

# **Pregnancy Student Policy**

## **Purpose**

This policy ensures that pregnant and new parenting students enrolled at Bethel University are afforded the rights and protections required under Minnesota law statute 135A.1582 and supported by Title IX. The institution is committed to fostering an inclusive, safe, and supportive academic environment for pregnant students without fundamentally altering the nature of the educational courses the student is enrolled in. In order to access the entirety of this policy, students should disclose their pregnancy or new parenting status to Bethel University's Title IX coordinator at [title-ix@bethel.edu](mailto:title-ix@bethel.edu) or 612-322-8908.

## **Scope**

Bethel University is interpreting 135A.1582 and Title IX guidance within this policy. Bethel interprets this guidance to apply to those students who are pregnant and/or new parents. The scope of this policy is to offer arrangements and accommodations for students who meet the policy threshold. Should a student need additional support outside of the scope of this policy, please reach out to the Title IX Coordinator at [title-ix@bethel.edu](mailto:title-ix@bethel.edu) or 612-322-8908. The institution cannot provide modifications that fundamentally alter the nature of the educational course.

## **Definitions**

New Parent: A student enrolled at Bethel University within the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Adult and Professional Studies, Seminary, or any Graduate School who is breastfeeding and/ or experiencing medical impacts of birth needing acute care within the first year of the child's life.

Pregnant Student: A student enrolled at Bethel University within the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Adult and Professional Studies, Seminary, or any Graduate School who is pregnant at the time of utilizing this policy.

## **Student Responsibilities**

The student is required to go through an interactive process taking into account their major, courses, and limitations due to their pregnancy, or parenting needs to determine what might be appropriate. This is a temporary accommodation to be used through their time of needs related to pregnancy, and post-pregnancy. If a student is needing more permanent accommodations, students can coordinate with the Office of Accessibility Resource Services to facilitate those accommodations.

## **Institution Responsibilities**

### ***Non-Discrimination***

A pregnant or new parenting student shall not be required, solely based on pregnancy or new parenting status, to do one of the statements below:

- Take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program.
- Limit their studies.
- Participate in an alternative program.
- Change their major or program of study.
- Refrain from or stop participating in any course, activity, or program at the institution.

An accommodation or modification cannot fundamentally change the nature of the educational course or program.

### ***Reasonable Modifications***

The institution shall provide reasonable modifications to pregnant students, including but not limited to:

- Any modification provided to students with temporary medical conditions.
- Modifications necessary for the health and safety of the student and unborn child (e.g., lifting heavy weights or being exposed to harmful chemicals).
- Early course registration.

An accommodation or modification cannot fundamentally change the nature of the educational course or program.

### ***Excused Absences and Academic Flexibility***

For absences related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, the institution shall:

- Excuse the student's absence to the same extent as those with temporary medical conditions (see OARS guidance for reference).
- Allow the student to make up missed assignments, exams, or assessments as allowed with the same timeline as those with temporary medical conditions.
- Provide extended time for assignments equivalent to accommodations for temporary medical conditions.
- Offer access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures, to the same extent such resources are provided to students with other excused absences.

An absence or academic flexibility cannot fundamentally alter the nature of the educational course or program.

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

Pregnant or new parenting students shall be allowed to:

- Take a stop-out (one term) related to pregnancy or new parenting status.
- Return to their degree or certificate program in good academic standing, without reapplying, if they were in good academic standing at the time of the leave.

### ***New Parenting Student Accommodations***

Students who are breastfeeding or experiencing symptoms related to birth will have access to accommodations, including but not limited to:

- Access to a private, clean, and secure space separate from a bathroom to express breastmilk.
- Breaks to express breastmilk.
- Access to food, water, and the ability to sit as needed.

## **Title IX Coordinator Contact Information**

For questions, accommodations, or to request modifications under this policy, please contact:

- Abby Woodley
- title-ix@bethel.edu
- 612-322-8908