy and its pregnancy-related protections apply to all pregnant persons, regardless of gender identity or expression.
- g) Reasonable Accommodations: (for the purposes of this policy) changes in the academic environment or typical operations that enables pregnant students or students with pregnancy-related conditions to continue to pursue their studies and enjoy the equal benefits of Stephens College.

E. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS AFFECTED BY PREGNANCY, CHILDBRITH, OR RELATED CONDITIONS

- a) Stephens College and its faculty, staff and other employees will not require students to limit their studies as the result of pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions.
- b) Students who are pregnant or parenting are entitled to reasonable accommodations so that they will not be disadvantaged in their course of study or research, and may seek assistance from the Title IX Office.
- c) No artificial deadlines or time limitations will be imposed on requests for accommodations, but Stephens College is limited in its ability to impact of implement accommodations retroactively.
- d) Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Providing accommodations requested by a pregnant student to protect the health and safety of the student and/or the pregnancy (such as allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from hazardous substances);
 - ii. Making modifications to the physical environment (such as accessible seating);
 - iii. Providing mobility support;

- iv. Extending deadlines and/or allowing the student to make up tests or assignments missed for pregnancy-related absences;
- v. Offering remote learning options;
- vi. Excusing medically-necessary absences (this must be granted irrespective of classroom attendance requirements set by a faculty member, department, or school);
- vii. Granting leave or implementing incomplete grades for classes that will be resumed at a future date); or
- viii. Allowing breastfeeding students reasonable time and space to pump breast milk in a location that is private, clean, and reasonably accessible. (Bathroom stalls do not satisfy this requirement.)

Nothing in this policy requires modification to the essential elements of any academic program. Pregnant students cannot be channeled into an alternative program against their wishes.

F. MODIFIED ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY FOR PARENTING STUDENTS

- a) Students with child caretaking/parenting responsibilities who wish to remain engaged in their coursework while adjusting their academic responsibilities because of the birth or adoption of a child or placement of a foster child may request an academic modification period up to one year from the time the child entered the home with the appropriate documentation. Extensions may be granted when additional time is required by medical necessity or extraordinary caretaking/parenting responsibilities.
- b) During the modification period, the student's academic requirements will be adjusted and deadlines postponed as appropriate, in collaboration among the Title IX Office, the student's academic advisor, and the appropriate academic department(s).
- c) Students seeking a period of modified academic responsibilities may consult with their academic advisor or with the Title IX Office to determine appropriate academic accommodations requests. The Title IX Office will communicate all requests under this policy to students' academic advisors and coordinate accommodation-related efforts with the advisors unless the students specifically request that their advisor be excluded. Academic advisors will inform the Title IX Office of any requests related to this policy. 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 Title IX Office. If, for any reason, caretaking/parenting students are not able to work with their advisors/faculty members to obtain appropriate modifications, students should alert the Title IX Office as soon as possible, and the office will help facilitate needed accommodations and modifications.
- d) Students can request modified academic responsibilities under this policy regardless of whether they elect to take a leave of absence.
- e) While receiving academic modifications, students will remain registered and retain benefits accordingly.

G. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- a) As long as students maintain appropriate academic progress, faculty, staff, or other Stephens College employees will not require them to take a leave of absence, or withdraw from or limit their studies as the result of pregnancy, childbirth, or related

conditions, but nothing in this policy requires modification of the essential elements of any academic program.

- b) Enrolled students may elect to take a leave of absence for up to one year because of pregnancy and/or the birth, adoption, or placement of a child. The leave term may be extended in the case of extenuating circumstances or medical necessity.
- c) Students taking a leave of absence under this policy will provide notice of the intent to take leave 30 calendar days prior to the initiation of leave, or as soon as practicable.
- d) Intermittent leave may be taken with the advance approval of the Title IX Office and the student's academic department(s) when medically necessary.
- e) To the extent possible, Stephens College will take reasonable steps to ensure that upon return from leave, students will be reinstated to their program in the same status as when the leave began, with no tuition penalty.
- f) Students will not be negatively impacted by or forfeit their future eligibility for scholarships or similar Stephens-supported funding by exercising their rights under this policy.
- g) The Title IX Office can and will advocate for students with respect to external scholarship providers in the event that a leave of absence places eligibility into question.

H. HOUSING-RELATED ACCOMMODATIONS

Pregnant students' on-campus housing status will not be altered based on pregnancy status unless requested by the pregnant student. When available, parenting students will be allowed to live on campus with their child(ren) in apartment-style suites when all rooms of the apartment are occupied by the student and child(ren).

I. STUDENT-EMPLOYEE LEAVE

All student-employees will be entitled to the protections of the Family and Medical Leave Act, regardless of whether they are also students.

J. RETALIATION AND HARASSMENT

- a) Harassment of any member of the Stephens community on sex, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, or parental status is prohibited.
- b) Faculty, staff, and other Stephens employees are prohibited from interfering with students' rights to take leave, seek reasonable accommodation, or otherwise exercise their rights under this policy.
- c) Faculty, staff, and other Stephens employees are prohibited from retaliating against students for exercising their rights articulated by this policy, including imposing or threatening to impose negative educational outcomes because students request leave or accommodation, file a complaint, or otherwise exercise their rights under this policy.

K. COMPLIANCE

Any member of the Stephens College community may report a violation of this policy to any supervisor, administrator, or the Title IX Coordinator. All mandated reporters are responsible for promptly forwarding such reports to the Title IX Office. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for overseeing complaints of discrimination involving pregnant and parenting students.

L. CONTACT

Inquiries or complaints concerning the application of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, including the institutional response to pregnant and parenting students, may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator – Shannon Walls – (573) 876-7250, sbwalls@stephens.edu, LRW 342, Campus Box 2001.

Although the College encourages the use of its procedures to address complaints under this Policy, students and employees may also file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-421-3481 or ocr@ed.gov.