

Policy Title	Amorous Relationship Policy
Policy Number	HRS-C24-005
Effective Date	February 5, 2024
Responsible Office/Person	Human Resources Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Related Policies	Conflict of Interest; Employment of Relatives

I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (“UMass Dartmouth” or “University”) that members of the University community are strongly discouraged from entering into consensual amorous relationships with persons whom they currently supervise or whose work performance they currently evaluate. Such relationships give the appearance of a conflict of interest, favoritism, or bias in the workplace, which may be detrimental to the interests of the University, its members, and the public interest it serves. Through this policy, the University outlines its expectations regarding consensual workplace dating and amorous relationships between University community members.

II. PURPOSE

UMass Dartmouth is committed to maintaining an environment in which learning, discovery and engagement take place in a professional atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Amorous workplace relationships that occur in the context of educational or employment supervision and evaluation undermine professionalism and can be disruptive to the University’s educational and work environment.

III. DEFINITIONS

Amorous Relationship: Exists when two (2) individuals mutually and consensually understand a relationship to be romantic and/or sexual in nature.

Department Head: A Department Head is the primary head of a designated college, school, institute, center, department, functional area or section of the University.

Faculty and staff: Persons whom the University employs or awards institutional appointments to provide educational or support services to enrolled students.

Student: Any person who is currently enrolled at the University in undergraduate or graduate credit-bearing courses or programs.

IV. PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

A. Amorous Relationships Between Faculty and Staff Members

The University's position is that amorous relationships between faculty and staff members and other University faculty and staff members with whom they currently supervise are prohibited.

1. As of the effective date of this policy, any individual in authority who is in a current amorous relationship with a person with whom he or she currently supervises, must disclose this fact to his or her supervisor or Department Head within fifteen (15) business days.
2. Upon discovery or receipt of disclosure of the relationship, the University shall allow the impacted individuals fifteen (15) business days from the date of receipt of notification, to decide how the issue shall be resolved between the parties. Potential resolutions include, but are not limited to, the resignation of one or both parties, lateral transfer of one or both parties, a change in the reporting relationship resulting from the reassignment of a party to another supervisor, or recusal of evaluative role or responsibility.
3. In the event the parties cannot resolve the issue within the allotted fifteen (15) business day timeframe, the designated Department Head, in consultation with the Office of Human Resources, shall institute a personnel action change to resolve the issue, including but not limited to the potential resolutions as outlined above. When necessary, the University shall make a good faith effort to find the displaced individual another suitable position within the institution, but cannot guarantee such placement.
4. Any faculty or staff member in authority who knowingly violates this provision of the policy will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in University policy or the applicable provision(s) of the employee's collective bargaining agreement.

Any person who believes that a faculty or staff member is involved in an amorous relationship with a person under his/her direct authority or supervision is encouraged to report the perceived relationship to the Office of Human Resources for investigation. If someone reports the suspected relationship, it will be held in confidence to the extent possible. Reports may be submitted orally or in writing.

B. Amorous Relationships Between Faculty/Staff and Students

In the case of amorous relationships with students, faculty and staff members are prohibited from dating students, asking students for dates, engaging in amorous or sexual activities with students, asking students to engage in amorous or sexual activities, or engaging in any activities designed to encourage or which does encourage an amorous or sexual relationship with a student when:

- The student is enrolled in a course being taught by the faculty member; or

- The student's employment, academic work, admissions, enrollment, athletic or other educational participation or programming is being supervised or subject to review in any way by the faculty or staff member.

In principle, such relationships call into question the professional integrity of the faculty or staff member, create an appearance of impropriety, and raise potential conflicts of interest. In addition, such relationships jeopardize the academic freedom of the University community insofar as academic freedom demands an environment in which no person is intimidated, exploited, or coerced. The claim of mutual consent to such a relationship will not prevent the faculty or staff member from being subject to administrative sanctions, including discipline, which may result in termination.

1. As of the effective date of this policy, a faculty or staff member must disclose if he or she is involved in a current amorous relationship with a student to whom he or she has current supervisory and/or evaluative authority within fifteen (15) business days to his or her supervisor or Department Head.
2. The supervisor or Department Head, in consultation with the Office of Human Resources, shall review the matter and based upon the investigative findings, take appropriate remedial action consistent with the University's policy and past practice.
3. A demonstrated violation of this Policy will result in the initiation of disciplinary action consistent with the standards and procedures of applicable policies or collective bargaining agreements.

Any person who believes that a faculty or staff member is involved in an amorous relationship with a student is encouraged to report the perceived relationship to the Office of Human Resources for investigation.

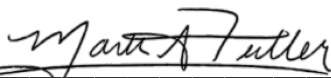
V. RESPONSIBILITY

- All faculty and staff members are responsible for the administration of this policy and adherence to its provisions contained herein.

VI. ATTACHMENTS

None

VII. APPROVAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE

APPROVED BY:  Date 2/5/24
Mark A. Fuller, Ph.D.
Chancellor