

HR21**Employee/Student Personal Relationships**

Classification:	Human Resources
Responsible Authority:	Director, Employee and Labour Relations
Executive Sponsor:	Vice President, Human Resources
Approval Authority:	Algonquin College Executive Team
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PURPOSE

To state the College's position on personal relationships between employees and students and to provide a mechanism for the disclosure and consideration of personal relationships between employees and students.

SCOPE

This policy applies both on and off campus, to all employees, students and volunteers in the pursuit of College duties or while engaging in College-related activities.

DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Employee	Full-time and part-time College support staff, faculty and administrators.
Personal Relationship	Goes beyond the normal level of relationship between a student and employee that is ordinarily present in an academic setting and includes, but is not limited to, close friendships and romantic and/or sexual relationships.
Student	A Student is any person who is currently enrolled in a course or program at Algonquin College, but who may not yet have registered; who has applied for admission to the College; or who was enrolled in a course or program at the College.
Supervisor	Any employee who supervises staff.

POLICY

1. Algonquin College is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from conflicts of interest and abuses of power and authority, both actual and perceived. A positive and professional relationship between the College's employees and its students is crucial to maintaining such a learning environment.
2. Relationships of a personal nature between employees and students that go beyond the normal relationships ordinarily present in an academic setting (e.g., involving immediate or extended family members, close friendships, romantic and/or sexual relationships, or other personal connections) create the potential

for actual and/or perceived conflicts of interest and abuses of power that could result in harm to both the student and the entire College community.

3. Personal relationships between employees and students expose all parties involved to potential harm that is unacceptable in a setting where the needs of students must come first. Such relationships may result in serious difficulties in maintaining the boundaries of professional and personal life and can disrupt the teaching and learning environment for students and employees. The reputation of the College is important both to employees and students, and any personal relationship between an employee and a student puts that reputation, and thus the interest of the students, employees, and the entire College community at risk.
4. An employee's personal relationship with a student who is enrolled in a program under the direct or indirect supervision of the employee is especially inappropriate and creates a conflict of interest. Accusations of undue access or advantage, favoritism, or unfavorable treatment may ensue. It is important for employees to always maintain professional boundaries and refer students to the appropriate support mechanisms when a concern arises which may result in a professional boundary becoming compromised.
5. Supervisors must be sensitive to the possibility of a personal relationship in their areas of responsibility and must be committed to ensuring that the work environment is free from personal relationships between employees and students that could create the potential for actual and/or perceived conflicts of interest. Supervisors who have been advised or become aware of the existence of an actual or perceived personal relationship between an employee and a student shall take immediate and appropriate action as set out in this policy.
6. Non-compliance with this policy constitutes misconduct and an employee who has not complied may be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Examples of non-compliance for which discipline may be imposed include, but are not limited to:
 - an employee engaged in a personal relationship with a student that resulted in an actual or perceived conflict of interest;
 - an employee failed to disclose a personal relationship with a student;
 - a supervisor was aware of an actual or perceived personal relationship between an employee and a student failed to report the personal relationship.
7. This policy provides guidance only with respect to consensual intimate or sexual relationships between employees and students. Any student with a complaint of sexual harassment involving an employee, or an employee with a complaint of sexual harassment involving a student, should follow the complaint procedure set out in the Sexual Assault / Sexual Violence policy (SA16) or Respectful Workplace policy (HR22).

8. If, at any time, a personal relationship is not consensual or a consensual personal relationship becomes non-consensual, it shall be addressed in accordance with the Sexual Assault / Sexual Violence policy (SA16) or Respectful Workplace policy (HR22).

PROCEDURE

	Action	Responsibility
1.	Requirement to Declare	
1.1	<p>Declare personal relationship to immediate supervisor and the Director of Employee & Labour Relations if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employee currently has a personal relationship with a student; 2. Employee has been involved within previous six months in a personal relationship with a student; 3. Employee believes that a personal relationship may develop with a student. 	Employee
1.2	If a personal relationship with a student exists, take steps not to be involved, directly or indirectly, with the teaching and evaluation of that student and refrain from exerting any influence or responsibility over the student's program.	Employee/Supervisor
1.3	If a personal relationship with a student exists, abstain from being involved in any selection process for courses, scholarships, bursaries, prizes, employment that could impact the student or be involved in dealing with a complaint or an appeal involving the student.	Employee/Supervisor
1.4	<p>If an employee suspects or becomes aware of a non-declared personal relationship between another employee and a student, they should confidentially report this to their immediate supervisor or to the Director of Employee and Labour Relations. If uncertain about whether to declare, seek guidance from Director, Employee and Labour Relations.</p> <p>The College will not tolerate any direct or indirect reprisal against anyone who reports a personal relationship between an employee and student, as long as the report is made in good faith, based on a reasonable belief, and is not malicious or frivolous.</p>	Employee

1.5	Report any perceived personal relationship between the employee and the student to the Director of Employee and Labour Relations within two working days of receiving the information.	Immediate supervisor, or administrator informed of situation
2.	Actions to be Taken	
2.1	In each case of an employee / student personal relationship, determine the procedure to be followed, the breadth & nature of the investigation to be undertaken and the appropriate individual to whom any recommendations are to be made.	Director, Employee and Labour Relations
2.2	Where necessary, investigate the existence and/or nature of an actual or apparent personal relationship between a student and employee and investigate any other related issues or violations that are relevant to this policy.	Director, Employee and Labour Relations
2.3	Assess whether there has been an actual or apparent violation of the policy.	Director, Employee and Labour Relations
2.4	Recommend to the employee designated under 2.1 what measures, if any, should be taken as a result of the actual or apparent violation of this policy including any corrective measure and/or disciplinary action, if any, to be taken by the College as a result of any violation(s) of this policy.	Director, Employee and Labour Relations
2.5	Implement corrective measures if the employee involved in a personal relationship with a student directly or indirectly teaches, evaluates or supervises the student or has any influence or responsibility over the student's program.	Director, Employee and Labour Relations

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

none

RELATED POLICIES

AD21: Safe to Speak Up

HR12: Conflict of Interest

HR18: Employee Code of Conduct

SA16: Sexual Assault / Sexual Violence

RELATED MATERIALS

[HR21 Declaration of Conflict of Interest Form](#)