

Chapter V.C. Consensual Relations with Students

A sexual or romantic relationship between a faculty member and a person for whom he or she has professional responsibility (including, for example, as a teacher, adviser, evaluator, or supervisor) raises concerns such as conflict of interest, abuse of authority, and unfair treatment. These concerns exist even where the relationship is considered consensual by both participants. Moreover, even when consensual, relationships involving individuals of different University status have the potential to have an adverse impact on others in the University community. As members of a community characterized by multiple formal and informal hierarchies, it is incumbent on faculty members not to abuse, nor to appear to abuse, the authority with which they are entrusted. To address these issues, the University has adopted the following rules:

1. **Prohibition of Consensual Relations with Students:** Faculty members shall not initiate or engage in romantic or sexual behavior with undergraduate or graduate students. This prohibition encompasses both enrolled and prospective students, and includes students from other institutions who come to Princeton for pre-baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, visiting, summer, or other programs or courses of study. For purposes of this policy, faculty members include members of the University community whose primary appointment is one of the following: tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, instructors, all ranks of lecturers, and visiting faculty.

2. **Prohibition of Consensual Relations with Individuals Under One's Supervision**
In addition, no faculty member, researcher, graduate student, visiting student, or undergraduate course assistant shall initiate or engage in any romantic or sexual behavior with any person, including a researcher or prospective or current student or employee, who is subject to that individual's academic supervision or evaluation. Examples of supervision or evaluation include: teaching; advising; assigning grades; supervising or evaluating research; supervising or evaluating teaching or grading; evaluating degree progress; serving as a dissertation reader or committee member; nominating or selecting individuals for awards, fellowships, or admission to an academic program; and providing letters of reference.

3. **Relationships and Conflict of Interest:** Faculty members shall not initiate or engage in any romantic or sexual behavior or relationship with any other member of the University community, regardless of the other person's status, if the conduct would create an actual conflict of interest. In instances involving an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest, the parties must promptly disclose their romantic or sexual relationship to their respective department chairs and to the Dean of the Faculty.

4. **Preexisting Relationships:** Except when such relationships create an actual conflict of interest, this policy does not prohibit relationships between a faculty member and another member of the University community that pre-date the adoption of this policy, the

affiliation of either party with the University, or the role at the University which causes the conflict. In all cases involving relationships that pre-date one party's affiliation with the University, both parties to the relationship must disclose it promptly to their respective department chairs and to the Dean of the Faculty, in order to enable the University to take steps to prevent conflicts of interest. Relationships which pre-date either this policy or the role at the University which causes the conflict must also be disclosed promptly to the parties' respective department chairs and to the Dean of the Faculty.

5. ***Disciplinary Consequences of Violations:*** Faculty participating in a sexual or romantic relationship prohibited by this policy, and failing to disclose when disclosure is required by the policy, may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of that faculty member's relationship with the University. Where this policy imposes a duty to disclose, the disclosure must be made as soon as practical after any action has been taken by either party to engage in or establish a sexual or romantic relationship, or in cases of pre-existing relationships, as soon as practical. The grounds for disciplinary action are set forth in *Rules and Procedures of the Faculty*, Chapter IV, Section N.

6. ***Prudential Considerations in Circumstances Involving Power Disparities:*** Even when permissible under this policy, all romantic or sexual relations or behavior between individuals of different University status require heightened awareness. Any member of the University community who is uncertain about how a power asymmetry may impact a relationship or adversely affect the community should contact the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, the Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity, or the Office of Human Resources.

7. ***Complaints:*** Complaints regarding conduct of members of the Faculty should be addressed to the Dean of the Faculty.