

Amorous Relationship

Date

10/23

I. Statement of Policy

Amorous Relationships

The University of Southern Indiana ("University" or "USI") is committed to maintaining an environment in which learning, discovery and engagement take place in a professional atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Actions of faculty or supervisors that jeopardize this atmosphere undermine professionalism and hinder fulfillment of the University's mission.

The disparity of power when an Amorous Relationship is between (1) a student and a faculty member, graduate teaching or research assistant, or any other University employee who has educational responsibility over the student, (2) a supervisor and subordinate, or (3) senior and junior colleagues in the same department or unit makes the individuals involved susceptible to exploitation. Relationships between faculty and students are particularly susceptible to exploitation and the existence of voluntary consent by the student suspect. This is due to the respect and trust accorded a member of the faculty by a student, as well as the power exercised by faculty in giving evaluations or grades, granting approvals for course or clinical access, and providing necessary recommendations for internships or employment.

Those who abuse their power in the context of an Amorous Relationship where there is Educational or Employment Supervision and Evaluation violate their duty to the University community. Voluntary consent by the student or subordinate in a romantic or sexual relationship is difficult to determine given the asymmetric nature of the power structure in the relationship. Because of the complex and subtle effects of the power differential in the relationship, the individual with power may perceive the existence of consent that may not exist or not exist at the level perceived by the individual with power. The possibility exists that, if the relationship sours, these individuals may be subject to a claim of sexual harassment.

Amorous Relationships may also have an effect on others in the course, department or unit. Others may perceive that the student or subordinate in the Amorous Relationship is favored and afforded undue access and advantage above others in the same course, department or unit. These individuals may perceive the environment created as a result of the Amorous Relationship to be hostile and/or perceive forward progress and benefits are obtained through engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with the person in power.

Therefore, USI prohibits Amorous Relationships between a student and any University employee who has educational or supervisory responsibility over the student.

Supervisors and subordinates or senior and junior colleagues in the same unit who are or were engaged in an Amorous Relationship prior to the existence of a supervisory or evaluative relationship within the educational and/or employment context, or who find themselves entering into such an Amorous Relationship, have a duty to report the existence of the Amorous Relationship to the department or unit head who must ensure that arrangements are made to sever the supervisory or evaluative relationship between the parties. The parties must further abide by the University's policy on **Nepotism (B.12)**. Individuals engaged in an Amorous Relationship in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action ranging from a written reprimand up to and including termination.

II. Reason For This Policy

The University's educational mission is promoted by professionalism in the faculty-student and supervisor-employee relationships. This professionalism is fostered by an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Amorous Relationships

that occur in the context of educational or employment supervision and evaluation undermine professionalism and are disruptive to the educational and work environment. Ultimately, Amorous Relationships hinder the fulfillment of the University’s educational mission.

III. Individuals and Entities Affected By This Policy

All colleges, schools, departments, offices, units, faculty, staff, and students are governed by this policy.

IV. Responsibilities

Faculty, Staff, and Students

- Report to their department or unit head any Amorous Relationship that they are in or previously were in with an individual with whom there is or will be a supervisory or evaluative relationship at the University.

Department and Unit Heads

- Ensure that arrangements are made to sever the supervisory or evaluative relationship between two individuals who are in or previously were in an Amorous Relationship.

Title IX Coordinator and Affirmative Action Officer

- Interpretation and enforcement of this policy.

V. Definitions

Amorous Relationships means a relationship or encounter of a romantic, intimate, sexual, or dating nature between persons who are not married to each other. The relationship may or may not involve physical contact and can include relationships conducted via electronic communications, such as set or social media platforms.

Disparity of Power refers to the differences in the concentration of power between the parties of an identified Amorous Relationship.

Educational or Employment Supervision and Evaluation means to (A) assess, determine, or influence another person’s (1) academic or research performance, progress or potential, (2) employment performance, progress or potential, or (3) entitlement to or eligibility for any institutionally conferred right, benefit or opportunity; or (B) to oversee, manage or direct another person’s academic, research, employment, co-curricular, athletic or other institutionally prescribed activities.

VI. Contacts

Policy Clarification

Title/Office	Telephone	Email/Webpage
Institutional Equity Office	812-464-1703	https://www.usi.edu/institutional-equity/

Government and Legal Affairs	812-464-1849	https://www.usi.edu/government-and-legal-affairs/
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Academic Adjustments and Reasonable Accommodations

Title/Office	Telephone	Email/Webpage
Disability Resources	812-464-1961	https://www.usi.edu/disabilities/
ADA Coordinator	812-465-1701	https://www.usi.edu/hr/ada/
Institutional Equity Office	812-464-1703	https://www.usi.edu/institutional-equity/

VII. Related Documents, Forms and Tools

- [Sexual Harassment Policy \(F.1\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy \(F.3\)](#)

[Institutional Equity Office](#)

[Report Flowchart](#)

[Incident Report Flowchart](#)

[Know Your Rights - Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence and Stalking](#)

[Procedures for Resolving Complaints of Discrimination and Harassment](#)

Regulations Governing Student Conduct:

Dean of Students Office: <https://www.usi.edu/deanofstudents/student-conduct/>

Human Resources Office: <https://www.usi.edu/hr/>

Websites for governing bodies with oversight for applicable laws and regulations:

- [Indiana Civil Rights Commission](#): www.in.gov/icrc
- [U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights](#): www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html
- [U.S. Department of Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act](#): www.ada.gov/
- [U.S. Department of Labor Office of Federal Contractor Compliance Programs](#): www.dol.gov/agencies/ofccp
- [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#): www.eeoc.gov