



## Guidelines for the Academic Accommodation of Pregnant Students and Students Caring for Dependants

*Other University policies, procedures and guidelines that apply to students can be found at <https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies-and-regulations>.*

### PART I: PREAMBLE, SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

#### Preamble:

- (a) McGill acknowledges the particular challenges facing pregnant students and students caring for a dependant.
- (b) McGill supports students in their desire to further their education while meeting their family obligations.
- (c) Wishing to provide an environment in which these students may be able to continue in the program of study and fulfill their university commitments when faced with exceptional circumstances related to particular family commitments, these guidelines aim to set out how, and in what exceptional circumstances, a student may request academic accommodation.

#### Scope:

A student is who is faced with a conflict between a responsibility in respect of pregnancy, or of care-giving responsibilities toward a dependant, and an academic obligation, may ask the University for academic accommodation in accordance with these guidelines.

#### Definitions:

For the purpose of these guidelines, the following definitions apply:

- (a) **Academic Obligation** shall mean course lectures, seminars, labs, tutorials, course assignments, class tests, mid-term exams and term papers but not field placements, medical rotations or final examinations.
- (b) **Associate Dean (Student Affairs)** shall refer to the individual in the student's faculty who has responsibilities for Student Affairs and, in the case of graduate students, to the Associate Dean (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies).
- (c) **Care Giving Responsibilities** shall mean the responsibilities provided by the student to a dependant for reasons of illness, disability or age.
- (d) **Dependant** shall mean a person who is wholly or substantially reliant on the student for support to meet basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, medical) and for whom the student has ongoing care-

giving responsibilities for reasons of illness, disability or age.

- (e) **Spouse** shall mean a legal spouse, a person with whom the student has a natural child, or a person of either sex with whom the student has been living in a conjugal relationship for at least two years.
- (f) **Student** shall mean a registered student in a McGill course or program of study.
- (g) **Student Affairs Office** shall mean the faculty office with administrative responsibilities for undergraduate students or Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
- (h) **Pregnant Student** shall mean a student whose pregnancy is confirmed by a medical attestation.

## **PART II: THE STUDENT WITH CARE GIVING RESPONSIBILITIES**

**2.1.** Where a student cannot meet an academic obligation due to a conflict with care-giving responsibilities, the student shall first endeavor to identify alternative arrangements before seeking accommodation through these guidelines. Where an alternative arrangement is not available at the time of the academic obligation, the student may request an accommodation as described below. All requests for accommodation must be supported with appropriate medical or other evidence.

### **2.1.1 Where care-giving responsibilities could not have been anticipated or planned**

#### **Examples:**

- unexpected disruption of back-up support system for care of a dependant
- illness of a dependant requiring the student's attention for care-giving responsibilities

#### **Procedure:**

The student who **has missed** a scheduled academic obligation for a course or program of study is responsible for informing the instructor or research supervisor and the relevant Student Affairs Office **as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours after the missed obligation**. The student shall provide supporting documentation and any other information requested by the University.

The student who **cannot meet** a scheduled academic obligation for a course or program of study is responsible for informing the instructor or research supervisor and the relevant Student Affairs Office **as soon as possible prior to the scheduled academic obligation**. The student shall provide supporting documentation and any other information requested by the University.

Requests for accommodation where the notification and/or supporting documentation is submitted, without reasonable explanation, more than one calendar week following the missed obligation shall not be considered.

### **2.1.2 Where planned or anticipated care-giving responsibilities will conflict with a regularly scheduled academic obligation**

#### **Examples:**

- a student who must accompany a dependant to monthly medical procedures

- where a medical procedure for a dependant is scheduled at the same time each week as one of the class lectures
- where an academic obligation is regularly scheduled outside daycare hours

**Procedure:**

A student who cannot meet a scheduled academic obligation for a course or program of study is responsible for informing the instructor and the relevant Student Affairs Office, **as soon as possible prior to the scheduled academic obligation**. The student shall provide supporting documentation and any other information requested by the University.

A student's absence from the academic obligation supported by a notification submitted, without reasonable explanation, more than one week following the date of the conflict shall not be excused.

**2.2 Possible Academic Accommodation**

Subject to the foregoing, the course instructor or research supervisor and the student shall endeavor to identify a suitable accommodation, which may include one or more of the following:

- rescheduling the academic obligation
- identifying an alternative method of evaluation to replace the academic obligation
- adjusting the weight for that academic obligation in relation to the weight for other components of the course
- rearranging the schedule so as to meet the academic obligations of the program of study
- arranging for a note taker
- offering the student a place in an alternate course or section
- providing for a leave of absence

Any dispute will be referred to the Associate Dean (Student Affairs) who will determine what accommodation is to be made and will convey the decision to the instructor or research supervisor and the student.

**PART III: RESPONSIBILITIES DUE TO PREGNANCY**

**3.1 Responsibilities in the Case of the Student's Pregnancy**

Students who, because of pregnancy, may not be able to meet academic obligations of a course or program of study are responsible for informing their Student Affairs Office as soon as possible. The student shall provide relevant medical and other supporting documentation, for example: medical appointments or expected date of delivery, confirmation of birth.

The student shall meet with the Undergraduate Program Director and/or the Associate Dean (Student Affairs), or the research supervisor and/or Graduate Program Director and/or Associate Dean (Graduate Studies), to review the student's academic schedule for the period of the student's pregnancy, along with the student's plans during the pregnancy and following delivery. The student may be asked to complete a Risk Assessment Form (sample copy attached).

Any requested or required arrangement(s) and any suitable accommodation(s) shall be confirmed in writing and filed with the Associate Dean. The student may need a medical note to justify time off for prenatal and antenatal appointments and delivery days.

### **3.2 Responsibilities in the Case of a Spouse's Pregnancy**

Students who, due to their spouse's pregnancy, may not be able to meet the academic obligations of a course or program of study, are responsible for informing their Student Affairs Office as soon as possible. The student shall provide relevant medical and other supporting documentation, for example: confirmation of status, medical appointments, expected date of delivery, confirmation of birth.

The Guidelines in Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 3.1 shall apply.

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