

**Mohawk Valley Community College  
2030 Sexual/Romantic Relationships**

<b>Policy Name:</b>	2030 Sexual/Romantic Relationships
<b>Issued:</b>	06.24.19
<b>Revision Date:</b>	12.15.25
<b>Responsible Office:</b>	Human Resources

**Policy Statement:**

Sexual or romantic relationships between Mohawk Valley Community College officers, employees, and students, often result in a loss of objectivity, and further create a conflict of interest in any evaluative, supervisory, instructional or other professional role because of the unequal power dynamic.

Romantic or sexual relationships between Mohawk Valley Community College officers/employees and currently enrolled students are strictly prohibited, regardless of consent, disclosure, or the presence of a direct supervisory or instructional relationship. This policy is in accordance with SUNY policy and reflects the power imbalance inherent in such relationships, which may compromise academic integrity, trust, and institutional credibility.

Sexual or romantic relationships between employees, or between employees and others over whom they have, or might reasonably be expected to have, an evaluative, supervisory, or instructional relationship are also prohibited unless the relationship is disclosed within five (5) business days of its inception to the appropriate authorities so that remedial actions may be taken and alternate arrangements put in place.

**Definitions:**

“Officer/Employee” means any officer, board member, panel member, employee, staff, faculty, instructor, professor, lecturer, agent, volunteer or other person providing oversight, instruction, or services to, or on behalf of, on an affiliated basis with, or at Mohawk Valley Community College. For purposes of this policy, the term “officer” refers to institutional officers (e.g., trustees or board members) and does not refer to public safety officers or campus security personnel.

“Professional Responsibility” for a student is defined herein as a level of responsibility that includes but is not limited to: any academic matters including teaching, counseling, grading, advising, evaluating, hiring, supervision, coaching, making decisions or recommendations that confer benefits such as admissions, registration, financial aid, awards, remuneration, or other academic opportunities.

“Sexual or Romantic Relationship” means any intimate, sexual, or amorous relationship. A single sexual encounter is considered a sexual relationship under this policy. A relationship need not to

include physical intimacy for a romantic relationship to exist, and the behaviors of the individuals extend beyond the reasonable boundaries of a collegial or professional relationship.

“Student” means persons currently enrolled in college credit or non-credit courses at Mohawk Valley Community College, whether full or part-time, including those in continuing education, workforce development, or adult education programs, or who have been admitted and registered for the upcoming academic term. The status of student no longer exists upon graduation, withdrawal, or discharge from the institution or any administrative revocation of student standing.

“Supervising an Officer/Employee” means the act of overseeing another officer or employee, and includes but is not limited to interviewing, hiring, evaluating, assigning work, making decisions or recommendations that confer benefits or discipline, or performing any other functions where it might be reasonably inferred that a person has the ability to influence the employment related outcomes for the officer or employee.

### **Context:**

Existing or pre-existing sexual or romantic relationships between any officer/Employee and any student are prohibited (unless the parties were married or in a pre-existing romantic relationship before the person became a student). Such relationships are more likely than other relationships to exploit the student vulnerability and carry the potential of coercion. Moreover, conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest may arise when an Officer/Employee evaluates the work or makes personal or academic decisions with respect to a student with whom he or she is in a romantic relationship. Should the relationship end in a non-amicable manner, the relationship may lead to charges of, and possible liability for, sexual misconduct. Furthermore, even if the relationship continues and thrives, issues may arise that can call into question the credibility of the evaluative and grading used with respect to the student in question, which may result in questions of accuracy concerning the grade received.

These concerns also extend to relationships involving supervisors when supervising an Officer/Employee. Even when no formal authority is exercised, the existence or perception of a power imbalance can compromise the professional environment and lead to significant ethical or legal challenges.

### **Revision History**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision Description</b>	<b>Revisions Made by:</b>
12.15.25	Revision of policy based on SUNY guidelines	Anne Nolan, Director of Compliance; Crystal Marceau, Executive Director of Human Resources