

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Pregnant and Parenting Student Rights: FAQs for California State University, Long Beach Students

Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex — including pregnancy, parenting, and related medical conditions - in education and in programs and activities that receive federal funding. If you are a pregnant or parenting student, you have the right to stay in school so you can meet your education and career goals. Below are some frequently asked questions from students in postsecondary schools regarding their Title IX rights:

How Does Title IX Apply to Pregnant or Parenting Students?

Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex – including pregnancy, parenting, and related pregnancy medical conditions in educational programs and activities that receive federal funding. This means that California State University, Long Beach students must give all students who might be, are, or have been pregnant the same access to school programs and educational opportunities that other students have. Your professors or school administrators should not tell you that you have to drop out of your classes or academic program or change your educational plans due to your pregnancy.

The university can require a pregnant student to provide a doctor’s certification of fitness to continue in an education program or activity only if the same requirement is imposed on all other students with physical or emotional conditions requiring a doctor’s care. The university must provide pregnant students with the same accommodations and support services available to other students with similar medical needs.

[NOTE: PLEASE SUBMIT MEDICAL OR OTHER MEDICAL INFORMATION DIRECTLY TO THE BOB MURPHY ACCESS CENTER (BMAC) – NOT TO YOUR PROFESSOR]

Do my professors have to excuse my absences due to pregnancy, childbirth, or abortion?

California State University, Long Beach must excuse your absences due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions for as long as your doctor says it is necessary for you to be absent. This is true even if there is no leave policy for students with other conditions. Your professors must provide you a leave of absence for as long as it is deemed necessary by your medical doctor. When you return to school, you must be reinstated to the status you held before your leave.

What if my professor says their absence/makeup policy applies regardless of any medical condition?

While your professor may have a strict attendance policy, California State University, Long Beach is bound by federal civil rights law. Title IX requires the university to ensure that all faculty and staff comply with the law and do not discriminate against pregnant and parenting students. Thus, you cannot be penalized for pregnancy or related medical conditions. An individual professor’s policy is not valid if it breaks the law.

After returning from an excused absence, your professors must provide a reasonable amount of time to make up for missed assignments and tests. The makeup assignments and tests must be reasonably equivalent to those missed, but do not need to be identical. If a professor provides specific points or other advantages to students based on class attendance, you must be given the opportunity to earn back the credit from classes missed due to pregnancy.

For example, if you have a doctor's note that excuses you from class for several weeks because you were on bed rest before giving birth, the university must provide you with the appropriate assignments and information to make up all of the work you would have been required to complete while you were out. For an extended absence, best practice suggests that the school provide you with the work you miss regularly, so you do not fall behind.

Does California State University, Long Beach need to provide me with special academic services like assistive equipment or furniture?

Title IX requires that California State University, Long Beach provide pregnant students with any special services we provide to students with any other type of temporary disabilities. Please contact the Bob Murphy Access Center at (562) 985-5401 or bmac@csulb.edu for more information.

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

Yes. California State University, Long Beach must allow you to continue participating in off-campus programs. For example, if your program provides opportunities to “work in the field,” you cannot be excluded based on your pregnancy. Your professor cannot require a doctor's note for continued participation unless your professor requires one for all students who have a medical condition that requires treatment by a doctor. If they do ask for a note, they cannot second-guess your doctor's decision.

[PLEASE SUBMIT MEDICAL NOTES DIRECTLY TO THE BOB MURPHY ACCESS CENTER (BMAC) – NOT TO YOUR PROFESSOR]

Classmates and/or professors have made offensive comments to me about my pregnancy. Should I complain to California State University, Long Beach about the offensive comments?

Title IX requires the university to prevent and address sex-based harassment, including harassment based on pregnancy. If you experience this sort of treatment, you should seek help immediately. The law prohibits anyone from retaliating against you for filing a complaint or raising a concern. If you believe that you have been harassed based on your pregnancy or retaliated against for raising a concern, you may submit an online incident report, with the Office of Equity & Diversity [here](#) or by calling (562) 985-8256.

I have a scholarship – can California State University, Long Beach take it back when they find out I am pregnant?

No, California State University, Long Beach cannot terminate or reduce athletic, merit, or need-based scholarships because of pregnancy. If you stay in school, you can keep your scholarship.

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

Not necessarily—it depends on the university's leave policy. If you want to take off more time than your doctor says is medically necessary, you will need to consult your school's non-medical leave policy.

What if I work for California State University, Long Beach in addition to being a student? Do I have the same rights? Do I qualify for maternity leave?

Your rights as an employee are different from your rights as a student. If you work for California State University, Long Beach, you may be eligible for family or medical leave, or may qualify for maternity leave under the school's policy, but that may not include leave from your classes, beyond what is medically necessary.

I finished my pregnancy and/or have already graduated – is there anything I can do about the discrimination I experienced as a pregnant student?

You may still have options. Contact Cal State Long Beach's Title IX Coordinator at (562) 985-8256 or oed@csulb.edu or the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights to learn more. Even if it is too late for you, you can help California State University, Long Beach to ensure that women who find themselves in your shoes do not run into the same barriers.