



POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 1.10123

DIVISION: Academic Affairs

TITLE: Consensual Relations Between Faculty and Students

DATE: August 15, 2006

REVISED: March 21, 2011, September 19, 2016, September 21, 2016

AUTHORIZED: David D. Lee, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

I. Purpose and Scope

Consensual relations (e.g. dating, sexual) between students and faculty members **with whom they also have an academic, advisory, supervisory, or evaluative relationship** are fraught with the potential for exploitation, and therefore are ~~discouraged~~ **expressly prohibited** ~~strongly discouraged~~. The respect and trust accorded a professor by a student as well as the power exercised by the professor in an academic or evaluative role, make voluntary consent by the student suspect. **Further, these relationships might be less consensual than the individual whose position confers power or authority believes.** Even when both parties initially have consented, the development of a dating and/or sexual relationship renders both the faculty member and the institution vulnerable to possible later allegations of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual harassment, sexual assault) due to the significant power differential that exists between **faculty members and students.**

Pre-existing consensual relationships (e.g., marital or Other Qualified Dependents as defined by HR policy xxx) are not expressly prohibited but are subject to the reporting requirements in Section III and may present a conflict of interest.

II. Policy

In their work-related relationships with students, members of the faculty are expected to be aware of their professional responsibilities and avoid apparent or actual conflict of interest, favoritism, or bias. ~~When a dating and/or sexual relationship exists or has existed, effective steps should be taken to ensure unbiased evaluation or supervision of the student.~~

If a consensual relationship has existed or develops between a faculty member and a student whom the faculty member evaluates, advises, or supervises, the evaluative, advisory, or supervisory relationship must cease immediately ~~is expressly prohibited~~ **strongly discouraged.**

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~~The instructor should not thereafter have undirected responsibility for advising, supervising, evaluating, or grading the consensual relationship partner's performance.~~

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~~This policy should not be construed to supersede any existing, applicable federal or state statutes.~~

~~Consensual and non-consensual relationships are addressed in the University's Discrimination and Harassment Policy (0.204V), and Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (0.207V).~~

III. Procedure

~~In order for these changes to be made and ratified appropriately, in the event that a consensual relationship does exist or develops between a faculty member and a student whom the faculty member evaluates, advises, or supervises, the faculty member must immediately disclose the consensual relationship to his or her immediate superior (normally the department head/chair or college dean), and make arrangements to immediately end advising, supervising, evaluating, or grading responsibilities for the consensual partner.~~

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~~Failure to act in accordance with this procedure will result in personnel and/or disciplinary action. Confidentiality regarding consensual relationships will be maintained in so far as possible.~~

~~For pre-existing consensual relationships as defined in Section I, alternatives to advising, evaluation, or supervision must be pursued if at all possible.~~

IV. Related Policies

~~Policy 0.204V, Discrimination and Harassment
Policy 0.207V, Title IX – Sexual Misconduct/Assault~~

V. Reason for Revision

~~March 2011
Paragraph concerning existing statutes added~~

~~September 2016
Policy updated in accordance with Policy 0.204X Discrimination and Harassment, Policy 0.207V, Title IX-Sexual Misconduct/Assault, and includes amendments recommended by the University Senate in Section I. and Section II.~~

~~Policy updated to address additional concerns brought forward by faculty and administrators.~~
POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: _____ 1.4070

DIVISION: _____ Academic Affairs

TITLE: _____ Excused Absence from Class

DATE: _____ February, 2015

REVISED:

Authorized by: Gordon Emslie, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

I. Purpose and Scope

The university expects regular and punctual class attendance by all students. However, during any academic semester, unavoidable situations such as sickness, military duty, childbirth, or family circumstances cause certain students to miss scheduled classes. This policy creates a system to deal with such absences that helps both the student and the faculty member.

II. Policy

Definition of Excused Absences

An excused absence is defined as an "absence necessitated by compelling and verifiable circumstances beyond the control of the student." Only if an absence can reasonably be considered to be beyond the student's control will it be determined an official excused absence. The individual course syllabus includes an attendance policy and may include "freebie" absences.

Types of Excused Absences

The university excuses absence from class both traditional and nontraditional classroom settings such as laboratories, studios, internships, practica and other experiential learning, and in semester and non-semester based, face-to-face and distance learning delivery modes for true emergencies or unavoidable conflicts including military duty, hospitalizations, death of immediate family members (as defined in WKU policy #4.6402), university activities (which includes activities sponsored by the academic college or department), observance of religious holidays, and court summonses (other than those for which the student is the defendant). Faculty members must exempt these absences from the requirements of any class attendance policy, provided the student gives supporting documentation and notifies the faculty member with the timeframe set by this policy.

Student Responsibility for Missed Work

When a student misses class, even as a result of an official excused absence, it is the responsibility of the student to become familiar with missed content and/or to make up any missed work or examinations. The instructor is not required to provide the student with lecture notes or similar content, but must provide the student the opportunity to make up any missed work within a reasonable period of time, usually no later than the next class period.

Suggested Withdrawal

If a student misses one-sixth or more of the scheduled classes for a given course as a result of excused absences, the instructor may, after review of the student's performance and in view of the likely impact of the absences on the student's grade, strongly encourage (but not require) the student to withdraw from the class with a grade of W. The student must complete and submit a Schedule Exception Appeal Form if the drop/add date for the term has passed. The incomplete grade also might be an option, if a relatively small amount of work is not completed.

III. Procedure

A. Student Notification Requirement

In order to be considered an official excused absence, the student must notify the faculty member in as timely a manner as possible.

If the student knows about the potential for an excused absence at the beginning of a semester/term, s/he must notify the instructor in writing within the first week of the class.

If the student becomes aware of the potential for an excused absence during the semester/term, s/he must notify the instructor in writing within one week of becoming aware.

If the absence arises at short notice or unexpectedly, the student (or a representative) must notify the instructor in writing within 3 weekdays or the next class period, whichever comes last.

If a student does not follow the above notification requirement and/or does not provide reasonable evidence for the delay in notification, their absence will not be considered an official excused absence. Such determinations are not appealable.

The student must present evidence in support of the request for an absence to be deemed "excused" within 48 hours of notifying the faculty member. Examples of evidence include, as appropriate, doctor's notes, police reports, obituaries, funeral/memorial programs, notes from religious leaders, and official orders.

B. Appeal Procedure

If a student and a faculty member disagree about a university excused absence, the student may appeal the faculty member's decision to the department head after discussing the matter with the faculty member. If the student is still not satisfied, the student may appeal to the college dean or her/his designated representative. The decision at the college level is final.

IV. Related Policies

- ~~_____ Engagement Requirements for Hour of Credit (#1.4033)~~
- ~~_____ Bereavement (#4.6402)~~
- ~~_____ Course Syllabi (#1.4064)~~

V. Reason for Revision