

# VITERBO UNIVERSITY PREGNANCY AND RELATED CONDITIONS AND PARENTING STUDENT POLICY

## 1. Non-Discrimination Statement

Viterbo University does not discriminate in its education program or activity against any applicant for admission, student, applicant for employment, or employee on the basis of current, potential, or past pregnancy or related conditions as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX). The University prohibits members of the University community from adopting or implementing any policy, practice, or procedure which treats an applicant for admission, student, applicant for employment, or employee differently on the basis of current, potential, or past parental, family, or marital status. This policy and its pregnancy-related protections apply to all pregnant persons, regardless of gender identity or expression.

## 2. Definitions

- **Familial Status.** The configuration of one's family or one's role in a family.
- **Marital Status.** The state of being married or unmarried.
- **Parental Status.** The status of a person who, with respect to another person who is under the age of 18, is a biological, adoptive, foster, or stepparent; a legal custodian or guardian; in loco parentis with respect to such a person; or actively seeking legal custody, guardianship, visitation, or adoption of such a person.
- **Pregnancy and Related Conditions.** The full spectrum of processes and events connected with pregnancy, including pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation; related medical conditions; and recovery therefrom.
- **Reasonable Modifications.** Individualized modifications to the University's policies, practices, or procedures that does not fundamentally alter the University's education program or activity.

## 3. Information Sharing Requirements

Any University employee who becomes aware of a student's pregnancy or related condition is required to provide the student with the Title IX Coordinator's contact information and communicate that the Title IX Coordinator can help take specific actions to prevent discrimination and ensure equal access to the University's education program and activity. If the employee has a reasonable belief that the Title IX Coordinator is already aware of the pregnancy or related condition, the employee is not required to provide the student with the Title IX Coordinator's contact information.

Upon notification of a student's pregnancy or related condition, the Title IX Coordinator will contact the student and inform the student of the University's obligations to:

- Prohibit sex discrimination.
- Provide reasonable modifications.
- Allow access, on a voluntary basis, to any separate and comparable portion of the institution's education program or activity.
- Allow a voluntary leave of absence.
- Ensure lactation space availability.
- Maintain a Resolution Process for alleged discrimination.
- Treat pregnancy as comparable to other temporary medical conditions for medical benefit, service, plan, or policy purposes.

The Title IX Coordinator will also notify the student of the process to file a complaint for alleged discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, as applicable.

#### **4. Reasonable Modifications for Students**

Students who are pregnant or are experiencing related conditions are entitled to reasonable modifications to prevent sex discrimination and ensure equal access to the University's education program and activity. Any student seeking reasonable modifications must contact the Title IX Coordinator to discuss appropriate and available reasonable modifications based on their individual needs. Students are encouraged to request reasonable modifications as promptly as possible, although retroactive modifications may be available in some circumstances. Reasonable modifications are voluntary, and a student can accept or decline the offered reasonable modifications. Not all reasonable modifications are appropriate for all contexts.

Reasonable Modifications may include:

- Breaks during class to express breast milk, breastfeed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or related conditions, including eating, drinking, or using the restroom
- Intermittent absences to attend medical appointments
- Access to online or homebound education
- Changes in schedule or course sequence
- Time extensions for coursework and rescheduling of tests and examinations
- Allowing a student to sit or stand, or carry or keep water nearby
- Counseling
- Changes in physical space or supplies (for example, access to a larger desk or a footrest)
- Elevator access
- A larger uniform or other required clothing or equipment
- Other changes to policies, practices, or procedures determined by the Title IX Coordinator

In situations such as clinical rotations, performances, labs, and group work, the institution will work with the student to devise an alternative 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 the University's support systems to devise a plan for how to best 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.

Supporting documentation for reasonable modifications will only be required when it is necessary and reasonable under the circumstances to determine which reasonable modifications to offer to determine other specific actions to take to ensure equal access.

Information about pregnant students' requests for modifications will be shared with faculty and staff only to the extent necessary to provide reasonable modification.

Students experiencing pregnancy-related conditions that manifest as a temporary disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are eligible for reasonable accommodations just like any other student with a temporary disability. The Title IX Coordinator will consult with the Director of Advising, Career Development, and Accessibility to ensure the student receives reasonable accommodations for their disability as required by law.

## **5. Certification to Participate**

All students should be informed of health and safety risks related to participation in academic and co-curricular activities, regardless of pregnancy status. A student may not be required to provide health care provider or other certification that the student is physically unable to participate in the program or activity, unless:

- 1) The certified level of physical ability or health is necessary for participation;
- 2) The institution requires such certification of all students participating; and
- 3) The information obtained is not used as a basis for pregnancy-related discrimination.

## **6. Lactation and Parenting Space Access**

The university provides students and employees with access to lactation spaces that are functional, appropriate, and safe. Such spaces are regularly cleaned, shielded from view, and free from the intrusion of others.

