

Northeastern University

Policy on Non-Fraternization

GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL

**Effective Date: August
1, 2014**

**Date Revised: December
13, 2019**

Supersedes: N/A

**Related Policies:
Sexual Harassment
Policy; Grievance
Procedure**

**Responsible
Office/Department:
Office for University
Equity and Compliance**

**Keywords: harassment;
misconduct;
relationship;
consensual; consent;
romantic; sexual;
amorous; coercion**

I. Purpose and Scope

Northeastern University strives to provide an environment for students, faculty and staff that is respectful, fair and free of unlawful harassment or discrimination. In keeping with its commitment to provide equal opportunity to students, faculty and staff, and in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest, favoritism, exploitation, harassment or breaches of professional standards, the university prohibits romantic or sexual relationships where there is supervision, direction or control between the parties.

This policy applies to all Employees, as defined herein.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy:

“Supervisor” shall mean any person who has the authority and/or responsibility to hire, promote, discipline, evaluate, assign or direct faculty, staff or employees of the university.

“Employee” shall mean any person employed by the university in any capacity, whether faculty or staff. Solely for the purposes of this policy, graduate research and teaching assistants shall be treated similar to employees when their relationship with a student entails any responsibility or authority for instructing, evaluating, assigning or advising the student.

Policy

a. *Undergraduate Students*

No employee shall pursue, have or maintain a romantic or sexual relationship with any undergraduate student.

b. Graduate/Professional Students

The university strongly discourages romantic or sexual relationships between employees and graduate or professional students. No employee shall pursue, have or maintain a romantic or sexual relationship with any graduate or professional student whom the employee is responsible for teaching, grading, advising or otherwise supervising. In the event such a relationship exists, the involved employee shall report such relationship immediately to his or her supervisor, who shall take appropriate steps consistent with this policy, including the removal of any reporting, grading, teaching, advising or similar relationships between the employee and the student.

c. Faculty, Staff and other Employee

No supervisor shall have or pursue a romantic or sexual relationship with any employee who reports to the supervisor or over whom the supervisor has the authority and/or responsibility to hire, promote, discipline, evaluate, assign or direct. If such a relationship exists, both the involved supervisor and involved employee shall report such relationship to the next-level supervisor, to whom the supervisor reports. The next-level supervisor shall take appropriate steps consistent with this policy, including the removal of any reporting or similar relationship between the supervisor and the employee.

d. Reporting

Any employee who becomes aware of a relationship prohibited by this policy should report such relationship to their supervisor, the Office for University Equity and Compliance ("OUEC"), or Human Resources Management (if the involved employee is a staff member), or the Provost's Office (if the involved employee is a faculty member or graduate assistant). The department receiving the report shall inform OUEC, which shall coordinate with the supervisor of the involved employee(s) to take appropriate action consistent with this policy.

e. Enforcement

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. In Canada, violation of this policy may constitute cause for termination.

f. Exceptions

Upon request, OUEC may grant exceptions to this policy if it determines that an otherwise prohibited relationship 1) existed prior to the professional or academic relationship between the parties at the university, and 2) does not present a likelihood of abuse of power by or exploitation of either party.

Additional Information

Questions regarding the applicability of or reporting requirements contained in this policy may be directed to the Office of University Equity and Compliance, Human Resources Management, the Office of the Provost, the university Ombudsperson or the Office of General Counsel. Allegations of harassing behavior must immediately be reported to the Office for University Equity and Compliance.

It is unlawful to take adverse actions against any member of the Northeastern community for filing a complaint of harassment or discrimination, or for cooperating in an investigation of such a complaint. Retaliation against a member of the Northeastern community who, in good faith, reports alleged harassment or who participates in an investigation is a violation of university policy and is subject to discipline. In Canada, violations of this policy may constitute cause for termination.

II. Contact Information

Office for University Equity and Compliance, (617) 373-4644

Human Resources Management, (617) 373-2230

Office of the Provost, (617) 373-2170

Ombuds Office, (617) 373-3362

Office of the General Counsel, (617) 373-2157