

TVCC Pregnant & Parenting Handbook

October 2024

Mission Statement and Goals

Mission Statements and Goals

Parenting Services Mission Statement

The mission of Trinity Valley Community College Pregnant and Parenting Services is to offer meaningful support to pregnant and parenting students by addressing their unique challenges, therefore allowing them the greatest opportunity to complete their degree program in a timely manner and ultimately provide for themselves and their children.

Pregnant and Parenting Services offers resources and academic support to students as they pursue academic goals while pregnant and/or parenting, and act as a resource for faculty and staff to assist with their interactions with students. When this mission is fulfilled, the quality of students' experience at Trinity Valley Community College is enhanced, and they are more likely to achieve academic and personal success.

Goals derived from Pregnant and Parenting Services' mission statement and legislation:

1. Enhance students' academic and personal functioning as they juggle school and home life by offering meaningful support, advocacy, individualized success strategies, reasonable academic accommodations, and referrals to outside resources.
2. Foster peer-to-peer collaboration and community within this population so that they know they are not alone.
3. Make an ongoing effort to monitor and evaluate the success of activities and services provided to students to determine effectiveness and make any needed changes.

Legislation

Pregnant and Parenting Services Legislation

Pregnancy and Parenting Laws

1. [House Bill 1361](#) states that each institution of higher education shall designate at least one employee of the institution to act as a liaison officer for current or incoming students at the institution who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The liaison officer shall provide the student information regarding support services and other resources available at the institution. The liaison officer shall assist in coordinating college readiness and student success efforts relating to those students.
 - a. TVCC's Parenting Services Liaison is Natalie Palacios (Phone: 903-675-6310; Email: natalie.palacios@tvcc.edu)
2. [Senate Bill 412](#) states that an institution of higher education may not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of the student's status or due to issues related to the student's pregnancy or parenting to take leave of absence or withdraw, limit studies, participate in an alternative program, change their major or degree program, or refrain from joining/stop participating in any course, activity, or program at the institution. An institution of higher education shall provide reasonable accommodations to a pregnant student such as those for a temporary medical condition and those related to protecting the health and safety of the pregnant student or unborn child. The institution shall excuse the student's absence and allow the student to make up missed assignments for reasons related to pregnancy, childbirth, or any resulting medical status or condition; allow the student additional time to complete assignments; and provide the student access to instructional materials and recordings of lectures that are made available to any other student with an excused absence. The institution shall allow a pregnant or parenting student to take a leave of absence and, if the student is in good academic standing at the time they take the leave of absence, shall allow the student to return to the program and remain in good academic standing without being required to reapply for admission.

3. [Senate Bill 459](#) requires early registration opportunities at institutions of higher education for pregnant students and students who are the parents or legal guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age.
4. [Title IX](#) prohibits discrimination, including harassment or retaliation, against any student based on race, color, religion, sex/gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law is strictly prohibited. Sex-based harassment is a form of sex discrimination based on sex and includes harassment based on pregnancy or related conditions.

Trinity Valley Community College does not discriminate based on sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment.

Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the College's Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both. The College's Title IX Coordinator is:

Janene Dotts, Title IX Coordinator
Administration Building Room 215
Janene.dotts@tvcc.edu
903-675-6215

Policies

Policies for TVCC Pregnant and Parenting Services

Pregnant and Parenting Services Information

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy establishes procedures and defines responsibility for the administration of services available to pregnant and parenting students through the Student Advocacy Office, and the provision of specific academic accommodations for pregnant and/or parenting by TVCC staff and faculty.

Policy Statements

1. This policy reflects an interactive process between the student and Trinity Valley Community College used to establish reasonable adjustments and referrals. The process includes:
 - a. Documentation of a pregnancy/parenting students. Students are responsible for submitting documentation.
 - b. The specific, individual barriers experienced by the student will be discussed in the intake appointment.
 - c. Identification of on-campus and off-campus resources (such as a pregnancy center or counseling services);
 - d. An initial framework for reasonable accommodations;
 - e. In some cases, additional documentation may be requested from a third party prior to the approval of accommodations that may present an undue burden on the College or fundamental alteration to the course design.
2. Trinity Valley Community College will comply with House Bill 1361, Senate Bill 412, Senate Bill 459, and Title IX.

