**New Policy:**

**Staff Handbook - General Policies**

**Staff-Student Romantic and Sexual Relationships**

Approved: By College Officers

Date Established: 10/1/18

**Policy Statement**

Romantic or sexual relationships between a College staff member and a student jeopardize the learning environment for that student and others. Such relationships, even when they occur between consenting adults, raise serious concerns regarding unequal status and power, validity of consent, conflict of interest, and preferential treatment, among many other concerns. Staff members engaging in such relationships put at risk themselves, the students, and the educational mission of the College. Accordingly, staff are prohibited from engaging in romantic or sexual relationships with all College students, even if consensual.

**Scope / Responsibilities**

This prohibition includes relationships that occur when the College is not in session or the staff member or student is on leave. Such relationships are prohibited regardless of whether the staff person is directly supervising or evaluating the student, and regardless of the age of the student.

This prohibition includes relationships between students and staff-like community members including volunteers, contractors, and vendors.

Under reasonable circumstances, limited exemptions to this policy may be granted by Human Resources, the Vice President of Student Life and the appropriate divisional Vice President. A reasonable exemption would include a situation when the spouse or domestic partner of a staff member enrolls as a student. In these situations, arrangements will be made if necessary to minimize any potential conflict of interest.

Individuals who experience, witness, or learn about possible violations of this policy or who have questions about this policy should consult with their supervisor, divisional leadership, the Ombuds office, Title IX Coordinator or Human Resources. All supervisors or managers are required to report possible violations to their divisional leadership or Human Resources.

**Policy Violations**

Failure to abide by this policy will result in discipline to the staff member, up to and including dismissal from employment at the College.

**Related Policies:**

Mount Holyoke College [Code of Ethical Conduct](https://www.mtholyoke.edu/risk/code-ethical-conduct) – Conflict of Interest