

Policies and Procedures

SECTION: Administration	NO. 2.2.5.			
CHAPTER: Human Resources	ISSUED: 9/27/85	REV. A 3/1/2020	REV. B 4/20/2020	REV. C 3/25/2021
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PURPOSE

This policy identifies the University's position on relationships among students, administrators, faculty, and staff at Creighton University. Specifically, it addresses the following:

- Romantic or intimate relationships between University employees (administrators, faculty and staff) and students.
- Romantic or intimate relationships between two University employees (administrators, faculty and staff)
- Romantic or intimate relationships between a student employee and other students

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees (administrators, faculty, staff, and student employees) of the University community. Individuals with a faculty appointment, residents sponsored by Creighton University, vendors, independent contractors, and other outside parties who conduct business with the University through affiliation and other agreements will be expected to comply with this policy as specified by the terms of any contract or agreement between the University and such third party.

DEFINITION OF RELATIONSHIP

For purposes of this policy, Creighton University defines “relationship” as a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature which can be serious or casual, monogamous or not, short- or long-term.

POLICY

I. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN AN EMPLOYEE AND A STUDENT

Creighton’s commitment to *cura personalis* (care for the whole person) is demonstrated in the classroom, laboratories, clinic sites, residence halls, recreation facilities, programs, and activities both on and off campus. . This commitment is also shown through the personalized teaching, advising, and mentoring of each student. The integrity of all employee-student interactions is central to the mission of Creighton University. This employee-student relationship vests considerable trust in the employee, who, in turn, bears authority and accountability as a mentor, educator, and evaluator. The unequal institutional power inherent in an employee-student relationship heightens the vulnerability of the student to the potential for coercion.

a. Undergraduate Students

- i. Romantic or intimate relationships between any employee (administrators, faculty and staff), and any undergraduate student, regardless of age, are prohibited by Creighton University. Relationships are prohibited regardless of whether the employee is currently supervising, advising, or teaching the student, unless covered by an exception as identified in subsection c below.

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b. Graduate and Professional School Students

- i. Employees are prohibited from romantic or intimate relationships with all graduate or professional students who are enrolled in the same school or college where the employee works, unless covered by an exception as identified in subsection c, below.
- ii. Employees who have direct or otherwise significant academic, supervisory, or evaluative authority or influence over graduate or professional student(s) are prohibited from a romantic or intimate relationship with those students, except as provided in subsection c, below.
- iii. Employees serving in an administrative role are considered to have significant influence over many students and are prohibited from relationships with any graduate or professional student, except in subsection c, below.

c. Exceptions to Policy

- i. Exceptions to the prohibitions in subsections a and b of this section, above, are employees who are married to or in a current romantic or intimate relationship with an undergraduate or graduate/professional student at the time of their hiring or prior to the time the student enrolls at Creighton University. However, such employees must disclose their relationship to their manager/department chairs, who in turn shall inform Human Resources; and Human Resources shall take all necessary actions to prevent any risk of favoritism, undue influence, or other harm that may occur.

II. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TWO EMPLOYEES

Employees of Creighton University are expected to promote the Catholic and Jesuit mission of the University and uphold the values of the institution. Inherent in these values is the belief that individuals have the ability to benefit from their workplace environment without concern for differential treatment based on another person's relationship status. Recognizing that some Creighton University employees choose to enter into relationships with other employees, the University works to reduce instances of disparate treatment based on power differences between two employees in a romantic or intimate relationship.

a. Administrators, Supervisors, and Department Chairs

- i. University employees who supervise or otherwise hold positions of authority over other employees at the University are prohibited from entering a romantic or intimate relationship with an individual under their supervisory authority. Romantic or intimate relationships with a difference in power or authority produce risks for every member of the University community and undermine the professionalism of administrators, supervisors, and department chairs.

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b. Employee relationships in which there is no supervisory authority

- i. A University employee can enter a romantic or intimate relationship with another University employee not under their supervision or authority. If there is no potential for favoritism, undue influence, or other harm to others, the employees do not need to disclose their relationship to the University.
 1. If during the relationship, the potential for favoritism, undue influence or other harm arises (*e.g.*, assignment to the same work project or committee) the employees must disclose the relationship to their manager/department chairs, who in turn shall inform Human Resources; and Human Resources at that time shall take all necessary actions to prevent risk of favoritism, undue influence or other harms.

c. Exceptions to Policy

- i. Exceptions to subsection a and b of this section are employees who are married to or in a current romantic or intimate relationship with new employees at the time of their own or the new employee's hiring or promotion. All such employees, existing and newly hired, must disclose their relationships to their manager/department chairs, who in turn shall inform Human Resources; and Human Resources shall take all necessary actions to prevent any risk of favoritism, undue influence, or other harms that could occur. See also *Nepotism Policy, 2.2.4.*

III. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN A STUDENT EMPLOYEE AND A STUDENT

Individuals who are enrolled as students at Creighton University can seek employment on campus. This section identifies the responsibilities of individuals who are classified as students for their primary status, meaning they are not full-time or part-time Creighton University employees nor are they enrolled in courses through their own employee tuition remission benefit.

- a. When a student employee is hired, that student employee must disclose to their supervisor any known potential for favoritism, undue influence, or other harm regarding any students they will be supervising, grading, instructing, or evaluating. This includes any individuals with whom they have had or currently have a relationship.
 - i. Supervisors shall work to change assignments and/or put measures into place to avoid any potential for favoritism, undue influence, or other harm.
- b. Graduate and undergraduate students serving in a teaching assistant or teaching fellow role shall not enter into a relationship with another student they instruct, evaluate, or over whom they have academic authority.
- c. Student employees holding a position of authority over other students (*e.g.*, Resident Advisor, Student Manager) shall not enter a relationship with a student under their direct supervision.

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- d. Student employees must follow all additional departmental or divisional policies governing relationships between student employees and other students.

PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of supervisors and department chairs and all other persons who oversee employees to communicate this policy to their employees.

Failure to comply fully or timely with this Policy is a violation of the Policy, and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with relevant disciplinary procedures in the current relevant handbooks, policies, procedures, practices, or contracts. Violations can include, but are not limited to: corrective action, written warnings, mandatory training or counseling, suspension, and termination of employment. Supervisors who fail to address violations of this policy are also subject to disciplinary action.

It is also important for employees to report to the Office of Equity and Inclusion situations where student or other employees may be attempting to initiate unwanted relationships with them. This timely reporting allows the University to respond appropriately to the student's or employee's actions; such responses are set out in the [Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy 2.1.35](#) and the [Non-Discrimination Policy 2.1.25](#).

When an affected employee is in Human Resources or the Human Resources personnel have any other conflicts of interest, the role of Human Resources under this policy shall be fulfilled by the Office of the General Counsel.

Individuals who are aware of violations of this policy (*e.g.*, an employee secretly dating an undergraduate student) shall report this information to Human Resources or the Office of Equity and Inclusion.

ADMINISTRATION AND INTERPRETATIONS

For guidance in interpreting and administering this policy, employees, supervisors and department chairs may contact the Human Resources Department or the Office of the General Counsel.

AMENDMENTS OR TERMINATION OF THIS POLICY

Because allegations of violations of this policy can sometimes raise challenging or novel issues, the University reserves discretion to take reasonable actions to address those issues in a manner consistent with the spirit of this policy, which preserves fairness for all parties and maintains the integrity in the investigation and resolution processes.

Creighton University reserves the right to modify, amend, or terminate this policy at any time.