

CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Office of Equal Opportunity
& the Office of the Provost

Purpose: To maintain a professional work and educational environment where those in positions of authority do not abuse or appear to abuse the power with which they are entrusted in their relationships with students.

Revised: July 2012

Applicability: This policy applies to faculty, staff, students, and community members.

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Tufts University seeks to maintain a professional work and educational environment. Actions of faculty members, academic administrators, and staff that are unprofessional, or appear to be unprofessional, are inconsistent with the University's educational mission. It is essential that those in a position of authority do not abuse, nor appear to abuse, the power with which they are entrusted.

Faculty members, academic administrators, and sometimes staff exercise power over students, whether by teaching, grading, evaluating, or making recommendations for their further studies or their future employment. Amorous, dating, or sexual relationships between faculty members, academic administrators, and staff with students are impermissible when the faculty members, academic administrators, and staff have professional responsibility for the student. Voluntary consent by the student in such a relationship is suspect, given the fundamental nature of the relationship. Moreover, other students may be affected by such behavior because it places the faculty member, academic administrator, or staff in a position to favor or advance one student's interest to the potential detriment of others. Therefore, it is a violation of University policy for a faculty member, academic administrator, or staff member to engage in an amorous, dating, or sexual relationship with a student whom s/he instructs, evaluates, supervises, or advises, or over whom s/he is in a position to exercise authority over in any way.

II. DEFINING CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS

As used in this policy, the terms faculty or faculty member include all those who teach at the University and other instructional personnel, including graduate students with teaching responsibilities. Academic administrators include all staff in a position to counsel, direct or influence the academic performance of students. Staff include all those who work for the University and who may supervise or direct the work of students and/or student employees.

III. POLICY VIOLATION

A violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action. A violation of this policy could also violate other University policies such as the Sexual Harassment Policy or the Sexual Misconduct Policy.

IV. REPORTING

If the person involved in a possible policy violation is a faculty member, the issue should be brought to the attention of the appropriate dean of the college/school. If the person involved is a staff member or academic administrator, the issue should be brought to the attention of the Director of OEO, the Vice President for Human Resources or the dean of the college/school employing the staff member or administrator.

In addition, you may also report such conduct through the University's anonymous hotline, Ethicspoint, at 1.866.384.4277 or at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/7182/index.html>.