

Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations for Dental Students

The Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, through both the [Office for Equity](#) and the Office of Student Affairs, supports pregnant and parenting students so they can achieve academic success while pregnant, recovering from the birth of a child, caring for a newborn, and/or breastfeeding. Students whose partners are pregnant or who give birth to a child are also entitled to support.

Students should meet with Dr. Williams, Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs to map out a detailed plan of adjustments and accommodations as early in pregnancy as feasible. The [Office for Equity](#) supports students by identifying available pregnancy and parenting accommodations and serving as an additional resource. Pregnant students or students whose partners are pregnant should contact the [Office of Equity](#) to understand the scope of available accommodations and options.

Adjustments to Promote Student Success:

Title IX (which prohibits gender discrimination against students) prohibits schools from penalizing students because they need time off or other reasonable accommodations due to pregnancy, childbirth, or caring for an infant. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the United States Department of Education is responsible for enforcing Title IX, which states: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity . . .”^{1,2}

A pregnant student may also be entitled to reasonable accommodation under the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) for serious health conditions arising from pregnancy or conditions that constitute a disability and arise from an exacerbation, due to pregnancy, of an existing impairment.

Under Title IX and the ADA, a **reasonable accommodation** includes a change in the academic environment, or the way things are customarily done, that enables an individual who is or was pregnant or is caring for a newborn, to complete the essential elements of a course with or without an accommodation, attend and/or be successful in class, or enjoy equal benefits and privileges of education.

Student Accommodations:

Accommodations cover pregnant students and co-parents, regardless of gender. For pregnancy, this includes pregnancy symptoms and complications, infertility, miscarriage, termination of pregnancy, recovery from any of these events, and parenting an infant.

All academic requirements must be met before graduation. Accommodations may result in the extension of time needed to complete the DMD degree.

Individualized support and accommodations may include the following:

- Academic support (extended deadlines, flexible exam scheduling, excused absences, grades of incomplete, remote learning)
- Temporary parking in a closer location
- Modification of policies, including attendance policies
- Modified clinical schedules

- Leaves of absence
- Access to nursing/pumping sites on campus and at the hospital affiliates
- Frequent breaks for nursing/pumping or to manage fatigue
- The ability to eat in class, if necessary, to manage health conditions arising from pregnancy

Other accommodations, designed to support students but not discussed here, may be available based on individual circumstances.

Unfair Treatment

Students who feel they are being treated unfairly because they are pregnant or parenting should contact the Office for Equity for assistance. Possible concerns about unfair treatment may include:

- Instructors not fully implementing accommodations
- Someone questioning a student's accommodations (remember, pregnant and parenting students do not have any obligation to tell their story or share information with anyone except the Office for Equity to communicate the student's eligibility for an accommodation)
- Someone singling out a student for negative treatment because of the student's pregnancy or status as a parent

Students with concerns about discrimination should contact the [Office for Equity](#) for information about options, help with problem solving or other strategies, and complaint and investigation processes.

References:

1. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.html>
OCR's pamphlet, "Supporting the Academic Success of Pregnant and Parenting Students," Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, states:
Title IX protects students in all of the academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs or activities of schools. This includes prohibiting discrimination against pregnant and parenting students . . .
To ensure a pregnant [or parenting] student's access to its educational program, when necessary, a school must make adjustments to the regular program that are reasonable and responsive to the student's . . . status . . .
For example, a teacher may not refuse to allow a student to submit work after a deadline that she missed because of absences due to pregnancy or childbirth [or parenting] . . .
As required by Title IX, [schools must] assist pregnant and parenting students who have excused absences by providing them with make-up assignments and exams. As long as the absences are excused, schools should allow pregnant [and parenting] students to make up the work that they missed.
2. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201306-title-ix.html>
A "Dear Colleague Letter" published by OCR states:
We as a nation need to do more to help the hundreds and thousands of young people who become mothers and fathers each year graduate . . . To help improve the . . . graduation rates of young parents, we must support pregnant and parenting students so

they can stay in school and complete their education, thereby building better lives for themselves and their children.

Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations for School of Dental Medicine Faculty and Staff

The Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine partners with the [Office for Equity](#) to support pregnant and parenting faculty and staff so they can achieve professional success while pregnant, recovering from the birth of a child, caring for a newborn, and/or breastfeeding. Employees whose partners are pregnant or who give birth to a child are also entitled to support.

Faculty and staff should meet with their supervisor and/or the [Office for Equity](#) to map out a detailed plan of adjustments and accommodations as early in pregnancy as feasible. The Office of Equity can help identify available pregnancy and parenting accommodations. Pregnant employees and those whose partners are pregnant should contact the [Office of Equity](#) to understand the scope of available accommodations and options.

Faculty and Staff Accommodations:

Accommodations cover pregnant employees and co-parents, regardless of gender. For pregnancy, this includes pregnancy symptoms and complications, infertility, miscarriage, termination of pregnancy, recovery from any of these events, and parenting an infant.

Individualized support and accommodations may include the following:

- Workplace support (flexible schedules, excused absences, remote work)
- Temporary parking in a closer location
- Modification of policies, including attendance policies
- Modified schedules
- Leaves of absence
- Access to nursing/pumping sites on campus
- Frequent breaks for nursing/pumping or to manage fatigue
- The ability to eat at a workstation, if necessary, to manage health conditions arising from pregnancy

Other accommodations, not discussed here, may be available based on individual circumstances.

Unfair Treatment

Employees who feel they are being treated unfairly because they are pregnant or parenting should contact the [Office for Equity](#) for assistance. The Office for Equity will assist by providing information about options, problem solving or other strategies, and complaint and investigation processes.