**Pregnant and Parenting FAQ**

**Who do I talk to if I have pregnancy or parent related questions?**

Any pregnancy/parenting student related questions should be directed the Title IX Coordinator Carol D. Branch, Ph.D. The Title IX Coordinator is available to support you in continuing your education. Her office is in Ahmanson 205. She can be reached at 310-846-2554.

**I am pregnant; does Title IX apply to me?**

Yes. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits educational institutions from discriminating against students on the basis of sex. This includes a student’s “actual or potential” parental, family or marital status and a student’s “pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy or recovery there from.”

**Will I have to drop out of school if I become pregnant?**

No. Schools cannot exclude pregnant students (or students who have been pregnant) from participating in any part of any educational program, including extracurricular activities. Nor can you be compelled to withdraw from school by the College. If you desire to take a leave of absence, please speak with the Title IX Coordinator, located in Ahmanson Hall, Suite 205 or e-mail cbranch@otis.edu or call 310-846-2554 and your Department Chair to discuss your rights and options.

**Do I have to notify the College that I am pregnant?**

No, you do not have to notify the College of your present, future or past pregnancy. However, if you require accommodations from the College, you will need to notify the Title IX Coordinator (310-846-2554 or cbranch@otis.edu) and provide appropriate documentation.

**Can I receive services due to my pregnancy status?**

Yes. Any special services provided to students with temporary medical conditions must also be provided to a pregnant student. Any student requesting reasonable accommodations from the College must provide appropriate documentation from their doctor. These reasonable adjustments include, but are not limited to modifications like a larger desk, elevator access, or allowing you to make frequent trips to the restroom, when necessary because of your pregnancy.

**What if I hear negative comments about my pregnancy status from the instructor or other students?**

The College must protect you from harassment based on sex, including harassment because of pregnancy or related conditions. 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, and making sexual propositions or gestures, if the comments are sufficiently serious that it interferes with your ability to benefit from or participate in your school’s program. If you experience harassment based on your pregnancy status, please inform the Title IX Coordinator (310-846-2554 or cbranch@otis.edu).

**Can I still take part in school activities and programs if I am pregnant? Will I have to submit documentation to participate in these activities/programs?**

The Collegemust allow you to continue participating in classes and extracurricular activities even though you are pregnant. This means that you can still participate in honors classes, clubs and organizations, internships, student leadership opportunities, and other activities operated at and through the institution. According to federal guidance, an institution may only require a pregnant student or student who has given birth to submit medical documentation for school program participation only if the same is required for all students with physical or emotional conditions requiring the attention of a physician. The College also must not require a doctor’s note from you after you have been hospitalized for childbirth unless it requires a doctor’s note from all students who have been hospitalized for other conditions. If a note is required, the College cannot second guess the doctor’s determination of your fitness to participate.

**What do I do if my doctor’s appointment causes me to miss a class? Is this an absence?**

Your department/instructor must excuse an absence due to pregnancy related issues, so long as there is documentation deeming the absence medically necessary. This could mean a few absences for necessary medical appointments. If you have a doctor’s appointment, please bring a note to your department documenting your appointment.

Please note: Otis College of Art and Design has many courses that are hands on and with “in the moment” classroom activity. There may be no way to recreate the experiences missed in classes such as Life Drawing or courses with guest speakers or mentors. If your doctor’s appointments cause you to miss more than three days of one course, please talk to either the chair of your department or the Title IX Coordinator about your options for that course.

**Will I be able to turn in late work due if I miss class?**

If your absence is due to a documented pregnancy related issue, federal guidance states you should be allowed to turn in worked missed as a result of this absence without penalization.

**But what if my department says that absence/make-up work policies are up to each individual professor?**While that may be the department’s practice, the institution’s 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. An individual professor’s policy is not okay if it breaks the law.

**If the doctor puts me on bed rest, what do I do?**

The College must excuse absences due to pregnancy or childbirth for as long as your doctor says it is necessary. As with all health related issues, a doctor’s note will be needed as proof of medical necessity. If you need to take a pregnancy related leave of absence, the College must allow you to return to the same academic and extracurricular status as before your medical leave began, which should include giving you the opportunity to make up any work missed while you were out.

