

1 **Consenting Relationships**

2 Effective: Moved to Policy Library from UPM 3.1(12)
3 Contact: [Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost](#)

4 **Introduction**

5 Consenting relationships that are of concern to Iowa State University are those romantic, sexual, or
6 intimate relationships in which both parties appear to have consented, but where there is a reporting or
7 evaluation relationship between the two parties.

8 **Policy Statement**

9 Consenting relationships between teachers and students, supervisors and employees, or colleagues
10 when one is, or likely will be, involved in the evaluation of the other are inappropriate.

11 In the case of the instructor and student, for example, the respect and trust accorded the instructor by
12 the student, as well as the power exercised by the instructor in giving grades, thesis advice,
13 evaluations, recommendations for further study and future employment, may greatly diminish the
14 student's actual freedom of choice concerning an amorous or sexual relationship. Similarly, supervisors
15 are in positions of assigning and evaluating the work of employees who report to them, and senior
16 colleagues often provide advice and support to junior colleagues and are involved in decisions
17 concerning promotion and tenure, course and committee assignments, and salary increases.

18 Because of these reporting and evaluation relationships and the uneven power inherent in such
19 relationships, it will be very difficult to prove immunity from a subsequent charge of sexual
20 harassment on grounds of mutual consent. It is the instructor, supervisor, or senior colleague who, by
21 virtue of his/her position, will bear a special burden of accountability if charges of sexual harassment
22 arise.

23 It is the responsibility of the faculty member, supervisor, or other staff member who becomes involved
24 in a personal relationship with a student or employee to avoid any conflict, or apparent conflict, of
25 interest between personal and professional concerns. Thus, a faculty member must not participate in
26 the evaluation of a student, colleague, or staff member with whom a romantic or sexual relationship
27 exists or has existed. In the case of a supervisory relationship, it is the responsibility of the parties
28 involved to take appropriate actions to change the work and reporting relationship to remove the
29 possibility of a conflict of interest. Failure to do so is a violation of professional ethics and may result
30 in disciplinary action.

31 **Resources**

32 **Links**

- 33 • [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#)
- 34 • [Faculty Handbook 7.2.2.1.1.](#)
- 35 • [Conflicts of Interest and Commitment](#)
- 36 • [Nepotism](#)