



National University of Health Sciences General Policies

Title: **Consensual Relationships -
NUHS Employees and NUHS Students**

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Date Adopted: **7/1/11**

Date(s) Revised:


President

Date



POLICY STATEMENT

National University of Health Sciences (NUHS) promotes an institutional climate that emphasizes awareness within the University community, that each individual has a shared responsibility to establish and maintain the conditions, privileges, opportunities, and protections of a vibrant learning and working environment. The hallmark of this institutional climate is centered on the development of professional relationships built on the shared values of civility and respect for others. In turn, these values are applied to achieve optimal levels of productivity and collegiality required to realize the collective goals and overall mission of the University. It is in the furtherance of the University's educational mission, therefore, that this ***Consensual Relationship Policy*** has been adopted.

National University of Health Sciences strictly prohibits an amorous, romantic, or sexual relationship to exist between an employee (as defined by this policy) and a currently enrolled student. It is the University's position that consensual relationships between an employee and a student undermines the fundamental educational mission of the institution and holds immeasurable potential to result in any number of threatening outcomes ranging from disruption of the learning and working environment, up to and including, workplace violence involving murder and suicide.

Applicability

This policy applies to all faculty, administrators, and staff employees of the National University of Health Sciences. Nothing in this policy replaces the University policies on prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliatory sexual violence as set forth in the ***NUHS Policy Against Sex Discrimination*** under Title IX, the ***Sexual Harassment and Anti-Harassment Policy***, the ***Employment of Relatives Policy*** (dealing, generally, with nepotism), or other University policies that may be triggered by conduct or relationships covered by this policy.

Definitions

Consensual Relationship – is an amorous, romantic, or sexual relationship to which both parties have given their consent.

Employee - as used in this policy, the term employee includes all who are employed by the University, including but not limited to all categories of: faculty, administrators, and staff members with a professional responsibility for students (supervisory or otherwise) or any other employee who has the potential to directly impact the student's academic or professional status currently or in the future, and those persons who are under contract or assignment with the University.

Student - as used in this policy, and except where otherwise noted, refers to currently enrolled students at the University.

Consensual Relationships Between Employees and Students

NUHS supports the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) position that there is a definite power differential between students on the one hand, and faculty on the other hand. It is always incumbent upon a faculty member not to abuse, nor appear to abuse, the power that has been vested in them.

The respect and trust accorded a faculty member by a student, as well as the power exercised by the faculty member in an academic or evaluative role, makes "voluntary consent" to a personal relationship by the student highly suspect.

Moreover, in their relationships with students, members of the faculty are expected to be aware of their professional responsibilities and avoid apparent or actual conflict of interest, favoritism, or bias.

The University strictly prohibits faculty members and other employees who have a professional responsibility for students, (supervisory or otherwise) to establish, or attempt to establish, to encourage, or attempt to encourage, or to maintain, or attempt to maintain, an amorous, romantic, or sexual relationship with students.

University employees (faculty and others having a professional responsibility for students, supervisory or otherwise) must take special care in their relationships with students not to inappropriately exercise, or even appear to exercise inappropriately, their power. This policy includes those employees who have the potential to directly impact the student's academic or professional status currently or in the future.

Consensual relationships (defined as an amorous, romantic, or sexual relationship to which both parties have given their consent) represent a definite conflict of interest, a violation of this policy and a genuine threat to the educational mission of the University.

Employees who violate this policy and choose to engage in a consensual relationship with a student will not be defended or indemnified by the University if difficulties in the relationship arise (including, but not limited to, student claims of sexual harassment against the University or employee). Instead, any employee who violates this policy shall be notified of the allegations against him/her and be accorded a reasonable time to prepare for a disciplinary hearing and informed of possible sanctions that could result in punitive actions ranging from a *Warning* or *Censure* to *Permanent Separation* from the University.