



# THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM

## TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Transmittal Number 155

April 24, 2024

Policy Manual Number	Title	Action
<a href="#">300.4.1</a>	Policy on Interpersonal Relationships among Faculty, Staff, and Students	Amended and Superseded 4/18/24 <i>Redline version attached</i>
<a href="#">400.1.5</a>	Policy on Fostering Undergraduate Student Success	Amended 4/18/24 <i>Redline version attached</i>

The actions taken on the above Policies were reviewed and approved by the Board of Governors for inclusion in the UNC Policy Manual following the April 2024 Board of Governors meetings.

The entire UNC Policy Manual is accessible at: <https://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/policy/index.php>

## **Policy on Interpersonal Relationships among Faculty, Staff, and Students**

### **I. Purpose.**

It is the policy of the University that current and prospective faculty, staff, and students shall be selected, evaluated, and supervised on the basis of individual merit and without reference to any other factors unrelated to professional qualifications and performance. Toward that end, the following shall apply to all faculty, staff, and students within the UNC System to address interpersonal relationships that may unduly affect the academic career of students or the employment of faculty, staff, or students. While this policy sets out the minimum standards for addressing and managing such relationships, constituent institutions are permitted to adopt policies that contain such additional restrictions as they deem necessary to the extent allowed by law.<sup>1</sup>

### **II. Definitions**

A. “Evaluate or supervise” means to assess, determine, or influence an individual’s academic or professional performance, progress, or potential, or their entitlement to or eligibility for any institutionally conferred right, benefit, or opportunity; or, to oversee, manage, or direct the individual’s academic, professional, or other institutionally prescribed activities.

B. “Related persons” means anyone whose relationship is so closely identified with another person in either an academic or employment setting that the relationship suggests a conflict of interest. “Related person” includes:

1. Spouse or Domestic Partner
2. Parent or Child
3. Grandparent or Grandchild
4. Sibling
6. Guardian or Ward
7. Aunt/Uncle and Niece/Nephew
8. First Cousins

The prohibited conduct in this policy applicable to related persons shall continue after the termination of the relationship (e.g., divorce) until such time as the constituent institution determines that there is no effect upon, or perception of, impartiality.

C. “Romantic relationship” means a relationship not identified as marriage or domestic partnership where the parties involved are consenting adults in a sexual or in a romantic (or intimate) relationship, regardless of whether or not the relationship has been consummated sexually.

D. "Employment decision" means a decision regarding the search, selection, or appointment of an individual to employment; establishing the terms and conditions of employment or benefits; determining job classification/compensation or benefits of employment; evaluating work performance; voting or otherwise participating in processes for reappointment, promotion, tenure, or post-tenure review; issuing disciplinary action; or any other action that assesses, determines, or influences an individual's work performance or career progress (e.g., work assignments, allocation of space, etc.).

### III. Prohibited Conduct

A. Improper Relationships with Students. At a minimum, constituent institution policies must ensure that:

1. University employees are prohibited from evaluating or supervising, either directly or indirectly, any enrolled student of the institution with whom they have or had a romantic relationship or any enrolled student of the institution who is a related person as defined in this policy.

2. University employees are prohibited from engaging in a romantic relationship with any enrolled student of the institution, other than his or her spouse, who is a minor under the age of eighteen.<sup>2</sup>

B. Employment Decisions. At a minimum, constituent institution policies must ensure that:

1. An employee may not supervise, evaluate, or have authority for employment decisions over a person with whom they have or had a romantic relationship or who is a related person as defined in this policy. The prohibited conduct in this policy applicable to related persons shall continue after the termination of the relationship (e.g., divorce) until such time as the constituent institution determines that there is no effect upon, or perception of, impartiality.

2. With respect to proposed employment decisions that would result in the concurrent service of related persons within the same academic department or employing unit, a person related to an incumbent employee may not be employed if the professional qualifications of other candidates for the available position are demonstrably superior to those of the related person or persons involved in a romantic relationship as defined in this policy.

