



Policy Title

Health Policy for Pregnant Students

Identifier

USCSOMG – STAF – 7.3

Prepared by: Office of Student Affairs

Approved by: Student Affairs Policy Committee

Reviewed by: USCSOMG Policy Review Committee

Communicated to: USCSOMG Students

Date: 04/01/2018

Date: 04/30/2018

Date: 06/04/2018

Date: 07/16/2018

Effective Date: 07/16/2018

LCME Standards

3.4 – Anti-Discrimination Policy

12.4 – Student Access to Health Care Services

Scope

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville students

Policy Statement

The USC School of Medicine Greenville is committed to supporting students who have children during medical school and to working with such students to facilitate the completion of their medical education. The USC School of Medicine Greenville complies with the Federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PL95-555) which has as its basic principle that pregnancy and related conditions must be treated the same as any other disability or medical condition. Therefore, when necessary, a pregnant student in conjunction with appropriate faculty, may request alterations in the academic program to protect the health of the pregnant student and her fetus. However, academic standards will not be altered and arrangements must be made to allow the student to make up any deficiency.

Reason for Policy

To provide USC School of Medicine students clarity on altering academic schedule to accommodate pregnancy, birth, and/or post-partum leave of absence during the course of study.

Procedures

When requesting a leave of absence due to a pregnancy, early communication and good-faith efforts among all parties involved are essential to ensure the least impact on a student's education. A detailed plan must be developed by the student in close collaboration with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs. The plan must be completed and approved at least 3 months prior to the anticipated due date.

The pregnant medical student will be permitted class or clerkship release time for regular supervision by her obstetrician. At minimum, the student will be given perinatal leave of absence up to two (2) weeks before delivery and six (6) weeks postpartum. Only upon the recommendation of the student's obstetrician will this period of leave be lengthened or shortened.

Because the structure and demands of the medical education program vary throughout the four-year curriculum, the approach to leave accommodation may differ. Due to the nature of the M1 and M2 curriculum, depending on the time of year and the length of the leave, a leave of absence may require a student to take a full year of leave and return the following year. However, a leave of absence in the M3 and M4 years is less likely to require a 12-month leave. Working with the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, the student may resume M3 clerkships or the M4 year at a mutually agreed upon time, and must meet all degree requirements in order to be eligible for graduation.

The goal of creating a safe environment for pregnant students can be facilitated by awareness of inherent risks, adopting procedures to minimize risk exposure, education on how to use protective equipment properly, and avoiding unnecessary risks. The responsibilities of the pregnant medical student include the following:

- 1) Seeking obstetrical care as early in pregnancy as possible and meeting all recommended appointments. It is strongly recommended that students consult with their own obstetrician regarding prevention of potentially harmful environmental and infectious exposures in laboratory and hospital environments.
- 2) Taking appropriate precautions. The student must:
 - A) Be aware of her rubella immune status as required for matriculation in the USC School of Medicine Greenville.
 - B) Whenever possible, avoid X-ray exposure. At a minimum, the pregnant student must, as all students should, wear appropriate shielding protection, wear a monitoring badge for herself in addition to a fetal monitoring badge, and take all available precautions to reduce exposure. The fetal monitoring badge will be ordered by the Office of Academic Affairs upon notification of pregnancy. While many students may be unsure of how early to notify the office, early notification and fetal monitoring is the safest approach. In addition, the student should strongly consider notifying the Clerkship Director as he/she can adjust the assigned schedule to reduce exposure to high radiation environments.
 - C) Take necessary precautions with patients in the clinical environment.
 - D) Wear a respirator with a formaldehyde/organic vapor filter while in anatomy lab.
- 3) Arranging leave time with the Office of Student Affairs and Office of Academic Affairs.

Sanctions

N/A

Additional Contacts

Office of Student Affairs
Office of Academic Affairs
Clerkship Directors

Related Information

USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook
Federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PL95-555)
USCSOMG-STAF-4.2-Radiation Safety Policy

History

- Date of Change: 06/04/2018
- Change: Move to standardized template
- Reason for Change: LCME CQI