

# Pregnant and Parenting Students' Rights: FAQ for Students

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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 are available to me?**

Some of the accommodations that may be available, depending on your needs, are:

- 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 Title IX Office, submit an online request for pregnancy accommodations, or file a NOVA Cares report. You will work with the Title IX Office to determine appropriate accommodations.

Use this link to request accommodations: [Pregnancy and Childbirth Accommodation Request](#)

## **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 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 provide 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 situations such as clinical rotations, lab, or group work, faculty should consider whether the absences substantially alter the course requirements and discuss your options with you (such as withdrawal, or taking an incomplete).

### **What about internships, clinical 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 for field work, NOVA cannot deny participation based on pregnancy. Faculty cannot require a doctor's note for continued participation unless it is required for all students with a medical condition.

### **What about financial aid and scholarships?**

Financial aid is awarded on an annual basis. Some scholarships are year-specific. Federal, state, and institutional aid are more restrictive and funds must be used within the year. Contact the Financial Aid Office at 855.323.3199 or <https://nvcc.edu/financialaid/support/staff.html> for further guidance.

### **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 leave available to you as an employee. Please contact Human Resources – Benefits for making a complaint or raising a concern.

### **Classmates and even faculty have made offensive comments to me about my pregnancy. Who do I complain to?**

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, contact the Title IX Office. 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 NOVA's Title IX Office.