

Marquette University Consensual Relationships Policy FAQs

Please note that *employee* includes faculty, staff, post-doctoral positions, and employee positions requiring student status or university affiliation, including post-doctoral positions funded by other entities.

1. If I am an employee and currently in a relationship with another employee in my department, but there is no reporting relationship between us, what should I do?

If you and your partner are peers in the same reporting structure, no action is necessary. If, however, in the future you have the opportunity to manage, supervise or evaluate your partner or that becomes true for your partner, the person in position of greater authority must report the consensual relationship to their supervisor or to the Title IX Coordinator. In that case, the Title IX Coordinator, appropriate supervisor and other appropriate administrators as necessary will collaborate with the participants in the relationship to write a mitigation plan and address the conflict of interest presented by the reporting relationship.

2. My partner and I have a relationship that falls under the category of “permitted with a mitigation plan in place.” What will happen when we report the relationship?

When you report the relationship goes to your supervisor, the supervisor will reach out to the Title IX Coordinator, and the Title IX Coordinator will reach out to you and your partner to begin developing a mitigation plan. The Title IX Coordinator will keep the matter as private as possible when determining, with you, who needs to be involved in the development of a mitigation plan. Other parties will likely need to be involved to arrange the alternative means for managing, supervising, teaching, evaluating, and or advising of the supervisee. The mitigation plan will give priority to the interest of the supervisee.

3. What is a mitigation plan and who is involved in creating one?

A mitigation plan is a written plan, acknowledged and signed by the parties involved, that mitigates the conflict of interest and the potential for real or perceived favoritism, bias, or exploitation created by a consensual relationship. The people involved in creating the plan are the participants in the relationship and the Title IX Coordinator. Others who may be involved include the direct supervisor of the person in greater/direct authority and/or others required to develop the strategy for managing, supervising, teaching, evaluating and/or advising the supervisee or otherwise mitigating the real or perceived conflict of interest. These may include an associate dean, dean, business manager, or other person who could take on direct authority for the person in lesser authority in the relationship.

4. I am an undergraduate student supervising another undergraduate student whom I am dating. What does this policy require me to do?

You must promptly inform either your supervisor or the Title IX Coordinator of the relationship, and then work with the Title IX Coordinator to put a mitigation plan in place so your partner can be supervised by someone else.

5. I am a graduate student dating an undergraduate in a class I am teaching. Is this OK with a mitigation plan in place?

This relationship may be permitted with a mitigation plan in place to create an alternative means for your partner to be evaluated in the class. Your partner may also opt to leave to course, if possible.

6. What if your consensual relationship turns nonconsensual?

Nonconsensual sexual contact violates Marquette University's Sexual Harassment and Sex Discrimination Policy. If you have experienced nonconsensual sexual contact, there are resources and options for you. Please see the [Title IX Office homepage](#) for more information.

7. I am an employee in a relationship with another employee that falls under the category of "permitted with a mitigation plan in place." We have been in this relationship for a while but never reported it. What should I do?

Report the relationship to the Title IX Coordinator to begin a consultation and the development of a mitigation plan. Remember, if you are peers in the same reporting structure, no action is necessary.

8. If I am an employee currently in a relationship with another employee that is "permitted with a mitigation plan in place," and I am in the position of lesser authority, can I report our relationship?

Yes. Since you are supervised by your partner, you can report the relationship to the Title IX Coordinator. By doing so, you will initiate a consultation that will involve you, the other participant in the relationship, and the Title IX Coordinator to initiate the development of a mitigation plan.

9. If I am an employee and my spouse who is also an employee is taking advantage of the tuition benefit to begin an undergraduate degree at Marquette, what should I do?

The person in the position of greater authority in the relationship should report the relationship to the Title IX Coordinator to request an exemption from the policy.

10. If I am an employee and currently in a relationship with an undergraduate student, what should I do?

This relationship is prohibited under the policy, though exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests for exemptions should be made to and will be reviewed by the Title IX Coordinator in consultation with other employees as appropriate. Please note that the Title IX Coordinator will keep the matter as private as possible.

