



Policy Title: Pregnancy and Related Conditions
Policy #: *(leave blank)*
Effective Date: August, 2024
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Responsible Unit: Title IX
Responsible Administrator: Julie Powell

- I. Policy Statement**
 - II. Purpose**
 - III. Certification to Participate**
 - IV. Leave of Absence**
 - V. Lactation Room Access**
 - VI. Housing**
 - VII. Definitions**
-

I. Policy Statement

Non-Discrimination Statement

Northwestern State 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). Northwestern State University prohibits members of the Northwestern State 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.¹ This policy and its pregnancy-related protections apply to all pregnant persons, regardless of gender identity or expression.

II. Purpose

Students who are pregnant or are experiencing related conditions are entitled to Reasonable Modifications to prevent sex discrimination and ensure equal access to Northwestern State 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. Title IX will work with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Support in providing these modifications. Reasonable Modifications are voluntary, and a student can accept or decline the Reasonable Modifications offered. 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 from attending medical appointments that could not be scheduled at other times
- 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 Northwestern State 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 the 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 Accessibility and Disability Support (OADS) to ensure the student receives reasonable accommodation for their disability as required by law.

III. 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 able to participate in the program or activity, unless:

- 1) A 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.

IV. 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 have a responsibility to contact NSU Registrar's Office, NSU Financial Aid Office, NSU Title IX Office and Campus Living Villages (housing), prior to taking a leave of absence to ensure the student is informed of any possible outcomes related to the leave.

To the extent possible, Northwestern State University will take reasonable steps to ensure that 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 or an equivalent course catalog that was in place when the leave began.

Continuation of students' scholarship, fellowship, or similar Northwestern State University-sponsored funding during the leave term will depend on the students' registration status and the policies of the funding program regarding registration status. NSU Financial Aid Office may advise students on this topic.

While the Office of Title IX Compliance can and will advocate for individuals with respect to financial aid agencies and external scholarship providers in the event that a leave of absence places eligibility into question, the provider's policy may take the lead.

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 practicable. The coordinator will assist the student in identifying the correct offices to work with and locating the necessary paperwork.

B. Employees

Information on employment leave can be found on the Human Resources webpage <https://www.nsula.edu/hr/> .

If an employee, including a student-employee, is not eligible for leave under this leave policy because they;

(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 may be eligible to qualify for pregnancy or related condition leave under FMLA.

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 FMLA will be reinstated to the status held when leave began or a comparable position without a negative effect on any employment privilege or right.

V. Lactation Spaces

In recognition of the well documented health advantages of breastfeeding for infants and mothers, Northwestern State University provides a supportive environment to enable breastfeeding students, faculty, and staff members time and a space for lactation needs during university hours. Female students planning to use the lactation room for these purposes should do so around their scheduled class times to the extent possible. Instructors are not required to excuse tardiness or absences due to students' lactation needs, except in cases where a class time or class activity exceeds two hours. For students whose classes are distant from one of the lactation stations, academic units should try to locate a suitable lactation room within the academic unit. The University reserves the right to require medical certification to support the intent of breaks for lactation room use, as is the policy for all accommodations.

To qualify for access to the Lactation Rooms, you must apply for the accommodation through the Title IX Center, Room 306 of the Student Union. The accommodation must be approved prior to room access being granted.

NSU currently has five (5) Lactation spaces available.

The locations are:

1. Natchitoches, Watson Memorial Library, Room 307 (sink access is next door in the lounge)
2. Natchitoches, Sylvan Freidman Student Union, Room 147 (sink is in the room)
3. Natchitoches, Alost Hall-Room 235
4. CENLA Campus-Building B, Room 2013
5. Shreveport Campus-Building LB, Room 101H

Females utilizing the lactation room in Watson Memorial Library will go to the Circulation Desk and exchange their Student ID for the key. Once the student is finished with the room, they will exchange the key for their Student ID.

Females using the room in the Friedman Student Union will be given an access code once they have been approved for this accommodation.

Females on CENLA and Shreveport campuses, see your building manager.

If a key is not returned, a lock or room is damaged, or property is missing, fees will be added to the appropriate student account for replacement or repair. Misuse of the room will result in privileges being suspended and the possibility of Student Conduct sanctions.

Key replacement-\$20.00

Missing item(s)-current retail cost

Damaged digital lock-\$800.00

Furnishings may include:

- A chair
- A small table
- Electrical outlets
- Access to a sink

There may not be a refrigerators in these rooms. Please plan accordingly.

Nursing Parent Responsibilities:

- Provide their own breast pump.
- Provide their own containers and coolers for storage of breast milk.
- Remove all personal items when exiting the room.
- Understand that others will be using this room, so utilize it in a timely manner.
- Keep the general area clean for the next user.

The university will provide normal janitorial services

Please contact the building manager regarding any problems with the room or

fixtures. For problems using this accommodation, please contact the Title IX Office at 318-357-5570.

VI. Housing

Campus Living Villages (CLV) follows the Fair Housing Act as it relates to Pregnancy and Related Conditions. Please contact CLV for more information.

VII. 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.²
- **Reasonable Modifications.** Individualized modifications to Northwestern State University’s policies, practices, or procedures that do not fundamentally alter Northwestern State University’s education program or activity.

A copy of this Pregnancy and Related Conditions Policy will be made available on Northwestern State University’s Title IX website <https://www.nsula.edu/studentexperience/notalone/>.

VIII. Revision History

ARTICLE #	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES MADE

This policy is hereby adopted on this first day of February 2025

President,
Northwestern State University