# Relationships Policy

## PURPOSE:
This policy is intended to define expectations and responsibilities surrounding consensual and familial relationships within the KU Medical Center community.

## APPLIES TO:
Faculty, Staff, Students, Fellows and Affiliates

## DEFINITIONS:

**Faculty**: For purposes of this policy, “faculty” includes all full- or part-time faculty, volunteer or adjunct faculty, and any other persons involved in the education, evaluation, supervising, or advising of students or employees.

**Staff**: Any full-time, part-time, or temporary employee, including residents.

**Student**: Any person enrolled or otherwise participating, including students from other institutions, in any graduate or undergraduate education at KU Medical Center. This also includes individuals who confirm their intent to enroll in programs and those or who are not officially enrolled for a particular term but who have a continuing relationship with the university.

**Family Member**: An individual related by blood, adoption, marriage or domestic partnership to the following degrees: parent, child, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, first cousin, grandparent or grandchild, spouse, domestic partner, step-parent, step-child, step-brother, step-sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law or the equivalent for individuals in a domestic partnership.

**Position of Authority**: A position of authority is one that has responsibility for or influence over admitting, educating, assigning, evaluating or advising students or hiring, promoting, evaluating, assigning or supervising employees. Persons in positions of authority could include faculty, teaching and research assistants, residents, and fellows. For instance, a faculty member will always be treated as having such a power differential if the student is in an educational experience where the faculty member has evaluative authority such as in assigning grades or serving on thesis, dissertation, or scholarship awards committees. These

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principles also apply to administrators and supervisors in their relationships with students and faculty.

**Consensual Relationship:** For purposes of this policy, a consensual relationship is any dating, romantic, sexual or marital relationship between two consenting adults.

**Title IX:** Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal statute that prohibits sex discrimination or harassment in any academic program or activity. Any individual in a position of authority who uses their status to intimidate or coerce another to participate in a consensual relationship may be engaging in sexual harassment in violation of Title IX.

**POLICY:**

University of Kansas Medical Center is committed to providing an academic and working community environment that fosters intellectual, professional, and personal growth without discrimination. Central to the preservation of this environment is the trust that should characterize all interactions between students/trainees and faculty and supervisors and employees working toward the common educational and healthcare goals of the institution. Trust is put at risk and conflicts of interest arise when members of the University community engage in romantic or sexual relationships that involve individuals of unequal power whether they be students, trainees, staff, or other faculty members for example administrator and faculty member, faculty member and student, supervisor and employee, even if the relationship is consensual. Likewise, questions of fairness, bias and conflict arise when members of the same family supervise one another. In order to maintain the University's high standards of integrity and excellence in its academic and working environments, this policy provides the following expectations and responsibilities regarding relationships in the KU Medical Center community:

**Consensual Relationships**

It is the position of the University that consensual romantic or sexual relationships between individuals of unequal power are unwise, often contrary to professional ethics and create a conflict of interest. Such a relationship may impair one's ability to make an objective judgment of the performance of the student/trainee or employee or cast doubt on the objectivity of the supervision or evaluation provided. Decisions concerning grades, degrees, promotions, merit increases, and awards must be made free from any trace of bias or favor. Such decisions may be suspect when made by those who have an emotional relationship, beyond the purely professional or academic one, with those who benefit from those decisions. Even the mere appearance of bias may seriously disrupt the academic or work environment. Thus, faculty and staff shall not engage in consensual relationships with students/trainees/residents/fellows or employees over whom they have evaluative or decision-making authority or over whom it is foreseeable that such authority will arise in the future based on program curricula or job roles. Efforts by faculty and staff to initiate these relationships are also prohibited.

In the event that a consensual relationship prohibited by this policy exists or develops, the individual in the position of authority has a duty to report such relationship and cooperate in removing the conflict. Removing the conflict could include having a qualified alternative faculty member or supervisor assume the position of authority; the student not enrolling in a course; transfer of the student to another course taught by a different faculty member; or reassignment of the employee to a different department reporting to a different supervisor. In the case where there is no alternate placement for an employee, either the employee or the supervisor's employment may be recommended for dismissal at the discretion of KU Medical Center administration, in accordance with applicable appointment rules.
Familial Relationships

KU Medical Center permits employment of members of the same family. However, to avoid a conflict of interest or an appearance of favoritism, no family member may initiate or participate in, directly or indirectly, decisions involving hiring, promotion, salary, evaluations, work assignments or other working conditions or benefits of another family member employee.

Employees must report the existence of any familial relationship that may pose a conflict of interest at the time of application, employment or when the relationship or conflict develops. The employees are expected to work with the department chair or supervisor to resolve the conflict. Options may include the transfer of one employee to another department, the revision of the reporting structure within a department, or excluding the family member applicant from further consideration for the position. In the case where there is no alternate placement for an employee, either the employee or the supervisor's employment may be recommended for dismissal at the discretion of KU Medical Center administration, in accordance with applicable appointment rules.

Reporting

Relationships prohibited by this policy should be reported. Reports should be made to the appropriate vice chancellor, department chair or dean and to Human Resources. Credible allegations of a prohibited relationship reported by someone not involved in the relationship will be investigated by Human Resources or the Equal Opportunity Office if warranted. Where a prohibited relationship is found to exist and the faculty or staff member refuses to terminate the position of authority or eliminate the conflict, the department chair, dean, or other appropriate administrator shall terminate the position of authority or conflict and may impose sanctions against the parties involved in accordance with procedures set forth in the KUMC Faculty Handbook, the Unclassified Professional Staff Regulations, or Policies of the University Support Staff.

For purposes of consensual relationships, reports of allegations that an individual in a position of authority may be using that position to coerce or intimidate another to engage in a relationship should be made to the Equal Opportunity Office for investigation into whether a violation of KU Medical Center's Title IX Policy has occurred. Such investigations will be conducted in accordance with KU Medical Center's Discrimination Complaints Resolution Process.

Reports of existing relationships will be kept confidential except to the extent necessary to avoid, and address, conflicts of interest and misconduct.

Retaliation

KU Medical Center prohibits retaliation in any form. It shall be a violation of this policy to engage in any conduct or take any action against a person because they reported a possible violation of this policy or participated in an investigation into any alleged violations of this policy.

EXCLUSIONS OR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:
CONSEQUENCES:

Violations of the KUMC Relationships Policy may lead to disciplinary action as specified under any applicable University or campus policies and procedures.
REFERENCES:

RELATED POLICIES links:
KUMC Title IX Policy

RELATED PROCEDURES links:
Related other with links: Faculty Handbook

RELATED FORMS links:

CONTACT/S BY TITLE w phone number:

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REVISION HISTORY NOTES

12/16/2016: Comprehensive KUMC policy approved
04/2016: Faculty Handbook Version revised

APPROVED BY: (EVC OR VC) Executive Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Attachments: No Attachments

Approval Signatures

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<td>Natalie Holick: Director</td>
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Applicability

KU Medical Center, KU Public Policies and Procedures, KU Salina, KU SoM Wichita