

**University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Consensual Relationship Policy**  
<https://www.uwlax.edu/human-resources/consensual-relationships/>

**Questions & Answers for Instructors, Advisors, Coaches, and Supervisors**

**1. Who does this policy cover?**

- Any employee who serves as an instructor for students, which includes:
  - academic instruction
  - advising
  - direct or indirect evaluation of a student's work
  - research collaboration or assistantships
  - coaching
- Any other employee (including graduate assistants) who has supervisory, advisory, evaluative, or other authority or influence over students or employees.

**2. What are my obligations under this policy?**

Employees are prohibited from commencing a romantic, physically intimate, or sexual relationship with a student if they are currently serving as an instructor for that student, or they reasonably anticipate serving as an instructor for that student in the future.

If an employee enters into an instructor/student role (or any other role that involves supervisory, advisory, evaluative, or other authority or influence) with a person they had a pre-existing consensual relationship with, including marriage, this must be disclosed to their supervisor/chair.

The supervisor/chair will notify Human Resources (and the Dean of Students, if a student is involved), and measures will be devised to eliminate conflicts of interest and adverse effects on the other party to the relationship.

**3. What if I have a concern about a colleague who may be violating this policy?**

Please contact your supervisor, Human Resources, or Equity & Affirmative Action. The policy protects you against retaliation, and all information shared will be treated sensitively.

**4. What happens if an employee violates this policy?**

If an instructor commences a relationship with a student under their instruction, or whom they reasonably believe may be under their instruction in the future, OR if an employee fails to disclose a relationship as required by this policy, disciplinary action may be taken up to and including termination.

**5. Why is this policy necessary?**

When employees abuse their power, authority, and influence by fostering romantic or sexual relationships with people they hold power over, it creates conflicts of interest and undermines the climate of fairness, safety, and equity for all.

Our sexual misconduct policies already prohibit nonconsensual sexual activity and unwanted sexual advances. However, even if a relationship appears to be consensual, a power imbalance creates a risk of coercion, bias, and fear of retaliation.

## University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Consensual Relationship Policy Flowchart for Instructor/Student Cases

### Policy Definitions

"Instructor" includes: academic instruction; advising; direct or indirect evaluation of a student's work; research collaboration or assistantships; coaching.

"Consensual Relationship" means any romantic, physically intimate, or sexual relationship, including marriage and civil unions. The consensual relationship may be ongoing, or it may have ended before the instructor/student relationship began; either way, a potential conflict of interest exists and must be reported.