3. All college departments are responsible for maintaining a close liaison with Pregnant and Parenting Services with regard to requests from pregnant and/or parenting students and any special services offered to them.
4. The policy statement provided below shall be used in college publications:
 - a. TVCC prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to the Title IX Coordinator. The notice of nondiscrimination is located at <https://www.tvcc.edu/Human-Resources/category.aspx?z=1102>
5. The mission of Pregnant and Parenting Services is to ensure that pregnant and/or parenting students have the ability to participate in all university programs and activities. Parenting Services provides students the opportunity to reach their full potential by:
 - a. Coordinating academic accommodations and support services
 - b. Promoting independence and self-advocacy
 - c. Providing information and referrals to appropriate services
6. Pregnant and Parenting Services helps to foster a supportive and inclusive educational environment by:
 - a. Building and maintaining partnerships with faculty, staff, and the community
 - b. Promoting awareness of access to parenting services and resources among all members of the college community, and
 - c. Providing guidance regarding college policies and procedures to ensure full participation for pregnant or parenting students in all aspects of campus life.

Policy on Pregnant and Parenting Services' Hours of Operation

Generally, the Parenting Services Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Parenting Services staff are not available during breaks such as fall break, winter break and spring break.

Documentation Guidelines

1. Documentation provided by a student is our proof of the parenting status, medical condition, and needs of the specific student. Documentation is required in order to provide services to students. It serves as evidence of status and helps Parenting Services understand the student's unique circumstances to gauge relevant supports and accommodations to offer. Basic accommodations include modified attendance for occasional parenting-related absences, extended time on assignments, breaks during testing, phone availability, alternate class activities, a larger chair, or remote classes for a short time period based on medical need and physician recommendations.
2. It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the Student Advocacy Office and to provide appropriate documentation of the pregnancy-related medical condition. In addition, related functional limitations for which students are requesting accommodations should be included. This process is designed to ensure that reasonable, appropriate accommodations are provided to all qualified students in a timely manner. A diagnosis of a medical condition in and of itself does not automatically qualify an individual for uncommon parenting accommodations. In order to meet the criteria for additional or uncommon accommodations for pregnant and parenting students, a person must demonstrate how their condition substantially limits their academic ability and/or one or more daily life activities.
3. Common sense and discretion will be used in accepting older documentation of conditions that are permanent or non-varying as a result of a previous pregnancy.
4. Some documentation may be required to be as recent as within the last month, depending on the pregnancy status and/or related medical condition.
5. Requests for all accommodations will be reviewed on a case- by-case basis with approval being based on two factors:
 - a. Is the accommodation requested appropriate?
 - b. Is it reasonable?
6. Accommodations are designed to allow the student to meet the same essential elements of their selected program that are required of all students. While accommodations may be made to allow greater flexibility and support in managing pregnancy and parenting while in school, the core component of courses cannot be changed.

Procedures

Procedures for Providing Accommodations to Students on the Basis of Pregnant and Parenting Status and Related Medical Conditions

1. The Student Advocacy Office is designated to receive and review documentation and create a plan of support for pregnant or parenting students.
2. Students who require accommodations to participate in the academic setting or in a college-sponsored activity or event as required as part of their degree program should contact the Student Advocacy Office. Parenting Services will require the student to provide documentation that substantiates the condition and need for academic accommodations and support services.
3. Procedures Used to Determine Eligibility for Accommodations
 - a. Based on review of the documentation by Pregnant and Parenting Services, eligibility for specific accommodations will be approved by the Student Advocacy Office. A student is eligible for services when it is determined that the need for an accommodation exists.
 - b. Documentation of a person's parenting status and/or related medical condition can be presented to the Pregnant and Parenting Services Office by any designated individual or agency.
 - c. Upon receipt, parenting and medical documentation is reviewed by Pregnant and Parenting Services and formal accommodations are determined within 30 business days of receipt of the documentation. The Student Advocacy Office is the designated authority for the college for assigning parenting student adjustments.
 - d. A regularly enrolled student for whom parenting documentation has been reviewed, and adjustments approved by Parenting Services, is not eligible to access accommodations until the student completes the documentation.
 - e. Upon completion and return of the required documents, a student's accommodation letter will be emailed to their instructors.

