Interactions between faculty and residents/fellows in graduate medical education training programs sponsored by Washington University Medical Center institutions are guided by mutual trust, confidence and professional ethics. Professional faculty/student relationships have a power differential between faculty and residents/fellows; personal relationships between faculty and residents/fellows carry risks of conflict of interest, breach of trust, abuse of power and breach of professional ethics.

A. Policy

Faculty members shall not engage in consensual relationships with residents/fellows whenever the faculty member has a professional "position of authority" with respect to the student in such matters which involve evaluation of resident/fellow performance as part of the graduate medical education program. Should a consensual relationship develop, or appear likely to develop, while the faculty member is in a position of authority, the faculty member and/or the student shall terminate the position of authority. Even when the faculty member has no professional responsibility for a student, the faculty member should be sensitive to the perceptions of other residents/fellows that a student who has a consensual relationship with a faculty member may receive preferential treatment from the faculty member or the faculty member’s colleagues.

This policy will also apply to relationships between residents/fellows and students during student rotations/experiences in which the performance of the student as part of their approved curriculum is being evaluated.

B. Definitions

1. Faculty, for purposes of this policy only, consist of full or part-time faculty and all other personnel who evaluate resident/fellow performance.

2. Residents/fellows are all full or part-time residents/fellows.

3. Medical student refers to any student enrolled in a course approved by the School of Medicine.

4. A consensual relationship is any dating, romantic, sexual or marriage relationship.
5. **Position of authority** includes situations in which the faculty members (or resident/fellows when evaluating students) makes or is responsible for an evaluation of the performance of a resident/fellow (or student when being evaluated by residents/fellows). Instruction that does not have an evaluation component is not included).

C. **Procedures**

When a consensual relationship, as defined above, exists or develops, a position of authority with respect to the student must be avoided or terminated. Avoidance or termination includes, but is not limited to, the evaluation being performed by another qualified faculty member (or resident/fellow evaluating student performance); the position of authority being assumed by an alternative faculty member or (or resident/fellow evaluating student performance); transfer of the resident/fellow (or student being supervised by the residents/fellows) to another rotation etc.

D. **Non-Compliance with Policy**

Any credible allegation of a faculty member’s failure to avoid or terminate a position of authority while in a consensual relationship obligates the department chair, program director or other responsible person to conduct a prompt and thorough inquiry to determine whether the allegation is true. Where it is concluded that a position of authority in a consensual relationship exists and the involved persons refuses to terminate the position of authority, the department chair or program director shall terminate the position of authority and can impose sanctions against parties involved.

E. **Sanctions**

Persons in violation of this policy shall be subject to sanctions ranging from verbal warnings to dismissal or termination. Persons who knowingly make false allegations that consensual relationship overlaps with a position of authority between the two shall be subject to the same sanctions.

F. **Faculty Rights**

Nothing herein shall abridge the rights of faculty as outlined in the Washington University Policy on academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure.

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