

Sam Houston State University
A Member of The Texas State University System

PRE-31 – Pregnant & Parenting Students

SUBJECT: Pregnant & Parenting Students

PURPOSE: To provide accommodations and support services to help pregnant and parenting students have equal access to education and to fulfill their academic requirements while attending an institution of higher education.

POLICY: Sam Houston State University (SHSU) is committed to creating and maintaining a supportive learning environment for pregnant and parenting students through policies that protect academic rights guaranteed to these students under federal and state law.

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1. Definitions

- a. Accommodation – reasonable modification or adjustment that enables an individual to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks.
- b. Discrimination – conduct directed at a specific individual or a group of identifiable individuals that subjects the individual or group to treatment that: (1) adversely affects the individual or group's education; and (2) is different than similarly-situated individuals or groups regarding an SHSU service, benefit, or privilege because of the protected category, which, for the purpose of this policy, is the category of sex or familial status as it relates to pregnancy or parenting.
- c. Leave of Absence – a temporary break from studies to manage a personal, medical, or family issue.
- d. Parenting Student – a student enrolled at SHSU, who is the parent or legal guardian of a child under 18 years of age.

2. Responsibility for Implementation

SHSU designates the Office of Title IX & Discrimination Resolution to provide resources and supportive services to pregnant and parenting students. Through support from the Office of Enrollment, automated information regarding resources and services will be provided to students who voluntarily self-disclose pregnant or parenting student status.

For more information regarding resources and available services the University provides for pregnant and parenting students, please visit <https://www.shsu.edu/titleix/pregnancyparenting.html> or contact the Office of Title IX & Discrimination Resolution via:

- a. Phone at (936) 294-3080
- b. Email to titleix@shsu.edu

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- c. In person at John W. Thomason Building, Suite 302
- d. By Mail:
Office of Title IX & Discrimination Resolution
Box 2542
Huntsville, Texas 77341-2542

3. Protections for Pregnant and Parenting Students

Employees of SHSU may not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of the student's status as a pregnant or parenting student or due to issues related to the student's pregnancy or parenting, to:

- a. take a leave of absence or withdraw from the student's degree or certificate program;
- b. limit the student's studies;
- c. participate in an alternative program;
- d. change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or
- e. refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the institution.

4. Support Services for Pregnant Students

4.01 For reasons related to a student's pregnancy, childbirth, or any resulting medical status or condition, SHSU shall:

- a. excuse the student's absence;
- b. allow the student to make up missed assignments or assessments;
- c. allow the student additional time to complete assignments in the same manner as the institution allows for a student with a temporary medical condition; and
- d. provide the student with access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for classes for which the student has an excused absence under this section to the same extent that instructional materials and video recordings of lectures are made available to any other student with an excused absence.

4.02 Students may also be entitled to other reasonable accommodations for limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions. This includes, but is not limited to, accommodations related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child, such as allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant women or unborn children.

5. Leave of Absence

5.01 The University shall allow a pregnant or parenting student to:

- a. take a leave of absence for a period not less than the minimum period established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board rule; and

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- b. if in good academic standing at the time the student takes a leave of absence, return to the student's degree or certificate program in good academic standing without being required to reapply for admission.

5.02 Students seeking a leave of absence due to pregnancy or parenting shall make a request for such leave to the Office of Title IX & Discrimination Resolution.

6. Priority Registration for Parenting Students

The University provides certain early registration options for parenting students. Students may visit <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/registrar/students/parenting-students> for more information regarding deadlines and to complete the Parenting Student Priority Registration Form. Please contact the Registrar's Office at 936-294-1040, for any other questions regarding early registration.

7. Designation of Liaison Officer

Sam Houston State University has designated the Director of the Office of Title IX & Discrimination Resolution or the Director's designee as the liaison officer and initial point of contact for parenting students requesting protection or accommodation under this policy, and provide information to parenting students regarding available support services or other resources, such as:

- a. medical and behavioral health coverage and services;
- b. public benefit programs, including programs related to food security, affordable housing, and housing subsidies;
- c. parenting and childcare resources;
- d. employment assistance;
- e. transportation assistance;
- f. student academic success strategies; and
- g. any other resources developed by the institution to assist the students.

8. Non-Discrimination & Title IX Compliance

8.01 Title IX provides for equal educational opportunities for pregnant and parenting students. It prohibits educational institutions from discriminating against students based on pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from any of these conditions. This applies to all aspects of the University's educational program and activities.

8.02 Reports of discrimination related to pregnancy or parenting student status may be reported by contacting the Office of Title IX & Discrimination Resolution or by using the online reporting portal at <https://www.shsu.edu/titleix/>. Refer also to the PRE-29 Non-Discrimination Policy.

9. Guidance for Faculty & Staff Supporting Students

Staff and faculty employees seeking guidance or accommodations for supporting pregnant and parenting students should contact the Office of Title IX & Discrimination Resolution.

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