

FAQ's for Consensual Relationships Policy

Please note: use of the word *employee* includes faculty, classified staff, administrative and professional staff, post-doctoral positions, and employee positions requiring student status or university affiliate, including post-doctoral positions funded by other entities. Use of the phrase *authority differential* means the difference in the level of work-related authority between two people (example: one person is a director and the other is a coordinator).

1. Q: *If I am an employee and currently in a relationship with another employee, and we never reported it, what should I do?*

A:

- If there is a non-reported relationship among employees who are not in the same reporting structure (i.e., different departments), no action is necessary.
- If the employees are in the same reporting structure and there is an authority differential, the person in the position of higher authority must report the relationship to his or her supervisor and create a mitigation plan.
- If the employees are in the same reporting structure and peers, no action is necessary.

2. Q: *My partner and I have been in a relationship for a while. Our relationship was allowed under the previous UT policies but would be prohibited with the new standards. We are now an established couple and/or married. Do we need to do anything?*

A:

- If you are a couple and not married, all consensual relationship policies apply.
- If you are a married couple, please note UT Austin's nepotism policy: <https://policies.utexas.edu/policies/employment-close-relatives-nepotism>
- If there is a relationship among employees who are not in the same reporting structure (i.e., different departments), no action is necessary.
- If the employees are in the same reporting structure and there is an authority differential, the person in the position of higher authority must report the relationship to his or her supervisor and create a mitigation plan.
- If the employees are in the same reporting structure and peers, no action is necessary.
- If the relationship involves an undergraduate student and an employee, the relationship is prohibited.
- If the relationship involves a graduate student or a professional school student and an employee, the employee must not have power or influence over the student. If the employee has such power, the relationship is prohibited.

3. Q: *What should I do if I know of a colleague or co-worker who is in a relationship with a student or other UT affiliate that would be prohibited under the new policy?*

A: You should report it. Pursuant to the policy, any employee who is notified or becomes aware of an alleged violation of this policy has an obligation to report it in a timely manner. A list of reporting options is specified in the [Consensual Relationships Policy, Section VII, E.](#)

4. Q: I am an employee currently in a relationship with an employee in another unit on campus. Our units are unrelated and we have no reporting relationship. Do we need to do anything?

A: No. If you are in a relationship with another employee with whom there is no authority differential or sphere of authority, you do not need to report it.

5. Q: Who in a relationship has the responsibility to report it?

A: The person in the position of greater authority and/or power has the responsibility to notify the appropriate university office and work with them to develop a mitigation plan.

- For faculty members, such relationships should be reported to the appropriate dean and [Executive Vice President and Provost](#) (EVPP).
- For staff members, such a relationship should be reported to the appropriate unit head, the [Office for Inclusion and Equity](#) (OIE), and [Human Resources](#) (HR).