- f. Students are required to renew services each semester they wish to receive accommodations in the classroom by completing a new request form.
 - g. The pregnant and parenting liaison is available to assist faculty or staff members who may experience difficulties in providing requested accommodations and will work with faculty or staff members to resolve problems and provide the most appropriate and reasonable accommodations to students. The Parenting Services staff will consult with divisions and instructors regarding academic accommodations on an as-needed basis. Accommodations may vary depending on the needs of the academic program in which the student is enrolled.
4. The Student Advocacy Office will maintain all parenting and medical documentation in a confidential file and release to members of the campus community only that information necessary to verify that the student falls under parenting legislation and to identify approved accommodations.
 5. Based on an individual student's documentation, consideration will be given to the modification of a student's course curriculum on a case-by-case basis by the AVP of Student Advocacy. Academic requirements that the college considers essential will not be regarded as discriminatory. The Student Advocacy office will consult with the chair of the student's department and faculty members on an as-needed basis. This policy is subject to periodic revisions.
 6. Pregnant and Parenting Services recommends that college syllabi include a statement directing pregnant and parenting students to the Pregnant and Parenting Liaison for needed support or resources. The following statement is suggested.

Pregnant and Parenting Services:

Any student who, because of their pregnancy or parenting status, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the Student Advocacy Office. Please note that the instructor is not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until verification from the Student Advocacy Office has been provided. For additional information please contact the Student Advocacy Office.

Academic Accommodations

Difference between Pregnant and Parenting Accommodations and Disability Accommodations

Students experiencing normal pregnancies typically need “reasonable accommodations” and would go through the Student Advocacy office. Students experiencing complications related to pregnancy may qualify for academic accommodations coordinated by the Office of Disability Services and Counseling if the complication(s) qualify as an impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 were designed to ensure that colleges and universities are free from discrimination in their recruitment, admission, and treatment of students. Please visit the Disability Services Office website for more information.

Accommodations provided by the Student Advocacy office entirely dependent upon the documentation with a clearly stated diagnosis and varies from student to student.

Reasonable accommodations for parenting students will vary based on student needs. Accommodations may include a larger desk, bathroom breaks, access to food/water during exams and/or extended time for exams. Keep in mind, every situation is unique, and accommodations may change throughout the student's tenure at the college.

If students are unsure of which department to contact, we recommend students contact either office to discuss their situation.

Reasonable Accommodations

1. A reasonable level of documentation will include, but is not limited to, a combination of documentation from healthcare providers and educational professionals, case worker interaction, observation, and review with the student about their pregnancy-related medical condition, and accommodation request.
2. Accommodations include but are not limited to:
 - a. Access to instructional materials and recordings of lectures
 - b. Accessible seating
 - c. Frequent restroom breaks
 - d. Ability to have food or drink in the classroom
 - e. Priority Registration
 - f. Allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant women or unborn children
 - g. Excused absences due to pregnancy, childbirth, or a resulting medical condition when deemed medically necessary by a health professional
3. Pregnant and Parenting Services will provide information to on and off campus resources; provide information concerning approved accommodations to relevant faculty and staff; and act as a liaison between students, faculty, and staff.

Conditional Accommodations

1. Conditional accommodations refer to specific accommodations that only apply case-by-case, class-by-class. These accommodations must be re-evaluated each semester prior to approval.

Good Faith Course Drop and Withdrawal Process (Medical)

A medical withdrawal request may be made in extraordinary cases in which serious injury or illness (medical), or another significant personal situation (compassionate) prevents a student from continuing in his or her classes and other arrangements with the instructors are not possible.

All applicants for withdrawal require thorough and credible documentation, however, applicants for less than a complete withdrawal must be especially well-documented to justify the selective nature of the partial medical/compassionate withdrawal. The letter must be typed on the health care provider's letterhead and submitted to Enrollment Services.

A student may request and be considered for compassionate withdrawal when extraordinary personal reasons, not related to the student's personal or mental health (for example, care of a seriously ill child or spouse, or a death in the student's immediate family), prevent the student from continuing in classes. Appropriate documentation for a compassionate withdraw is dependent on the nature of the student's circumstances.