Lactation spaces are located in the following spaces:

- School of Nursing Building room 443
- School of Nursing Building room 206

- Brophy Center room 213
- Murphy Center room 571
- Reinhart Center room 020 (garden level)

## **7. Leaves of Absence**

### **A. Students**

Students are permitted to take a voluntary leave of absence for a reasonable time as deemed medically necessary by their health care provider 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. Students who elect to take leave under this policy may register under an “inactive” status to continue their eligibility for certain benefits (e.g. counseling services). While registered under that status, students who choose to take a leave of absence under this policy are subject to the payment of applicable fees to maintain access to services and other fee-based resources.

To the extent possible, Viterbo University will take reasonable steps to ensure that students who take a leave of absence or medical leave, under this policy, return to the same position of academic progress that they were in when they took leave, including access to the same or an equivalent course catalog that was in place when the leave began.

- If a student needs to take a leave prior to midsemester that will extend through the duration of the semester, it is recommended that the student considers the following options, based on the duration of the leave: short-term leave with extensions on course(s) and experiential requirements or withdrawal for the term to re-enroll in the course(s) and experiences upon their return to academics.
- If a student needs to take a leave of absence after midsemester, the following options are recommended, based on the duration of the leave: short-term leave with extensions on course(s) and experiential requirements, take incompletes for the course(s), or withdrawal for the term to re-enroll in the course(s) and experiences upon their return to academics.
- Internships, clinical placements and rotations, student teaching, and other credited experiences will be evaluated and addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that there may be financial aid implications for the decisions made. A high-level overview of potential aid implications will be discussed with the student. The student will also be recommended to schedule a meeting with the Financial Aid office to discuss short-term and long-term financial aid implications based on the decisions made related to the leave of absence.

Continuation of students' scholarship, fellowship, or similar University-sponsored funding during the leave term will depend on the students' registration status and the policies of the funding program regarding registration status. Students will not be negatively impacted by or forfeit their future eligibility for their scholarship, fellowship, or similar University-supported funding by exercising their rights under this policy.

The Financial Aid and Title IX offices can and will advocate for students with respect to financial aid agencies and external scholarship providers if a leave of absence places eligibility into question.

In order to initiate a leave of absence, the student must contact the Title IX Coordinator at least 30 calendar days prior to the initiation of leave, or as soon as feasible. The Title IX Coordinator will assist the student in completing any necessary paperwork.

## **B. Employees**

Information on employment leave can be found in the [Employee Handbook](#).

If an employee, including a student-employee, is not eligible for leave under the aforementioned leave policy because they either (1) do not have enough leave time available under that policy, or (2) have not been employed long enough to qualify for leave under that policy, they are eligible to qualify for pregnancy or related condition leave under Title IX. Pregnancy and related conditions will be regarded as a justification for a leave of absence without pay for a reasonable period of time.

Employees who take leave under Title IX must be reinstated to the status held when leave began or a comparable position without a negative effect on any employment privilege or right.

## **8. Student Parents**

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 during the first twelve months from the time the child entered the home. Extensions may be granted when additional time is required by medical necessity or extraordinary caretaking/parenting responsibilities.

During the modification period, the student's academic requirements will be adjusted, and deadlines postponed as appropriate, in collaboration among the Accessibility office, the student's academic advisor, and the appropriate academic department(s).

Students seeking a period of modified academic responsibilities may consult with Accessibility and their academic advisor and/or faculty to determine appropriate academic adjustment requests. Accessibility may communicate requests under this policy to students' academic

advisors and coordinate adjustment-related efforts with the advisors unless the student specifically requests that their advisors be excluded.

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 Accessibility.

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 and Accessibility offices as soon as possible, and the office will help facilitate needed accommodations and modifications.

In timed degree, certification, or credentialing programs, students who seek modifications upon the birth or placement of their child will be allowed an extension based on the parameters of the program and correlating licensure requirements to prepare for and take preliminary and qualifying examinations. Additionally, students may request an extension of up to twelve (12) months toward normative time to degree completion while in candidacy, to the extent those deadlines are controlled by the university. Longer extensions may be granted in extenuating circumstances.

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

While receiving academic modifications, students will remain registered and retain benefits accordingly.

## **9. University Housing**

A pregnant student's university housing status will not be altered based on pregnancy status unless requested by the student. Parenting students' access to housing is governed by [Residence Life Housing Policies](#). Student residency requirements and exemptions may be found [here](#).

## **10. Policy Dissemination and Training**

A copy of this policy will be made available to faculty and employees in the annually required training and posted on the University website. The University will educate all new students about this policy and the location of this policy as part of orientation. The Title IX office will make educational materials available to all members of the University community to promote compliance with this policy and familiarity with its procedures.