3. With respect to the concurrent service within the same academic department or employing unit at a constituent institution involving related persons or individuals who have had or have a romantic relationship, neither related person or individual shall be permitted individually or as a member of a committee to participate in or otherwise influence an employment decision for the other related person or individual person (including promotion, job classification/compensation, tenure, reappointment, and post tenure review). The prohibited conduct in this policy applicable to related persons shall continue after the termination of the relationship (e.g., divorce) until such time as the

constituent institution determines that there is no effect upon, or perception of, impartiality.

4. It shall also be a violation of the constituent institution policy for an employee to influence or attempt to influence those involved in employment decisions regarding the related person or persons involved in a romantic relationship as defined in this policy.

#### IV. Procedures, Remedies, and Reporting

A. Constituent institutions must establish procedures for identifying, addressing, and managing interpersonal relationships in the selection, evaluation, and supervision of students, faculty, and staff when such situations are unavoidable (e.g., faculty member promoted into a position that would oversee faculty member's spouse; related person teaches the only section of a course required for a student's degree, etc.). Appropriate processes may include, but are not limited to, the development, implementation, and monitoring of conflict management plans to address the conflict (e.g., reassignment of supervision, advising, grading/assessing, or other such decision-making authority over the subordinate individual, etc.).

B. An employee shall disclose all actual or potential conflicts of interest created by a romantic or familial relationship as defined in this policy to their employer. Constituent Institution policies shall define a procedure for such disclosures of any actual or potential conflicts of interest in order to avoid a potential violation of this policy.

C. Remedies for any prohibited conduct may include, but are not limited to, discipline, discharge, or related corrective action dependent upon the nature and circumstances of the violation.

D. Each chancellor, or their designee, shall report annually to their board of trustees concerning all specific cases during the preceding year in which violations of this policy were identified and how they were addressed.

#### V. Related Policy Considerations

These prohibitions addressed by this policy are not intended to address other academic and employment situations regarding unlawful or prohibited harassment and discrimination under applicable constituent institution or University policy or regulation.

#### VI. Other Matters.

A. **Effective Date.** The provisions of this policy shall be applicable prospectively only, with reference to appointments made or conflicts that arise after the adoption date of the policy.

B. **Relation to State Laws.** This policy is meant to supplement, and does not purport to supplant or modify, those statutory enactments, regulations, and policies which may govern the activities of public officials.

~~C.~~ **C.** ~~Regulations and Guidelines.~~ This policy shall be implemented and applied in accordance with such regulations and guidelines as may be adopted by the president.

\*Supersedes and replaces the prior UNC Policy 300.4.1, “Improper Relationships Between Students and Employees” and supersedes and replaces UNC Policy 300.4.2, “Employment of Related Persons”, combining the two prior policies into one comprehensive policy on Interpersonal Relationships among Faculty, Staff, and Students.

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<sup>1</sup> With respect to University employees who are subject to the North Carolina Human Resources Act, applicable restrictions concerning the concurrent service of related persons shall be those adopted by the Office of State Human Resources.

<sup>2</sup> At the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, it is prohibited conduct for any employee to engage in a romantic relationship or in sexual activity with any enrolled student, except their spouse or domestic partner.

### **Policy on Fostering Undergraduate Student Success**

I. Purpose. The University of North Carolina (UNC) System’s policies on student success adopted by the Board of Governors direct constituent institutions to:

- A. Set academic progress and degree attainment as primary outcomes;
- B. Promote academic quality, rigor, and integrity; and
- C. Make possible “seamless” educational opportunities across the UNC System constituent institutions, with the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), and early college high schools.

Improving retention, graduation rates, and time to degree are important aspects of such policies. However, the Board of Governors also recognizes that students come into the system from a number of different life circumstances and their paths to success vary accordingly. Policies, therefore, set parameters within which a constituent institution can best meet the needs of these diverse student populations.

