

## **Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations at St. Francis College**

St. Francis College is committed to supporting students in all phases of life and recognizes the unique challenges that may come with giving birth or raising a family while in school. Accommodations may be available to pregnant students or students with children six months old and younger. This document is intended to serve as a guide for students seeking accommodations due to pregnancy, childbirth, or parental/caregiver responsibilities in the first six months of a child's life. Students may apply for both parenting and pregnancy accommodations at the same time.

Possible pregnancy and parental accommodations could include, but are not limited to:

- Attendance flexibility and/or granting leaves of absence
- Ability to attend courses remotely
- Assignment extensions
- Take-home examinations
- Retroactive course withdrawal
- Retroactive leave of absence
- IP grade extension, if approved by Academic Dean and Professor

Accommodations must be renewed by the student each semester. Please contact Caitlin McGuire at [cmcguire@sfc.edu](mailto:cmcguire@sfc.edu) with any questions about this process.

### **1. Pregnancy Accommodations**

Any student requesting accommodations or academic adjustments due to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition should contact The Office of Accessibility and Accommodations ("OAA"). Please note that requesting a pregnancy accommodation does not guarantee that it will be granted and the reasonable accommodation provided is not required to be the requested accommodation.

Students seeking these accommodations should complete the following procedures as early as possible:

- Complete and submit the online [Accommodation Request Form](#) and upload supporting documentation verifying the need for accommodation. Please specify that you are applying for pregnancy-related accommodations. Please see the below section for important information on supporting documentation.
- Once OAA receives the online Accommodation Request Form and supporting documentation, the student will be contacted by Assistant Director Caitlin McGuire to schedule an intake appointment.
- At the intake appointment the Assistant Director and the student will discuss the student's accommodation needs. Pregnancy-related accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis and are highly individualized. The intake appointment is also an opportunity for students to ask any questions regarding the accommodations process. Together, the student and Assistant Director will work to finalize a reasonable accommodations plan for the student. OAA will work with you to determine accommodations that will best fit your needs while still ensuring you are able to actively participate in your courses. During the intake appointment the student will complete and sign the Authorization for Release of Information form.

- Once reasonable accommodations have been approved, an electronic Accommodation Letter will be generated and sent to the student for the student to share with affected faculty members. Since each course and student situation is unique, the accommodation should be discussed between the faculty member(s) and the student within a reasonable amount of time after the Accommodation Letter has been sent to the student. Students must provide timely notification to instructors of the approved accommodation.

### **Important Information about Supporting Documentation**

Supporting documentation should be from a licensed, treating provider and describe the connection between the student's pregnancy and the requested accommodation(s). Documentation should:

- Be recent.
- Include a statement confirming the pregnancy.
- Discuss the current functional limitations caused by the pregnancy.
- Identify the current impact of the pregnancy with respect to academics.
- Sufficiently establish a direct link between the pregnancy and the requested accommodation.
- Contain a clear and detailed description of the requested accommodation and how the requested accommodation will mitigate the effect of the pregnancy.
- Contain recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services.
- Be signed by a licensed, qualified professional. The license number should be included in the supporting documentation, or the professional can submit the documentation on their own letterhead. The professional cannot be related to or have a personal relationship with the student.

### **2. Parenting Accommodations**

Certain accommodations may be available to students caring for children six months of age and younger. Students wishing to pursue parental accommodations should contact The Office of Accessibility and Accommodations (OAA). Please note that requesting a parenting accommodation does not guarantee that it will be granted and the reasonable accommodation provided is not required to be the requested accommodation.

Students seeking these accommodations should complete the following procedures as early as possible:

- Complete and submit the online [Accommodation Request Form](#) and upload supporting documentation verifying the need for accommodation. Please specify that you are applying for parenting accommodations. Please see the below section for important information on supporting documentation.
- Once OAA receives the online Accommodation Request Form and supporting documentation, the student will be contacted by Assistant Director Caitlin McGuire to schedule an intake appointment.
- At the intake appointment the Assistant Director and the student will discuss the student's accommodation needs. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis and are highly individualized. The intake appointment is also an opportunity for students to ask any questions regarding the accommodations process. Together, the student and Assistant Director will work to

finalize a reasonable accommodations plan for the student. OAA will work with you to determine accommodations that will best fit your needs while still ensuring you are able to actively participate in your courses. During the intake appointment the student will complete and sign the Authorization for Release of Information form.

- Once reasonable accommodations have been approved, an electronic Accommodation Letter will be generated and sent to the student for the student to share with affected faculty members. Since each course and student situation is unique, the accommodation should be discussed between the faculty member(s) and the student within a reasonable amount of time after the Accommodation Letter has been sent to the student. Students must provide timely notification to instructors of the approved accommodation.

### **Important Information about Supporting Documentation**

Supporting documentation should be:

- Recent.
- Indicate the age of the child in question. A copy of the child's birth certificate or documentation from licensed medical provider is sufficient.
- Sufficiently establish a direct link between parenting and the requested accommodation.
- Contain a clear and detailed description of the requested accommodation and how the requested accommodation will mitigate the effect of parenting responsibilities.

### **Denial of Accommodation Requests**

Accommodations and academic adjustments cannot alter fundamental course or program requirements. In the accommodation determination process, OAA will work with faculty to ensure that any accommodations or adjustments implemented do not detract from the integrity of the course or program of study. However, it may be that a specifically requested accommodation alters fundamental course or program requirements or is otherwise unreasonable. In such a case, an alternative accommodation may be offered. If any and all accommodations would alter fundamental course or program requirements, or if the student and OAA cannot agree on a reasonable accommodations plan for the student, then the accommodation request may be denied.

### **Appeals Procedure**

If a student with a documented disability believes that they have not been provided with a reasonable accommodation based on access or reasonable consideration, the student should direct their concern via email to Dean Monica Michalski ([mmichalski@sfc.edu](mailto:mmichalski@sfc.edu)) within three weeks of notification of the denial of their accommodation request. The student should provide, in writing, the nature of the concern and any other relevant information to their case.

Dean Michalski will confer with necessary stakeholders, including the student and OAA, to make a determination about the appeal. The student will be notified via email about the outcome of the appeal within ten business days of appeal submission. The determination reached by Dean Michalski at the conclusion of the appeals process is final.

### **Important Considerations**

OAA works to maintain and protect student privacy. Due to the unique nature of pregnancy and parental accommodations, OAA may need to discuss aspects of a student's case with faculty or school administrators, such as a Dean or Registrar's Office. This information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and students will be informed ahead of time by OAA of any information that will be shared with faculty or administrators.

Any questions or concerns about pregnancy or parental accommodations should be directed to OAA via the contact information below.

### **OAA Contact Information**

Main office email: [oa@sfc.edu](mailto:oa@sfc.edu)

Caitlin McGuire, Assistant Director: [cmcguire@sfc.edu](mailto:cmcguire@sfc.edu)

Office phone: 718-489-2047