

TOOLKIT: PREGNANCY & RELATED CONDITIONS

FACULTY GUIDE: CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

Faculty members serve as a critical first point of contact. When a student requests a minor accommodation—such as carrying water, taking brief breaks, or needing a larger desk—faculty should move through a specific mental and procedural checklist before making a decision.

1. THE "OBVIOUSNESS" & "REASONABLENESS" TEST

Remember that for many minor needs, formal documentation is unnecessary and should be avoided. Faculty should consider:

- Is the need obvious? If a student is visibly pregnant and asks for a larger desk or a chair with better support, the need is "obvious," and the request should be granted without requiring a doctor's note.
- Is the modification minor? Requests to carry water, eat a small snack, or use the restroom more frequently are considered "de minimis" (minimal) and typically should be granted immediately to ensure equal access.
- Is it "Reasonable"? A modification is reasonable if it allows the student to participate in the program without fundamentally altering the nature of the course.

2. THE "FUNDAMENTAL ALTERATION" BARRIER

Faculty are the experts on their own curriculum. The primary reason a faculty member might deny or seek to adjust a modification is if it fundamentally alters the academic program.

- Individualized Assessment: You must consider the specific needs of the student against the specific requirements of your class.
- Example: Allowing a student to attend a lecture via Zoom might be a minor modification for a history seminar, but it might be a "fundamental alteration" for a hands-on surgical rotation or a chemistry lab where physical safety and presence are essential.

3. YOUR MANDATORY DISCLOSURE OBLIGATION

Once a student discloses a pregnancy or related condition to any employee (including faculty), that employee has a legal obligation to:

1. Provide the Title IX and EEO Officer's contact information.
2. Inform the student that the Title IX and EEO Officer can help coordinate specific actions and modifications.
3. Refrain from requesting medical documentation themselves. Generally, only Human Resources or a designated disability services office should handle medical paperwork.

4. COMPARISON TO OTHER STUDENTS

Faculty should ask: *"If a student with a temporary injury (like a broken leg or severe flu) asked for this same adjustment, would I grant it?"*

- Title IX requires that pregnancy and related conditions be treated at least as well as any other temporary medical condition. If you would excuse a 3-day absence for a student with food poisoning without a note, you must do the same for a student with morning sickness.

5. PRIVACY AND DISCRETION

Faculty must maintain the student's privacy.

- Confidentiality: Do not discuss the student's pregnancy or the nature of their accommodations with other students or faculty members who do not have a "need to know" to implement the modification.
- Voluntary Basis: Modifications must be voluntary. You cannot force a student into an "alternative" assignment or a remote version of the class if they would prefer to be there in person and can be accommodated.

SUMMARY TABLE FOR FACULTY ASSESSMENT

FACTOR	CONSIDERATION
Documentation	Do not ask for it. Refer the student to the Title IX and EEO Officer if documentation seems necessary: Phone: (619) 482-6530 Email: swcertix@swccd.edu Web: Title IX & EEO (swccd.edu)
Type of Request	Is it minor (water, breaks, seating)? If yes, grant it immediately.
Academic Integrity	Does this change the "essential nature" of the course? If so, contact the Title IX and EEO Officer to find a compromise.
Consistency	Am I treating this student the same as a student with a different temporary medical issue?
Make-up Work	Ensure the student can earn back 100% of the points missed due to medical necessity.
Privacy	Do not share the student's status with other faculty or students.