II. University-Wide Policies

A. The Board of Governors has adopted the following policies for all institutions comprising the University of North Carolina System except the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics.<sup>1</sup>

- 1. Constituent institutions will require no more than 120 semester credit hours for a four-year baccalaureate degree program unless an exception is granted by a board of trustees as described in Section 400.1.5[R] of the UNC Policy Manual.
- 2. Constituent institutions will follow the credit hour limits for five-year baccalaureate degree programs as described in Section 400.1.5[R] of the UNC Policy Manual.
- 3. Constituent institutions will develop academic policies within the regulations established by the UNC System on:
  - a. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
  - b. Course Adjustment Periods (“Drop/Add”)

- c. Course Withdrawal
  - d. Grade Exclusion or Replacement
  - e. Minimum, Maximum, and Average Course Load
4. Constituent institutions will establish a student success and support structure to review and to issue regular reports on:
- a. Retention, academic progression, graduation, and time to degree;
  - b. Course scheduling as it relates to whether courses required for graduation are offered on a timely basis and with an adequate number of sections and seats;
  - c. Course offerings and grade requirements to assess if any undue additions to general education requirements exist or if such requirements unintentionally lengthen time to graduation; and
  - d. The academic advisement system to ensure students receive appropriate assistance in proceeding toward graduation in a timely manner.
5. Constituent institutions will be compliant with Title IV regulations that define student eligibility for and receipt of federal financial aid.
6. Constituent institutions will be compliant with the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement with the NCCCS and are encouraged to develop policies that promote seamless transfer among schools in the University of North Carolina System.
7. The UNC System Office shall, in consultation with faculty and staff from the constituent institutions, establish and maintain a common course numbering system for undergraduate lower division courses, which shall be mapped to the unique course numbers used at each respective institution of higher education. The president shall approve regulations to describe and implement this common undergraduate course numbering system, which shall be established and operational by the 2022-23 academic year.
8. UNC institutions will either (1) accept for transfer academic credit issued by regionally-accredited institutions for a student's participation in internships and academic programs managed by The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars (TWC), or (2) enter into an agreement with TWC that provides that the UNC institution will issue academic credit for a student's participation in TWC internships and academic programs.
9. For students entering on or after July 1, 2025, UNC institutions will require, as a condition of awarding a baccalaureate degree, that students successfully complete a course or courses covering the foundations of American democracy.
- a. The course or courses that fulfill this requirement must include substantively the following student learning outcomes:

i. Evaluate key concepts, principles, arguments, and contexts in founding documents of the American republic, including the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and a representative selection of the Federalist Papers; and,

ii. Evaluate key milestones in progress and challenges in the effort to form “a more perfect Union,” including the arguments and contexts surrounding the Gettysburg Address, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Letter from Birmingham Jail, as well as other texts that reflect the breadth of American experiences.

b. The student learning outcomes may be met in a single course, or each student learning outcome may be met separately in a total of two courses.

c. The president shall issue regulations implementing this requirement. Without limitation, the regulations shall determine exemptions to this requirement for a student’s prior learning, including appropriate exemptions for postsecondary courses taken at non-UNC System institutions and Qualified Advanced Course Examination Scores, as that term is defined in Section 700.10.1[R] of the UNC Policy Manual.

B. These policies are designed to ensure that campus and system-wide policies and practices facilitate behaviors that support retention and timely graduation.

### III. Other Matters

A. **Effective Date.** The requirements of this policy shall be effective on the date of adoption of this policy by the Board of Governors.

B. **Relation to State Laws.** The foregoing policy as adopted by the Board of Governors is meant to supplement, and does not purport to supplant or modify, those statutory enactments which may govern or relate to the subject matter of this policy.

C. **Regulations and Guidelines.** This policy shall be implemented and applied in accordance with such regulations and guidelines as may be adopted from time to time by the president.

<sup>1</sup>The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics shall track data on student attrition, completion rates of its high school curriculum, and high school graduation. See G.S. 116-235.