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Effective Date: **May 1, 2013**

**POLICY**

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**ETHICS, SAFETY, STUDENT LIFE**

# **Policy on Consensual Relationships with Students**

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RESPONSIBLE OFFICE

**Office of the University Provost**

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Boston University is committed to providing a safe, positive environment where students can securely devote their time and energy to learning, research, and other University activities. The integrity and professionalism of the teacher-student relationship is fundamental to the University's educational mission. The University recognizes that relationships may develop between individuals teaching or working at the University and students, and this Policy addresses the propriety of those relationships.

Nothing in this Policy limits or alters the [University's Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Policy](#) or its [Workplace Violence Prevention Policy](#).

A student or any other member of the community may lodge a complaint of sexual harassment with the Dean of Students or with the Executive Director of the Equal Opportunity Office (who also functions as the University's Title IX Coordinator). This policy applies broadly to all "affiliates" who engage in "supervision" over "students" (all as defined below).

**“Affiliates”** includes, but is not limited to University faculty, graduate and professional students, postdoctoral fellows and associates, coaches and athletic trainers, resident assistants, residence hall directors, academic advisors, teaching assistants, graders, and University staff and volunteers who supervise students.

**“Student”** includes all those enrolled in any and all educational and training programs of the University.

**“Supervision”** means a context that involves instruction, evaluation, or supervision, direct or indirect, of a student’s academic work or participation in University programs, housing, activities, or employment.

A consensual romantic or sexual relationship between an affiliate and a student over whom the affiliate has supervision may undermine the integrity of the educational process and adversely affect the learning and living environment for the student in the relationship and for other students. The risks associated with relationships between an affiliate and a student include conflicts of interest, perceptions of undue advantage, and the potential for abuse of the inherent power differential. Therefore, Boston University’s policy is that no affiliate shall supervise a student with whom the affiliate has a consensual romantic or sexual relationship.

Affiliates should avoid supervising any student with whom the affiliate has had a romantic or sexual relationship in the past. Affiliates also should avoid entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with any student over whom the affiliate reasonably expects to exercise supervisory authority in the future. All affiliates who are not students should avoid entering into romantic or sexual relationships with undergraduate students, regardless of whether or not they exercise supervision over a particular student.

Any affiliate who has questions about this policy or a relationship with a particular student must promptly contact his or her supervisor, dean, or department chair, who will implement a management plan, as appropriate. Supervisors, deans and department chairs are encouraged to consult with the Executive Director of the Equal Opportunity Office about these issues. A management plan may involve, for example, identifying a different faculty advisor for a particular student. A student or any other member of the community may report any suspected violation of this policy to his or her dean or department head, or to the Dean of Students or the Executive Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity. The University may take disciplinary action against any affiliate who engages in a relationship or supervises a student in a manner

inconsistent with this policy. The disciplinary action will depend on the particular circumstances of the violation and may include a written reprimand, suspension of relevant responsibilities, such as teaching or advising, or termination of employment.

Schools, colleges or departments may have more restrictive policies.

## **Additional Resources**

[Equal Opportunity Office](#) – 617-358-1796

The Equal Opportunity Office works to promote and realize Boston University's commitment to equal opportunity and affirmative action. We strive to ensure that equal opportunity is a reality at Boston University, that our faculty, staff, and students can work and study in an environment free of unlawful harassment and discrimination, and that the University meets its obligations under federal and state equal opportunity and affirmative action laws and regulations. Students, staff and faculty from both campuses are encouraged to contact the Equal Opportunity Office with any questions concerning this policy.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) – 617-358-5960 (Charles River Campus); 617-638-7645 (Medical Campus)

The Office of the Ombuds is an independent, impartial, informal problem-solving resource serving faculty, staff, and students on the Charles River and Medical Campus. The Office maintains strict confidentiality, and provides a safe place for you to have off-the-record conversations on issues related to life, work, or study at Boston University.

[Dean of Students](#) – 617-353-4126

The mission of the Dean of Students and the Division of Student Affairs is to enhance the quality, character, and perspectives of our students. Through its many orientation, mentoring, and counseling programs, the Division promotes an environment that encourages intellectual exchange and individual expression.

[BUSM Student Affairs](#) – 617-638-4166

The mission of the Office of Student Affairs at Boston University School of Medicine is to guide medical students through their education at the School of Medicine; facilitate an environment conducive to learning and the professional development of compassionate physicians; ensure that all requirements for promotion and graduation are met, and that the standards of student performance meet the highest quality of medical education; promote the development of skills for lifelong learning and respect for patients and colleagues; proactively anticipate and address awareness and sensitivity to other cultures, religions, and beliefs; and create a summative experience at Boston University School of Medicine that alumni will reflect upon with pride and gratitude.

[Boston University Student Health Services](#) or 617-353-3575

[Boston University Faculty and Staff Assistance](#) or 617 – 353 – 5381

[Boston University Crisis Counselor](#)

Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Center (SARP), 930 Commonwealth Avenue,  
1st Floor, Boston, MA 02215

24/7 on-call counselor: 617-353-SARP (7277)

Marsh Chapel

617-353-3560

[Website](http://www.bu.edu/chapel) [www.bu.edu/chapel](http://www.bu.edu/chapel)

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END OF POLICY TEXT

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## Additional Resources Regarding This Policy

### Related BU Policies

- [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Policy on Consensual Relationships with Students](#)

- [Code of Ethical Conduct](#)

Categories: Ethics, Faculty Handbook: Ethics and Activities, Safety, Safety and Safe Environments, Sexual Misconduct, Student Life, University Policies Affecting Student Life, Workplace Keywords: agree, mutual