

Pregnancy and Lactating Rights and Resources for Students

The Title IX Office provides support for students experiencing pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, false pregnancy, pregnancy loss, or recovery from any of these conditions. During an intake and support meeting, Title IX staff will share the rights of a pregnant or lactating student on campus, University obligations, campus resource referrals, and supportive measures available, including academic adjustments, leaves of absence, physical accommodations, and more. Title IX staff can assist in developing a supportive academic and co-curricular plan for labor, delivery, and the recovery period after.

How do I receive support?

- If you are pregnant, have experienced complications that ended your pregnancy, or are lactating and need support, start by filling out this form: **Pregnancy or Lactation Support Request Form**
- A member of the Title IX team will reach out to you to set up an initial meeting. This meeting will discuss: your rights, supportive measures on campus, adjustments available to you and more.
 - Supportive measures may include: academic adjustments, referrals to: mental health, disability, and advocacy resources, employment support, access to lactation spaces, parking accessibility, and more.

Adjustments must be *reasonable* for both you and your faculty/staff. Reasonable adjustments cannot fundamentally change requirements of a course or job and may not always be the desired option.

Your rights

- You must be provided with certain adjustments as necessary because of your pregnancy. Title IX staff members work collaboratively with you to determine reasonable adjustments based on an individual's needs and distinct circumstances.
- Absences due to pregnancy or childbirth must be excused, for as long as your doctor deems necessary.
 - Examples of this include prenatal appointments, doctor-recommended recovery time after delivery, and for documented disabilities related to pregnancy.
- You have the right to make up any missed work while you were out, and return to the same academic status as before your leave began.
 - Your teacher may not refuse to allow you to submit work after a deadline you missed because of pregnancy or childbirth. If your teacher's grading is based in part on class participation or attendance and you missed class because of pregnancy or childbirth, you should be allowed to make up the participation or attendance credits you didn't have the chance to earn.
- You can file a formal complaint for harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex, including your pregnancy or related conditions.

- You must not be required to submit a doctor's note for absences related to your pregnancy or childbirth, unless ALL students are required to submit a doctor's note for absences and hospitalizations related to physical or emotional conditions.
- You must be allowed to continue participating in classes and extracurricular activities while you are pregnant.

Helpful things to keep in mind

- Keep notes about your pregnancy-related absences, any instances of harassment and your interactions with school officials about your pregnancy, and immediately report problems to VCU Title IX at titleix@vcu.edu.
- Pregnancy alone is not a disability, but many pregnancy-related impairments may qualify for disability support under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Reach out to saeo.vcu.edu for information.
- VCU provides **Lactation spaces** across campus. Learn more about those spaces at the following page: advocacy.vcu.edu/resources/lactation-rooms/.
- Be communicative with your faculty and program. Alert staff ahead of time when possible of absences or follow up as quickly as possible after missing an assignment or exam.

Campus partners that can provide additional support

- **Office of Student Advocacy:** Can provide resources around financial and housing security, and assist students in communicating with and advocating for academic adjustments. OSA staff can also assist students with the transition to parenthood.
 - Ram Pantry: assists students who are experiencing food insecurity
- **Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (SAEO):** Can provide students with disability accommodation letters for pregnancy-related conditions such as preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, hyperemesis gravidarum, chronic migraines, and more.
- **University Counseling Services:** Supports students who have any concerns related to pregnancy or parenting issues. This may include but not limited to managing the demands of parenting while in school, mental health concerns while pregnant, or dealing any anxiety related to pregnancy or parenting
 - **TimelyCare:** Online platform that provides virtual therapy support
- **Dean of Students Office:** Can help students navigate Medical Leaves of Absence
- **Student Health:** Students can receive primary care, pregnancy and STI testing.