



SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING PREGNANCY OR RELATED CONDITIONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to outline the support available to students experiencing pregnancy or related conditions. Our goal is to support the health and academic success of our students and to foster a supportive, inclusive, and accessible educational environment, all while maintaining the integrity of the College's academic program.

These guidelines are designed with the student's success in mind. They are:

- Individualized: Tailored to meet the unique needs and circumstances of each student, while recognizing that the timing (program year, term etc.) of the requested adjustments or modifications and its duration will impact the range of available options.
- Flexible: Adaptable to address various situations and to allow for changes in adjustments or modifications, as needed.

SCOPE AND POLICY STATEMENT

The College has obligations under Title IX to provide certain supports and modifications to students experiencing pregnancy or related conditions in order to ensure their equal access to the College's program or activity. For example, the College must treat pregnancy or related conditions in the same manner and under the same policies as any other temporary medical conditions and must allow voluntary leaves of absence. Students should contact the Title IX Coordinator for more information.

Pregnancy or related conditions include pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation; medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or lactation; and recovery from pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, or related medical conditions.

The College prohibits discrimination against any student based on any of the above-referenced conditions and will provide reasonable modifications and adjustments to ensure equal access to educational programs and activities. In certain circumstances, medical documentation may be required to support the nature and/or scope of the student's requested modifications.

Defining "Reasonable Modifications": "Reasonable modifications" are adjustments provided to enable students experiencing pregnancy or related conditions to participate fully in academic

programs, without fundamentally altering the requirements of the degree program. Adjustments may include schedule modifications if possible, as well as additional breaks for mothers expressing breastmilk, and extensions for, or rescheduling of, course requirements. Any adjustments will be individually tailored to the needs of the student and will be determined after discussion with the student.

Handling Discriminatory Situations: Any perceived mistreatment related to pregnancy or related conditions will be addressed promptly and thoroughly, in accordance with the College's Title IX Grievance Procedure, <https://sunyopt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Title-IX-129B-Grievance-Procedure-2024-FINAL.pdf>. Students are encouraged to report any perceived discriminatory behavior to the Title IX Coordinator, Chief Diversity Officer, or to Student Affairs, who will provide guidance and support throughout the resolution process and make referrals to other College officials where appropriate.

Leave options will necessarily differ based on the student's program year (1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th). Options will also be dependent on the duration of the requested leave and the point at which the leave is requested during the specific term. Each stage of the program and time within the term may warrant unique considerations. While the College is committed to supporting students based on their individual needs and strives to support timely graduation within a student's original class, these guidelines do not guarantee that students seeking adjustments will graduate on time. Due to the progressive and sequential nature of the College's clinical and didactic requirements, and the fact that certain courses are only offered once during a given academic year, the College may be limited in the extent of academic and clinical adjustments that can be offered.

REQUESTING ADJUSTMENTS

Requests for adjustments must be submitted via email, to the Student ADA liaison (Learning Specialist), copying the Registrar and the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs. These individuals will collaborate with the student and their Instructors of Record (IORs) to establish a plan for necessary adjustments.

To ensure ample time for the development of appropriate adjustments, students are strongly encouraged to submit their requests as early as possible. Failure of timely notification may limit the scope of available options. While we recommend providing advance notice, we understand that unforeseen emergencies may arise. In such cases, we urge students to promptly contact the Student ADA liaison (Learning Specialist), the Registrar and the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs to initiate the process.

Timely notification is also important so that necessary protective measures can be implemented to protect students and their unborn infant from exposure to patients whose medical conditions may pose a health risk for them.

Medical Certification: In certain circumstances, students requesting extended leave or who present special circumstances may be required to submit medical certification from a licensed healthcare provider.

Prior to confirming any arrangements, students may request a meeting with the Financial Aid Office, Vice President for Student Affairs, and/or Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs to address any concerns the student may have.

Decisions: Final notification of the proposed plan shall be provided by the Student ADA liaison (Learning Specialist), after considering the feasibility, educational outcomes, and integrity of the proposed arrangement within the academic and clinical context. Adjustments which would fundamentally alter the essential elements of the academic program will not be granted.

Appeals: A student who wishes to appeal the decision may do so in writing to the Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs within one week of written notification from the Student ADA liaison (Learning Specialist). The Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs, or designee, shall issue a decision within one week of receipt of the appeal.

Types of Modifications: The College will endeavor to be both flexible and creative in structuring academic adjustments which meet a student's needs while also ensuring that the student is able to satisfy the fundamental requirements of the academic program.

