

# DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

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## Consensual Relationships

**Category:** Human Resources

**Responsible Department:** Employee Relations & Equal Employment Opportunity

**Responsible Officer:** Vice President of Human Resources

**Effective Date:** 2/17/2022

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### Policy Summary

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The purpose of this policy is to outline limitations on consensual romantic or sexual relationships to ensure the University remains free from real or perceived conflicts of interest, exploitation, or favoritism when consensual romantic or sexual relationships occur between faculty, staff or students and there is supervisory or evaluative authority.

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### Scope

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This policy affects the following groups of the University:

- Entire University Community

This policy affects all members of the above groups.

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### Policy

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#### Policy Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, a consensual relationship is defined as a relationship of a romantic, dating, and/or sexual nature that occurs with the mutual consent of both parties.

For the purpose of this policy, supervisory or evaluative authority is the power to control or influence another person's employment, academic advancement, or extracurricular engagement, including but not limited to outcomes such as hiring, compensation, promotions, discipline, admission, grades, assignments, recommendations, or scholarships.

#### Policy

DePaul University ("University") is committed to maintaining the integrity of its mission, its academic environment, and its work environment. The University recognizes that when individuals involved in a consensual relationship are in positions of supervisory or evaluative authority at the

University, there is the potential for a conflict of interest, favoritism, and exploitation. To ensure that the University's academic and work environment is free from such disruptions and to preserve the integrity of its mission, this policy prohibits undisclosed consensual relationships where individuals have supervisory or evaluative authority.

For example:

- Supervisors and any employee whom the supervisor manages, supervises, or evaluates in any way, even if indirectly.
- Faculty/staff members and any undergraduate/graduate student whom that faculty or staff member teaches, manages, supervises, advises, or evaluates in any way.
- Intercollegiate athletic coaches and staff and student-athletes.
- Student employees (including graduate assistants, resident assistants, and facilities assistants) and any student whom the student employee teaches, manages, supervises, advises, or evaluates in any way.

This policy is applicable regardless of the sex or gender identity of the individuals involved. DePaul's [Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment policy](#) prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of several characteristics, including sex, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation. DePaul prohibits retaliation and the threat of retaliation against any person exercising their rights and/or responsibilities in good faith under DePaul's [Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment policy](#) or laws prohibiting discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.

DePaul's [Sexual and Relationship Violence Prevention and Response policy](#) prohibits sexual and relationship violence.

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## Procedures

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- A. If a consensual relationship exists or develops between individuals as specified in Section VI of this policy, the following steps must be followed:
  - i. Immediately report the consensual relationship (a) to the appropriate Dean and the Provost if the relationship involves a faculty member; (b) to the appropriate officer of the unit and the Vice President of Human Resources if the relationship involves a staff member; and (c) to the appropriate officer of the unit and the Office of Student Employment if the relationship involves a student employee. While either party may report the consensual relationship, the individual who has the supervisory or evaluative authority is obligated to report the relationship.
  - ii. Cooperate in the development of a plan to mitigate potential conflicts of interest and/or perceptions of exploitation or favoritism. Both individuals who are involved in the consensual relationship are expected to participate in the development of the plan.
- B. The administrators who receive information regarding consensual relationships will be required to handle the information as confidentially as possible and will promptly take action to address the situation, if needed. This could include, for example, one of the following courses of action:

- i. Transfer one of the individuals to another comparable employment position or academic situation.
- ii. Transfer managerial, supervisory, academic, evaluative, or advisory responsibilities to another individual; or
- iii. Provide an alternative managerial or supervisory arrangement that eliminates the direct line of authority or power differential.

The plan will give priority to the interest of the individual with the lesser degree of power or authority in the relationship and will be put in writing and signed by both parties involved in the consensual relationship. The plan will be managed on a case-by-case basis by the responsible officer.

Individuals who are unsure as to whether a consensual relationship must be reported are encouraged to report the relationship so that a determination can be made as to whether a plan is needed.

- C. Consensual relationships are prohibited in the rare instances when effective arrangements to remove the conflict and mitigate the potential adverse effects cannot be reasonably made.
- D. If any faculty, staff, student employee, or student violates the terms of this policy, disciplinary action

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## **Divisional Collaborations**

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Office of Human Resources (Staff)  
Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity  
Office of the Provost (Faculty)  
Office of Student Affairs  
Office of Student Employment (Student Employees)

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## **Contact Information**

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### **Office of Human Resources**

#### **Mailing Address:**

1 East Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

#### **Office Location:**

14 East Jackson Boulevard Suite 1300  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

(312) 362-8500

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## **Appendices**

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None.

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## **History/Revisions**

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Origination Date: 02/15/2018

Last Amended Date: 2/17/2022

Next Review Date: