

# Augusta University

## Policy Library

### Amorous Relationships

**Policy Manager: Human Resources**

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Augusta University is committed to providing a harassment-free environment for all faculty, staff, and students. A sense of fairness is a fundamental prerequisite for fulfilling the University mission of teaching, research and public service.

Amorous relationships that might be appropriate in other circumstances can be inappropriate when they occur between an employee of Augusta University, and any student, subordinate employee or patient for whom he/she has a professional responsibility. Augusta University expects all members of the Augusta University community to exercise appropriate discretion and judgment with regard to personal interactions. When one person has a professional relationship involving another, or stands in a position of authority over another, even an apparently consensual amorous relationship may lead to sexual harassment or other breaches of professional obligations.

In addition, amorous relationships that are mutual and consensual may be viewed by others as exploitative and may, thus, adversely affect the educational and/or work environments. In particular, such relationships can create general conflicts of interest and the concern from fellow students or co-workers of unfair treatment in terms of grades, promotions, etc.

#### **AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS**

*Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:*

- Alumni     Faculty     Graduate Students     Health Professional Students  
 Staff     Undergraduate Students     Vendors/Contractors     Visitors  
 Other:

#### **DEFINITIONS**

An amorous relationship is any relationship between two or more persons that may involve romantic expressions and/or a sexual component.

#### **PROCESS & PROCEDURES**

Augusta University's position is that it is unwise and inappropriate for employees to have amorous relationships with students, employees and patients whom they have authority to supervise, evaluate or treat, even in cases where there is or appears to be mutual consent. Therefore, Augusta University prohibits all faculty and staff, including graduate assistants, residents and fellows from pursuing amorous relationships with students whom they currently supervise or teach, or whom they have a reasonable likelihood of supervising or teaching in the future. In addition, Augusta University prohibits any individual in authority from participating in discussions and decisions that affect the compensation, evaluation, employment conditions, instruction, and/or academic status of any subordinate with whom he/she has or has previously had an amorous relationship.

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**Office of Legal Affairs Use Only**

**Executive Sponsor: Enterprise VP for Human Resources**

**Next Review: 1/2025**

**Reporting:** Any individual in authority who is or has been involved in an amorous relationship with a person whom they may be called upon to evaluate must promptly report this fact to his or her supervisor. The supervisor will then make alternate arrangements so that the individual in authority does not evaluate or participate in discussions and decisions that affect the compensation, evaluation, employment conditions, instruction, and/or academic status of the subordinate involved. Any individual in authority who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action commensurate with the offense.

Any person who believes that an employee is involved in an amorous relationship with a person under his/her direct authority or supervision should report the perceived relationship to the Office of the Vice President of Human Resources (VPHR). Based on an employee's status, VPHR will notify and coordinate with the relevant AU Office for review: Associate Provost of Faculty Affairs (faculty); Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education (medical residents); Dean of Student Life (students); or Director of Employee Relations, Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Officer (staff employees).

Any employee who believes that he/she is entering into a relationship that may fall under the purview of this policy may contact the Vice President of Human Resources.

Augusta University reserves the right to take appropriate action when disruptive conduct, job performance problems, or actions that reflect poorly on the institution result from any amorous relationships. Any individual who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action commensurate with the offense, up to and including termination. Due process rights will be afforded to any individual suspected of violating this policy, as set forth in the Faculty Manual, Employee Manual, or Student Handbook, as applicable.

#### **REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

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#### **RELATED POLICIES**

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#### **APPROVED BY:**

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 1/5/2022

President, Augusta University

Date: 1/5/2022