

# WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY POLICY ON CONSENSUAL ROMANTIC OR SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FACULTY, STAFF OR STUDENTS

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## **Policy Statement**

When one partner to a consensual romantic, dating or sexual relationship holds a position of academic or professional authority with respect to the other partner in connection with their University roles, the potential may exist for favoritism, breach of trust, abuse of power, or conflicts of interest. Such situations may also raise questions concerning the consensual nature of the relationship.

To avoid those potential concerns, the University requires that when a consensual relationship exists or has existed in which one partner currently holds a position of academic or professional authority with respect to the other partner in connection with their University roles, the partners must promptly report the situation to their supervisor, department chair or dean and arrangements must be made to eliminate the position of authority.

For purposes of this policy, a faculty or staff member holds a “position of academic or professional authority” in situations including, but not limited to, those in which that partner controls or has influence over the other’s employment, assignments, evaluation, recommendation, compensation, discipline, admission, coursework, grading, financial aid, research funding, extracurricular participation, dissertation supervision, and other forms of control or influence over academic or professional matters.

## **Undergraduates**

The University prohibits consensual relationships between undergraduate students and faculty members, and between undergraduate students and employees in administrative or staff roles having broad authority over undergraduate students (e.g., deans and other senior administrators, coaches, academic advisors), regardless of whether the faculty or employee holds a specific position of academic or professional authority with respect to the student.

## **Noncompliance with Policy**

Violation of this policy may result in a range of remedial and disciplinary actions, including but not limited to mandatory training or counseling, reprimand, probation, suspension, loss of privileges, demotion, expulsion, dismissal or termination.

## **Faculty Rights**

Nothing in this policy is intended to abridge the rights of faculty as outlined in the Washington University Policy on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure.

## **Related Resources**

See [Employment of Relatives](#) policy in the Employee Handbook and the [Discrimination and Harrassment](#) policy.

Please contact the Office of Human Resources, Apryle Cotton for questions about this policy.