

Consensual Relationships Policy

Purpose and Intent

The University strives to foster an environment that is respectful, fair, and free of harassment and discrimination. In keeping with this commitment, and to avoid potential conflicts of interest, favoritism, coercion, abuse, and breaches of professional standards, the University prohibits romantic or sexual relationships between members of the community who are otherwise associated through supervisory, teaching, advisory, or evaluative roles. Examples of prohibited relationships and conduct include, but are not limited to, those specifically described below.

Prohibited Conduct

The University prohibits any faculty member, employee, graduate assistant, or undergraduate teaching assistant from engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship or in any romantic or sexual conduct with any individual whom he or she supervises, teaches, advises, evaluates, counsels, or coaches.

Furthermore, the University prohibits any faculty member or other employee from engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship or in any romantic or sexual conduct with any student currently enrolled as an undergraduate at Boston College.

The University also prohibits any faculty member from engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship or in any romantic or sexual conduct with a graduate student who is enrolled in any academic program (e.g., JD or MSW) or department in which the faculty member participates.

Reporting and Response

Any member of the University community who becomes aware of any conduct prohibited by this policy should report the conduct to the Vice President of Human Resources or his or her designee (if the involved individual is a staff member) or the Provost or his or her designee (if the involved individual is a faculty member, graduate assistant, or other student). The responsible office, working with other University administrators, will investigate the report and determine the appropriate response.

Members of the University community who violate this policy (meaning, in each case, the individual with greater authority who engages in a relationship or conduct prohibited above with a student or employee with less authority) will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Relationship to Other Policies

This policy is intended to be an addition to existing University policies and does not alter or modify any existing policies, including, without limitation, the University Statutes, the Discriminatory Harassment Policy, and the Professional Standards and Business Conduct Policy.

If any complaint of harassment or discrimination is made, the existence of a consensual relationship in violation of this policy shall not be a defense in any University process or response.

Exclusions and Exceptions

This policy is not intended to apply to: (a) relationships between spouses in cases in which the spouse of faculty member or employee enrolls as a student in a University course or program; or (b) relationships between undergraduate students, provided in each case that the relationship described in (a) or (b) does not involve individuals who are otherwise associated through supervisory, teaching, advisory, or evaluative roles.

Requests for exceptions to this policy may be considered on a limited, case-by-case basis by the Vice Provost for Faculties (in cases involving faculty or students) or the Vice President of Human Resources (for all non-faculty employees). Questions about the application or effect of this policy to an existing or potential relationship should also be directed to the Vice Provost for Faculties or the Vice President of Human Resources.