

	<i>Policy Level:</i>	President's Cabinet
	<i>Responsible Department:</i>	Human Resources
	<i>Effective Date:</i>	10/24/2025
NON-FRATERNIZATION POLICY		

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe and fair academic and professional environment, consistent with Niagara University’s Catholic and Vincentian values, by limiting intimate or sexual relationships among individuals in unequal positions of power. Relationships of this sort jeopardize the integrity of the University’s mission, of the supervision and the evaluation process and its educational and professional environments. This policy seeks to avoid potential conflicts of interest, exploitation, or favoritism.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to the entire University Community, which includes all faculty, staff, and students whom may or may not perform work-related functions for the University.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS:

1. **“Intimate Relationship”**: For purposes of this policy, an “intimate relationship” is a relationship between parties of a romantic, dating, and/or sexual nature. It is not necessary that the parties actually engage in sexual activity for a relationship to be deemed “intimate.”
2. **“Supervisory or Evaluative Authority”**: The ability to exert control over, evaluate, make professional judgments or to influence another person’s employment, academic advancement, athletic participation, or extracurricular engagement, including, but not limited to, outcomes such as: hiring, compensation, promotions, discipline, admission, grades, assignments, advisement, placements, recommendations, or scholarships.
3. Please note that the list above is not exhaustive and other situations of fraternization may also result in a violation of this policy. In all such circumstances, consent may not be considered a defense against a charge of sexual harassment in proceedings conducted under this policy. The determination of what constitutes sexual harassment depends on the specific facts and the context within which the conduct occurs.

MAIN PROVISIONS:

University Community members shall uphold the integrity and mission of the University, and to honor the professional and educational responsibilities of their positions at the University.

- 1. No intimate relationships are permitted between an employee (faculty staff, or administrator) and any student enrolled at Niagara University.**
- ~~2. No intimate relationship is permitted between a member of the University Community and any other member over whom they possess any kind of supervisory or evaluative authority.~~**

This includes, but is not limited to, supervisors and their subordinates; faculty and students, including graduate and professional students, whom they teach, manage, supervise, advise or evaluate in any way; department chairs and faculty or staff within a department that they oversee; graduate assistants and students in classes where they assist, teach, supervise, or aid in evaluation; community assistants and the residents they directly supervise; and coaches and athletes on their team.

This policy does not apply to a spouse who attends the university.

- 3. Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation:**

Cases under this policy are particularly sensitive and demand attention to issues of confidentiality. Dissemination of information relating to the case should be limited to individuals who have a legitimate need to know or who have information. Every effort should be made to protect members of the University Community so that they may use the reporting complaint and investigation procedures without fear of reprisal or retaliatory action. Retaliation against anyone who makes a complaint or participates in the complaint process or has engaged in any other protected activity is unlawful and is prohibited by this policy. Prohibited retaliation may include taking adverse action or treatment that leads to a negative impact on an individual's employment or educational experience, where such action or treatment is motivated by the fact that the individual has participated in the complaint process under this policy or engaged in other protected activity. If someone is found to be in violation of this policy, that person shall face disciplinary measures in accordance with the University's policies and codes of conduct, which may include suspension or termination.
- 4. Exemptions may be granted in writing by the Director of Human Resources where reasonable circumstances exist and where the General Counsel approves.**

PROCEDURES:

Reporting:

Any person who observes or is concerned about a potential violation of this policy may report their concerns to their supervisor or functional officer, Human Resources, Title IX or the appropriate Dean.

If an intimate relationship exists or develops between any individual and another over whom they exercise supervisory or evaluative authority, the individual who possesses supervisory or evaluative authority (i.e., professor, supervisor, director) **must** immediately report the relationship to: (1) their supervisor or functional officer; (2) Human Resources; and (3) if the relationship involves a faculty member or a student, the Dean of the faculty member's and/or student's College and the Provost.

While either party may report the relationship, the individual who possesses supervisory or evaluative authority **must** report the relationship.

Investigation:

Once a relationship is reported, an investigation is conducted by Human Resources to verify: (1) the precise nature and extent of the relationship; (2) that the relationship is, in fact, consensual, and that no coercion and/or exploitation has occurred; and (3) the type and degree of supervision or evaluative authority possessed by either party in the relationship over the other.

The General Counsel shall be consulted regarding the relationship's implications for the University's other policies, contracts, or legal obligations.

Mitigation:

A plan will be developed by the parties' supervisors, Human Resources, and, if applicable, Title IX, the appropriate Dean and the Provost to mitigate any real, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest, exploitation, and/or favoritism occasioned by the romantic relationship. Both parties to the relationship must cooperate in the development of this plan.

Examples of possible mitigating steps include, but are not limited to:

- If between colleagues who must evaluate each other's work, removing the colleague from the evaluation process;
- If between a supervisor and a subordinate, appointing a new supervisor.

If no accommodations are reasonably possible that would successfully eliminate a conflict of interest or the real or perceived potential for exploitation and/or favoritism, then the romantic relationship must cease while such a conflict persists, but may resume once the potential conflict of interest ends.

The relationship will be monitored by the parties' supervisors, Human Resources, Title IX and, if applicable, the appropriate Dean and the Provost. Any changes (ex. ending of a relationship) to the relationship **must** be reported to these parties by the individual who possesses supervisory or evaluative authority, though the other party may also report these changes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Non-consensual conduct, as well as workplace harassment, discrimination, and retaliation, are governed by Niagara University's *Title IX Grievance Policy* and *Non-Discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures*. Conduct of this nature should be reported immediately in accordance with these procedures.

In addition to this *Non-Fraternization Policy*, University Community members are required to comply with the University's *Conflict of Interest Policy*, and to disclose all conflicts of interest to their functional officer and the General Counsel, pursuant to that policy.

REFERENCED POLICIES:

- [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Title IX Grievance Policy](#)
- [Non-Discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct Awareness & Response Policy](#)

STATUTES AND REGULATIONS:

None

POLICY HISTORY:

- Originated: 07/11/2012
- Current Effective Date: 10/24/2025
- Next Review Date: 10/24/2028
- Revision/Renewal Log:
 - Revised – 10/24/2025