1. **Short-term Leave:** If approved, this option allows students a short-term leave of absence, while remaining enrolled, without impacting their academic trajectory or fundamentally altering the academic standards of the program.

During this period, students are responsible for coordinating with the Learning Specialist, their instructors and clinical preceptors to plan for making up missed assessments, labs, classes, and clinics. It is essential for students to communicate their needs promptly and as early as possible to allow time to create a detailed plan for their continued academic progress.

- **Class Attendance:** Students are responsible for the lectures and course work as they provide crucial theoretical knowledge directly applicable to the practical components in the labs and/or clinic. Students must coordinate in-person requirements and make-ups with their IORs.
- **Lab & Small Group Attendance:** Lab and small group attendance is a fundamental component of the academic program. Missing multiple consecutive labs can significantly impact a student's understanding of the material and overall progress. Therefore, failure to make up any missed lab(s) will impact the final course grade. Additionally, it is essential to highlight that depending on the nature, timing, and number of missed lab session(s), makeup opportunities may not be available.
- **Attendance in Clinic & Clinical Assignments:** Students are required to proactively engage with their IORs and clinical preceptors to develop a plan for meeting clinical requirements and making up missed clinical sessions.
 - The 3rd and 4th year clinical programs involve distinct clinical experiences and expectations. Given that there are progressing expectations as students move through the clinical sequence, "front loading" of anticipated clinical make-ups is discouraged and may not be possible in all cases.
 - Students in their 3rd year must coordinate with their clinic chiefs and 3rd year instructors of record (IOR), of any short-term clinical leave of absence and make-up sessions. Completion of substantial make-ups will depend on the availability of clinical sessions and patient scheduling. For example, and where appropriate, make-ups will be scheduled during breaks within the quarter, as defined on the academic calendar (e.g., spring break,

winter holiday break, etc.) or during intersessions (the weeks between quarters and the week after the spring quarter ends).

- Students in their 4th year must coordinate with their IORs and/or the Director of Externship, as applicable, of any short-term clinical leave of absence and make-up sessions. Completion of substantial make-ups will depend on the availability of clinical sessions at the assigned internship/externship site and patient scheduling. For example, and where appropriate, make-ups will be scheduled during the intersession between the winter and spring quarters, and the week after the spring quarter ends.

The College will work with all students requiring adjustments to assist them with graduating on time. However, given the curricular demands and progressing expectations of the professional degree curriculum, as well as very tight clinical schedules, a leave of absence may have to be considered by students requiring extended time away from the program.

2. **Leave of Absence:** Leave of absence will be considered for all students requesting extended time off for pregnancy and related conditions. Leave of Absence requests shall be submitted to the Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs. Students considering this option should consult the Leave of Absence policy outlined in the Student Handbook, <https://www.sunyopt.edu/pdfs/academics/StudentHandbook.pdf>, for detailed information on eligibility, application procedures, tuition/financial aid implications and impact on academic progression. A Leave of Absence will result in delayed graduation.

Students considering an extended leave must meet with representatives from the Offices of the Registrar and Financial Aid. Depending on when in a term the leave of absence begins, the student may be required to repeat the term and there may be tuition and financial implications. Note: Leaves of Absence may be granted for up to one year depending on the program year and start date of the leave.

BREAKS FOR NURSING MOTHERS

Students who are nursing are entitled to reasonable breaks to express breast milk for up to three years after childbirth. Students shall be allotted up to 30 minutes every 2-3 hours for nursing breaks. Students are responsible for making up the work missed during these breaks.

- **Communication:** Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the ADA liaison, their instructors of record (IOR), proctors and clinical preceptors, so that the integration of these breaks into their daily schedules can be reasonably accommodated with minimal disruption to education and patient care.
- **Lab & Small Group Attendance:** Students in labs and small groups must work with the course IOR and lab/small group instructor to arrange suitable breaks and schedule make-ups as needed to ensure completion of course requirements.
- **Clinical Responsibilities:** Students with clinical responsibilities must work with their clinical preceptors, IOR, and clinic chiefs to arrange a mutually suitable schedule that accommodates their needs while maintaining patient care standards.
- **Nursing Room:** The College has designated rooms 926a and 1517 to be used by nursing mothers, accessible during regular building hours.

- **Support and Queries:** Students facing difficulties accessing the designated rooms or requiring further assistance are encouraged to contact the Office of Student Affairs.