



# Pregnancy and Parenting Modification Policy

## I.     Policy Statement

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (“SAIC”) is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals enjoy freedom from discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of sex, as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Sex discrimination includes discrimination based on current, potential, or past pregnancy, marital status, or parental status. Sex discrimination is prohibited and illegal in admissions, educational programs and activities. This policy establishes procedures for ensuring the protection and equal treatment of pregnant students with pregnancy-related conditions and new parents.

A student who is, or becomes, pregnant is strongly encouraged to notify SAIC’s Title IX Coordinator, Denise Banks, SPHR, at [title9@saic.edu](mailto:title9@saic.edu) or 312.499.4165, as soon as possible. By doing so, the student and the Title IX Coordinator or their designee can collaborate and develop an appropriate plan for continuing the student’s education, as well as particular challenges the student may face while pregnant or when recovering from childbirth (e.g., missed classes, make-up work, etc.). **However, the choice to declare a pregnancy is voluntary, and a student is not required to disclose this information to SAIC.**

## II.     Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of SAIC's program, including admissions, educational programs, and activities.

### **III. Definitions**

1. "Medical necessity" is a determination made by a health care provider of a student's choosing.
2. "Pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions" include (but are not limited to) pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, conditions arising in connection with pregnancy, and recovery from any of these conditions, in accordance with federal law.
3. "Pregnancy discrimination" includes treating a person affected by current, potential, or past pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition less favorably than similar individuals not so affected, and includes a failure to provide legally mandated leave or modifications.
4. "Pregnant student/Birth-parent" refers to the student who is or was pregnant.
5. "Reasonable modifications" for the purposes of this policy are changes in the academic environment or typical operations that enable a pregnant student or student with a pregnancy-related condition to continue to pursue their studies and enjoy equal benefits of SAIC. In determining reasonable modifications, SAIC will consult with the student and base each reasonable modification on the student's individualized needs. A modification is not reasonable if it would fundamentally alter the nature of SAIC's education program or activity.

### **IV. Reasonable Modifications**

1. SAIC and its faculty, staff, and other employees shall not require a student to limit their studies due to pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions.
2. The benefits and services provided to students affected by pregnancy shall be no less than those provided to students with temporary medical conditions.
3. Students with pregnancy-related disabilities, like any other student with a disability, are entitled to reasonable accommodations.

4. Reasonable modifications may include, but are not limited to:
  - modifications requested by the pregnant student to protect the health and safety of the student and/or their pregnancy (such as allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from hazardous substances)
  - modifications to the physical environment (such as accessible seating)
  - mobility support
  - extending deadlines and/or allowing the student to make up tests or assignments missed for pregnancy-related absences
  - providing remote learning options
  - excusing medically-necessary absences
  - excusing intermittent absences to attend medical appointments
  - allowing a student to sit or stand
  - allowing a student to carry or keep water nearby
  - granting leave
  - allowing 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.
  
6. Breastfeeding students must be granted reasonable time and space to pump breast milk in a location that is private, clean, and reasonably accessible. Bathroom stalls do not satisfy this requirement. Students are encouraged to utilize SAIC's lactation spaces and may contact [nursingparents@artic.edu](mailto:nursingparents@artic.edu) for more information about these locations.

## **V. Modified Academic Responsibilities for Parenting Students**

1. Students with parenting responsibilities who wish to remain engaged in their coursework while adjusting their academic responsibilities because of the birth or adoption of their child or placement of a foster child may request an academic modification period of up to one semester beginning within the first six months of the child entering the home. Extensions may be granted

where additional time is required due to medical necessity or extraordinary parenting responsibilities.

2. During a modification period, the student's academic requirements will be adjusted and deadlines postponed as appropriate.
3. Students seeking a period of modified academic responsibilities must consult with their adviser to determine which academic responsibilities will be suspended or ongoing. The student will work with their adviser and professors to reschedule course assignments, lab hours, examinations, or other requirements and/or to reduce the student's overall course load, as appropriate. Students are entitled to full relief from academic responsibilities for at least six (6) weeks.
4. A student who seeks modifications upon the birth or placement of their child shall be allowed an extension of 12 months to prepare for and take preliminary and qualifying examinations and an extension of 12 months toward normative time to degree while in candidacy. Longer extensions may be granted in extenuating circumstances.
5. A student can request modified academic responsibilities under this section regardless of whether the student elects to take leave.
6. While receiving academic modifications, the student will remain registered and retain benefits accordingly.

## **VI. Options After Disclosure**

Once a student has voluntarily disclosed a pregnancy to SAIC, the student will have several options, as described below.

1. Continue in the program
  - If a student decides to continue in the program and desires to have any reasonable modifications to their academic program due to the pregnancy, the student should contact the Title IX Coordinator to discuss any reasonable modifications that may be necessary to continue in the program. Such modifications, if any, will be documented in a letter.

- Reasonable modifications are not retroactive.

## 2. Request a leave of absence

- A leave of absence due to pregnancy may be for various amounts of time depending on a student's particular circumstances. Such a leave may be extended if deemed medically necessary.
- Due to the structure of SAIC's academic programs, the timing and/or length of a student's leave of absence may result in the student being required to re-enroll in a course or finish course(s) in a future term.
- If taking a leave of absence due to a pregnancy, the leave of absence will be documented through SAIC's leave of absence procedures.

## 3. Withdraw from SAIC

- The student may, in their sole discretion, determine that they must withdraw from SAIC for an indefinite period of time or permanently due to their pregnancy. Normal SAIC withdrawal procedures and readmission procedures apply.

## **VII. Questions or Concern**

A student who has questions about this policy or who is concerned about its implementation should contact the Title IX Coordinator, Denise Banks, SPHR, at [title9@saic.edu](mailto:title9@saic.edu) or via phone at 312.499.4165.

