
The following are excerpts from unique local policies developed by districts to address relationships between employees and students.

Sample # 1

Consensual Relationships

Consensual relationships between staff members in positions of authority and their subordinates or between faculty and their students shall not be permitted by the College District.

Policy Statement

Any employee in a position of authority and any faculty member need to be sensitive to the potential for sexual harassment, as well as conflicts of interest in personal relationships with subordinate faculty and staff members or with students.

Consensual Relationships that Result in Sexual Harassment

The type of relationship addressed in this policy is one of an amorous or sexual nature. When disparities in authority are present between two individuals involved in a consensual relationship, questions about professional responsibility and sexual harassment may arise. What might appear to be consensual, even to one of the parties involved, may in fact not be so. A faculty member exercises power over his or her students, and an individual in a management/supervisory position exercises power over his or her subordinates and students through praise or criticism, performance evaluations or grades, recommendations for further studies or future employment, or conferral of other benefits, therefore diminishing his or her student's or subordinate's actual freedom of choice.

Examples of consensual relationships that might be construed as sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to, situations where:

1. The subordinate party or student in the consensual relationship feels unwanted pressure to become involved in and/or to continue the relationship;
2. The subordinate party or student in the consensual relationship feels compelled to change behavior and/or job duties because of the consensual relationship; and
3. The consensual relationship has the purpose or effect of creating a work or academic environment in which others are negatively affected by the existence of that relationship.

In each of the above instances, the consensual relationships may be deemed sexual harassment. Consensual relationships that involve allegations of sexual harassment shall be handled according to the provisions of the sexual harassment policy. [See DOA for employees and FDE for students]

**Other Inappropriate
Consensual
Relationships**

A consensual relationship between a faculty or staff member in a position of authority and his or her subordinates or students is inappropriate and shall be considered a violation of College District policy, whether or not such relationships result in sexual harassment. Such consensual relationships may not contain clear elements of sexual harassment. Nonetheless, such relationships can create problems including conflicts of interest, favoritism, and low morale. These relationships often carry the potential for sexual harassment. Such relationships shall be considered sanctionable behavior. Sanctions for inappropriate consensual relationships that do not contain clear elements of sexual harassment may include:

1. Instruction to the parties to terminate the relationship;
2. Transfer of one of the parties to a new department or job responsibility; or
3. Other disciplinary actions, including demotion or termination in severe cases.

Reporting inappropriate consensual relationships that do not contain clear elements of sexual harassment shall follow College District policies and procedures normally used in dealing with misconduct of faculty and staff.