Pregnant and Parenting Students’ Rights

Frequently Asked Questions

NOVA is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination based on sex, pregnancy and parenting, in education programs or activities, including academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs or activities of schools.

What types of accommodations based on my need are available?

Some of the options available to you based on need:

- A larger desk
- Breaks during class, as needed
- Rescheduling tests or exams
- Excusing absences due to pregnancy or related conditions
- Submitting work after a deadline due to pregnancy or childbirth
- Providing alternatives to make up missed work

Who do I contact when I have a medical complication due to pregnancy or recovery that impacts my attendance?

If you have a medical complication due to pregnancy or recovery contact the Office of Fair Practices, Title IX and discuss your need for accommodations with the Title IX Coordinator, Melanie Barr-Brooks, J.D. or the Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Marleen McCabe. They can be reached via email: titleix@nvcc.edu or by phone: 703-323-2262.

Are absences due to pregnancy, childbirth or abortion excused?

Yes, absences due to pregnancy or any related conditions are excused. However, depending on the length of the absence and the area of instruction (e.g. courses with lab requirements, clinical rotations, etc.), it may be not be feasible, even with reasonable modifications, to complete a particular course and it may be necessary for you to withdraw from a course or take a leave of absence. However, when you return to NOVA, you must be reinstated to the status you held before the leave.

If a faculty member adjusts grades based on class attendance, can they lower a grade because of the classes I miss due to pregnancy?

You cannot be penalized for pregnancy or related conditions. If faculty provides specific “points” or other advantages to students based on class attendance, you must be given the opportunity to earn back the credit from classes missed due to pregnancy, so that you can be reinstated to the status you held before you took leave.

Does NOVA have to let me make up the work missed while absent?

Yes, federal law requires faculty to allow you to make up the work missed while out due to pregnancy or any related conditions, including recovery from childbirth. Extended deadlines, makeup assignments, and incomplete grades that can be completed at a later date, should all be considered. Whenever the class work is of a type that can be completed at a later date—such as papers, quizzes, tests, and even presentations—that option must be made available to you within a framework of reasonable accommodations in light of standard policies and procedures. In situations such as clinical rotations, lab or group work, faculty should consider whether the absences substantially alter the course.
requirements and notify you as soon as possible of options available to you (such as withdrawal, or taking an incomplete as per policy).

**What about internships, career rotations, and other off-campus elements of a program—do I have a right to participate?**

Yes. NOVA must allow you to participate in off-campus programs. For example, if the program provides opportunities to "work in the field," NOVA cannot deny participation based on pregnancy. Faculty cannot require a doctor's note for continued participation, unless it is required for all students who have a medical condition that requires treatment by a doctor.

I receive financial aid; does a mandatory leave of absence due to pregnancy affect my receiving financial aid?

Financial aid is awarded on an annual basis. Some scholarships are year-specific. Federal, state, and institutional financial aid are more restrictive and funds must be used within the year. Contact the Financial Aid Office with any question: tel: 855.323.3199 or [https://nvcc.edu/financialaid/support/staff.html](https://nvcc.edu/financialaid/support/staff.html)

**What about scholarships?**

Scholarships are going to vary depending on the terms of the award. Contact the Financial Aid Office at 855.323.3199 or the Educational Foundation at 703.323.3023; [http://nvcc.edu/foundation/scholarship.html](http://nvcc.edu/foundation/scholarship.html), or the organization that provided the scholarship for information.

I am a NOVA employee who is also a student. Do I still have the same rights? Do I qualify for maternity leave?

Rights as an employee are different from rights as a student. If you are a full time employee, you may be eligible for Family and Medical Leave, or other leave available to you as an employee. Please contact Human Resources, Benefits for further information. As a student, leave from classes is limited to what is medically necessary.

Classmates and even faculty have made offensive comments to me about my pregnancy. Who do I report such incidents to at NOVA?

Title IX requires schools to prevent and address sex-based harassment, including harassment based on pregnancy. If you experience this sort of treatment at NOVA seek help immediately and contact the Office of Fair Practices, Title IX at titleix@nvcc.edu or call Title IX at 703-323-2262. The law prohibits retaliation against you for making a complaint or raising a concern.

What if I believe I have been discriminated against based on pregnancy related issues?

You may file a complaint with the Office of Fair Practices, Title IX at titleix@nvcc.edu or call 703-323-2262.

**Questions? Contact —NOVA’s Office of Fair Practices, Title IX, at titleix@nvcc.edu; Tel: 703-323-2262**

**Other Resources:**

US Department of Education: Supporting Academic Success of Pregnant and Parenting Students. Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. [https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf)

National Women Law’s Center – Pregnant & Parenting Students: [https://nwlc.org/issue/pregnant-parenting-students/](https://nwlc.org/issue/pregnant-parenting-students/)