

Bard College Consensual Relations Policy

Bard College prohibits sexual, dating, or romantic relationships (“intimate relationships”) when one individual has actual or perceived power or authority over the other individual. Entering into these types of relationships may compromise freely given consent and undermine the trust and integrity that are essential to Bard’s learning and working environment. Relationships where one individual has actual or perceived power or authority over the other individual, can give rise to unconscious or perceived bias and favoritism, thereby undermining the College’s inclusive environment and intellectual climate.

Accordingly, faculty, administrators, and other employees who educate, supervise, employ, coach, or who make educational or employment decisions and/or recommendations, should understand the fundamentally unbalanced nature of the relationship and not enter into these intimate relationships. The responsibility and obligation to follow this policy falls upon the person in a position of authority and not the student or subordinate.

The following intimate relationships are prohibited at Bard:

- (i) Faculty member/instructional staff and student;
- (ii) Advisor and student;
- (iii) Administrator/Non-student staff and student;
- (iv) Coach and student-athlete; and
- (v) Dean/Supervisor/Manager and employee over whom they have supervisory control.

This is not an exhaustive list and there may be other relationships where a power differential exists, which may also violate this policy. “Student” shall mean an individual who is enrolled and/or participating in any of Bard College’s educational programs. In the context of employment at Bard, “supervisory authority” is defined as having the ability to materially impact another individual's employment. This includes, but is not limited to: hiring, promoting, managing, disciplining, scheduling, evaluating, and compensation.

Consensual intimate relationships between graduate students and faculty members not in the same degree granting program should be disclosed to the Director of Human Resources but are not necessarily prohibited. In certain instances, exemptions may be granted for intimate relationships between staff and students when it can be demonstrated that the relationship would not interfere with or compromise Bard’s learning and working environment; these relationships must be disclosed to the Director of Human Resources.

If an intimate relationship already exists - or if a relationship not previously prohibited becomes prohibited due to a change in circumstances - the person in power or authority should recuse themselves of the supervisory or academic responsibility. The relevant supervisor or Dean may, in consultation with the Director of Human Resources or the VP for Student Affairs, set reasonable conditions so that there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest, abuse of authority, exploitation, bias, and/or preferential treatment. This policy does not prohibit pre-existing relationships or joint appointments where both people are working within the same academic department. In these cases, as stated in the [Faculty Handbook](#), the College prohibits an individual from participating in activities or decisions (including, but not limited to, evaluations) that may reward or penalize another faculty member with whom they had or have a romantic or sexual relationship.

Individuals who violate this policy will be referred to the appropriate office or department at Bard. When allegations of gender-based misconduct exist, they will be addressed by [Bard's Gender-Based Misconduct Policy](#). The College may take additional steps as deemed necessary.

NOTE: This Policy is effective as of March 9, 2023. As of this date, it will be used going forward.