11. Why if this policy relates to consensual relationships is the Title IX Coordinator in charge of this policy?

The Title IX Coordinator interacts with all university community members impacted by this policy – students, faculty, and staff. This individual is trained to respond to sensitive matters discretely and with care.

12. My spouse and I are in a relationship would be prohibited under the consensual relationships policy. What should we do?

The participant in the relationship with a higher level of authority should contact the Title IX Coordinator to request an exemption and, if relevant, develop a mitigation plan to address conflict of interest concerns.

13. What should I do if I know of a colleague who is in a relationship that would be prohibited under the policy? Can I report it anonymously?

Please contact the Title IX Coordinator to talk through the situation. You can do so anonymously by phone or email. You can also request that the Title IX Coordinator keep your identity confidential. The Title IX Coordinator cannot guarantee confidentiality, however, especially if you are part of a small group. Please note that retaliation is a violation of the policy.

14. I am an employee in a relationship with an employee in another, unrelated university department. Should I do anything?

No, you do not need to report it.

15. Who in a consensual relationship has the responsibility to report it?

The person in the position of greater authority and/or power has the responsibility to notify the Title IX Coordinator.

16. I am an employee in a consensual relationship with an employee in another department. I want to participate in the Marquette tuition benefit program, which would technically make me an undergraduate. Is this a violation of the policy?

Yes, it is technically a violation, but is likely to be exempted. Contact the Title IX Coordinator to explain your situation and request an exemption.

17. I am a Marquette faculty member and my partner wants to enroll as an undergraduate at Marquette so that he can expand his career options. Is this a violation of the policy?

Yes. The policy prohibits relationships between a Marquette employee (including faculty) and an undergraduate student. Under certain circumstances, an exemption from the policy may be granted. Please direct questions about the application of this policy to your existing relationship to the Title IX Coordinator.

18. Does the policy apply to spouses?

Yes, married couples fall under the consensual relationships policy. If you are in a consensual relationship wherein one of you has direct authority over the other, the person in the position of greater authority must report it to the Title IX Coordinator.

19. I work for a Marquette contractor working on a construction project. My partner is an undergraduate at Marquette. Is this a violation of policy?

Yes. The policy prohibits relationships between a Marquette affiliate and an undergraduate student. In certain unique situations, an exemption from the policy may be granted, depending on the facts and circumstances of the particular relationship at issue. Please direct questions about the application of this policy to your existing relationship to the Title IX Coordinator.

20. I am a student employee working as a resident advisor. My partner is an undergraduate at Marquette. Am I violating the policy by dating this person?

No. If you do not teach, manage, supervise, advise or evaluate the person in any way, there is no policy violation.

21. I am a post-doctoral fellow overseeing a lab. I want to have a relationship with a graduate student in my lab who has expressed interest in having a relationship with me. Would this relationship violate the policy?

Yes. The policy expressly prohibits employees or affiliates from engaging in a consensual relationship with any graduate student whom they teach, manage, supervise, advise, or evaluate in any way. Due to your supervisory role overseeing the lab, the proposed relationship would violate the policy.

22. I am planning to start as an undergraduate student at Marquette in the online Strategic Communication major next fall. My girlfriend of nearly five years is an adjunct faculty member at Marquette. She told me that we may have a problem. Is this true?

Yes. The policy prohibits relationships between a Marquette employee (including faculty) and an undergraduate student. If you enroll at Marquette as an undergraduate student, your relationship with the Marquette faculty member would be a violation of the policy. In certain unique situations, an exemption from the policy may be granted, depending on the facts and circumstances of the particular relationship at issue. Your girlfriend should contact the Title IX Coordinator for guidance about the application of this policy to your existing relationship.

23. Why did Marquette implement this policy?

Marquette University recognizes that consenting individuals associated with the university should be free to enter into personal relationships of their choice; however, the university also recognizes that such relationships must not put at risk the fundamental interest of every member of the University community to participate in University activities free from conflicts of interests, favoritism, and/or exploitation. The goal of the policy is to prevent actual or perceived conflicts of interest which create the possibility for favoritism and/or exploitation. Should you have any specific questions about this policy, please consult the Title IX Coordinator.