Students are encouraged to submit requests for withdraw and related documentation as soon as possible.

Enrollment Services may request documentation and either approve or deny the request. Documentation may also be provided to the Parenting Services Office if the student qualifies for pregnant or parenting student services. Medical and compassionate withdrawals and supporting documentation are retained by the College but separate from other student records.

If you are receiving financial aid, it is strongly recommended that you consult with a financial aid representative.

If you are an **international student**, you must consult with your international student representative to discuss any immigration consequences that may result from a withdrawal.

Appropriate documentation for a medical withdrawal consists of a letter from your attending health care provider that specifies the following:

1. Date of onset of illness/medical condition
2. Dates you were under professional care
3. General nature of your medical condition and why/how it prevented you from completing your work
4. Date of anticipated return to school
5. Last day you were able to attend class

If a grade has been issued, students will have to contact the respective academic division for a grade change appeal. Grade change requests must be submitted by the end of the next long semester.

Fully Remote Accommodation Procedure

1. Students may initiate a request to be exempt from in-person attendance in class using the Parenting Services process to request accommodations.
2. Pregnant and Parenting Services will explore the request and discuss alternative accommodations, resources, and options with the student such as:
 - Exploring accommodations in the classroom and other resources that will allow them to attend in person (i.e. frequent breaks, modified attendance, larger chair, etc.).
 - Working with their academic advisor to identify online courses already available that will work with their degree plan.
 - Working with their academic advisor to find online courses at other universities/community colleges that will meet their degree plan requirements.
3. If those options will not work for the student, Parenting Services will review the remote access request along with the additional information collected by the AVP of Student Advocacy or department head.
4. If not approved by Pregnant and Parenting Services, the office will communicate the decision to the student along with the reason why and with suggestions for other options, if any.
5. If approved, the student will be referred to the Director of the student's program who will work with the student and the academic department to determine if remote access is an option and what those options for remote access are depending on the course/program requirements.
6. Student must make an appointment with the professor of each course to determine eligibility, submitting assignments, taking exams, etc.

Fundamental Alteration

If an accommodation requested by a student appears to be a fundamental alteration to a course or program of study, the following will be of assistance in analyzing this request.

A fundamental alteration cannot include any change to curriculum or course of study that is so significant that it alters the required objectives or content of the curriculum in the approved course outline, thereby causing a fundamental alteration.

If a request by a student is considered by the Parenting Services Office staff to possibly be a fundamental alteration, a committee will be gathered to discuss the request.

The committee will consist of objective and knowledgeable persons to include:

- The professor of the class
- The Student Access Coordinator
- The AVP of Student Advocacy
- In attendance for consultation may be a counselor familiar with the student.

The committee will review the requested accommodation to determine if it is a fundamental alteration to the course or program. It is critical that the committee fully document their decision.

Questions to review for a course request:

- What is the purpose of the course?
- What are the prerequisites or other background knowledge needed?
- What core outcomes/expectations are stated on the syllabus and required of all students?

- What specific knowledge, principles, skills, or concepts must be mastered and demonstrated?
- What aspects/requirements constitute a significant component of the learning and assessment process?
- Could an alternative achieve the same result?
- What are the essential methods of instruction and assessment which are fundamental to the nature of the course?
- Have we diligently searched for alternatives?
- Was an alternative accommodation already offered, but rejected?
- How is the alternative believed to be effective?
- Have we identified whether other colleges have alternatives that achieve the objectives without fundamentally altering requirements?

For an Academic Program:

- What skills or competencies will be needed within the field after graduation?
- What are the requirements for licensing or professional accreditation?

If the committee has explored this issue in a well-reasoned manner and believes the accommodation would fundamentally alter the essential elements of the course or program and no reasonable alternative accommodations exist, then the requested accommodation can be denied.

A student may choose to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. Further information on this process can be obtained by contacting OCR at ocr@ed.gov or 800-421-3481 at <https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/filing-a-complaint/index.html>.

Resources: OCR Letter guidelines in 2017 to The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (OCR Complaint No. 11-17-2001)

Wynne v. Tufts Univer., 976 F. Supp. 792 (D. Mass. 1997),
aff'd, 976 F. Supp.792 (1st Cir. 1999)

