

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
YOUR RIGHTS
IF YOU ARE A PREGNANT AND/OR
PARENTING STUDENT

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, is a Federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex—including pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, recovery from any of these conditions, or marital status—in educational programs and activities.

YOUR TITLE IX RIGHTS:

Allow you to continue participating in classes and extracurricular activities even though you are pregnant.

- *You can still participate in advanced placement and honors classes, school clubs, sports, honor societies, student leadership opportunities, and other activities;*
- *You are not required to submit a doctor's note unless it is required from all students who have a physical or emotional condition requiring treatment by a doctor;*
- *You are not required to submit a doctor's note after you have been hospitalized for childbirth unless it is required from all students who have been hospitalized for other conditions;*
- *You must be provided with reasonable adjustments (larger desk, elevator access, allowing you to make frequent trips to the restroom, etc.) when necessary because of your pregnancy.*

Excuse absences due to pregnancy or childbirth for as long as your doctor says it is necessary.

- *You must be allowed to return to the same academic and extracurricular status as before your medical leave began, which includes giving you the opportunity to make up any work missed during any absence;*
- *Your faculty may not refuse to allow submission of work after a deadline missed because of pregnancy or childbirth;*
- *If your grade is based in part on class participation or attendance, you should be allowed to make up the participation or attendance credits you did not have the chance to earn due to missing class because of pregnancy or childbirth;*
- *Your institution must provide pregnant students with the same special services it provides to students with temporary medical conditions.*

Protect you from harassment based on sex, including harassment because of pregnancy or related conditions.

- *Examples of the type of comments that could constitute prohibited harassment include:*
 - *Making sexual comments or jokes about your pregnancy;*
 - *Calling you sexually charged names;*
 - *Spreading rumors about your sexual activity;*
 - *Making sexual propositions or gestures;*
 - *Any comments are sufficiently serious that it interferes with your ability; to benefit from or participate in classes and activities.*

RESOURCES:

URI Title IX Coordinator: (401) 874-2442
URI Women's Center: (401) 874-2097
URI Disability Services: (401) 874-2098



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

But what if my school says that absence or make-up work policies are up to each individual professor?

While that may be the school's practice, the school administration and professors are bound by federal civil rights law. Title IX requires that schools ensure that all faculty and staff comply with the law and do not discriminate against pregnant and parenting students.

I have a scholarship - can my school take it back when they find out I am pregnant?

No, schools cannot terminate or reduce athletic, merit, or need-based scholarships based on pregnancy. If you stay enrolled, you can keep your scholarship.

I want to take a semester off. Can I keep my student status, scholarship, etc.?

Not necessarily - if you want to take off more time than your doctor says is medically necessary, you will need to consult URI's non-medical leave policy.

What about internships, career rotations, and other off-campus elements of my program - do I have a right to participate in those?

Yes. You must be allowed to continue participating in off-campus programs. For example, if your program provides opportunities to "work in the field" you cannot be denied participation based on your pregnancy. You cannot be required to submit a doctor's note for continued participation, unless it is required for all students who have a medical condition that requires treatment by a doctor, and in that case there can be no second guessing of any medical decision.

Classmates and even professors have made offensive comments to me about my pregnancy. Should I complain to the school about it?

Title IX requires schools to prevent and address sex-based harassment, including harassment based on pregnancy. If you experience this sort of treatment at school, you should seek help immediately. The law prohibits the school from retaliating against you for making a complaint or raising a concern.

Unfortunately, Title IX has very little specific guidelines for parenting students. Primarily, it protects parenting students from discrimination in educational access. Such items may include:

- Being denied the ability to apply for an educational program, financial aid, or scholarships that you would otherwise be eligible.
- Instructors cannot penalize a student because of their parenting status.
- Special programs (e.g. study abroad, sports teams, clubs) cannot be denied to a parenting student for reason of their parenting status.

If you feel your school is discriminating against you because you are pregnant or parenting you may file a complaint:

- Using your school's internal Title IX complaint procedures;
- With the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), even if you have not filed a complaint with your school. If you file with OCR, make sure you do so within 180 days of when the discrimination took place;
- In court, even if you have not filed a complaint with your school or with OCR.

(Full Title IX Information can be located via URI Title IX or the US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights websites)



MORE INFORMATION:

URI Title IX Coordinator:
Roxanne Gomes
(401) 874-2442 or roxanne@uri.edu
<http://web.uri.edu/affirmativeaction/title-ix/>

OR

If you want to learn more about your rights, or if you believe your rights have been violated, contact the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (800) 421-3481 or ocr@ed.gov.