**Will my grade be penalized, if my child comes before the semester is completed?**

If your child is born before the end of the semester, please work with your department to determine your options for course related work. Your instructor may not refuse to allow you to submit work after a deadline you missed because of pregnancy or childbirth. If your professor’s grading is based in part on class participation or attendance and you missed class because of pregnancy or childbirth, you should be allowed to make up the participation or attendance credits you didn’t have the chance to earn.

**What’s the difference between an incomplete and a pregnancy related leave of absence?**An “Incomplete” is issued to students only in cases of emergency such as serious illness or accident (which require a doctor’s note), or a death in the family. The student must be in good standing at the time of the emergency, having completed all but the final project, paper, or assignment. Any Incomplete posted without the proper paperwork will automatically revert to an F. Incompletes require the prior approval of the appropriate department chair.

If granted, the student will have four weeks from the end of the semester in which to complete the coursework, at which time the student must complete an Appeal for Grade Change form available online (http://www.otis.edu/registration-records/forms) and submit the form to the department for instructor and Department Chair approval. All coursework and Appeal for Grade Change forms must be completed prior to the beginning of the next semester.

A student taking a pregnancy related leave of absence need only show that the leave is medically necessitated by a doctor in order for the request to be granted. The time frame of the leave is determined by the doctor and this information is relayed to the College through appropriate paperwork. If you need to take a pregnancy related leave of absence, the College must allow you to return to the same academic and extracurricular status as before your medical leave began, which should include giving you the opportunity to make up any work missed while you were out.

If you need to take a medical leave of absence, submit the following: <https://otiscollege.formstack.com/forms/loa_withdrawal_form>

**I can’t come to class because I do not have a babysitter for my child. Is this absence excused?**Lack of child care is not covered under Title IX.

**Can I bring my child to class?**According to the Student Handbook, “all degree-seeking students engaged in undergraduate and graduate programs must get advance permission from their instructor before bringing a guest to class. Children/dependents (under the age of 18) should not be brought into offices, classrooms, and other instructional and student support areas on a regular basis. On occasion, extenuating circumstances may arise when students, in their role as parents/guardians, must bring their children/dependents with them to campus. On such occasions, with the instructor’s advance permission, children/dependents may be brought into the classroom, but they must remain under the direct supervision of the parent/guardian and shall not be permitted to disrupt the learning environment. Parents/guardians failing to supervise their children/dependents sufficiently may be asked to remove the children/dependents from campus grounds. Students as parents/guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children/dependents on campus and are subject to disciplinary sanctions according to the Otis College Code of Conduct for any disruptive or destructive behavior by their children/dependents.”

**Is there a place for me to express breast milk on campus?**
Ahmanson 100B is a designated private room for breastfeeding, pumping milk and other issues related to breastfeeding while on campus.

**Is there a nursery on campus?**

No. Otis College does not have childcare facilities on campus.

**Are father’s covered under Title IX?**The provisions of Title IX are also extended to fathers. Fathers are to be provided with the same options for appropriate classroom adjustments and are covered for the birth of their child and any absences deemed medically necessary after the birth of their child. This includes absences related to the emergency care of their child. Absences related to the parenting status of a student must be accompanied by a note from a doctor.

**Where do I go if I feel I have been discriminated against because of my pregnancy or parent related status?**

You should keep notes regarding any instances of harassment and immediately report problems to the Title IX Coordinator.You can fill out an [incident report form](http://www.otis.edu/forms/students/student-incident-report/). You can also contact the Office of Civil Rights even if you have not filed a complaint with the College.

Office of Civil Rights – San Francisco Office
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
90 7th Street, Suite 4-100
San Francisco, CA 94103
Voice Phone (800) 368-1019
FAX (415) 437-8329
TDD (800) 537-7697

If you wish to fill out an OCR complaint form online, you may do so at: <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/complaintintro.html>. Please note: If you file with OCR, make sure you do so within 180 days of when the discrimination took place.

**Works cited in the creation of this document**

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf> <https://nwlc.org/resources/pregnant-and-parenting-students-rights-faqs-college-and-graduate-students/>
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-know-rights-201306-title-ix.html>
<http://www.thepregnantscholar.org/title-ix-basics/>