

Related Persons as Students

In order to protect both faculty and students from the reality and appearance of a conflict of interest, the following policy outlines a mechanism to ensure the maintenance of academic integrity in cases where faculty members become responsible for the academic evaluation of related persons, including spouses, domestic partners, children, or other relatives.

Students should avoid enrolling in classes taught by their spouse, domestic partner, parent, or relative wherever possible. In small departments and programs or in highly specialized courses, avoidance of related persons as faculty in course selection may not be possible. In those cases in which a faculty member teaches a class in which a related person is enrolled, the faculty member should request another member of the department or program to oversee the evaluation process of that student. Such oversight includes reviewing the work of the student being evaluated and comparable work by one or more other students in the class. Only in rare exceptions will faculty be permitted to work one-on-one with students who are related on honors theses, mater's theses, independent study, and award selections. Faculty are not permitted to serve as the main academic adviser to a student who is a relative. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Dean of the college.

Faculty members are encouraged to avail themselves of this mechanism in other instances of real or perceived conflict of interest, involving students who are close personal friends or persons with whom the faculty member is in conflict. The purpose of having the mechanism of another faculty member oversee the evaluation process of any student is to protect the faculty member and student from the appearance of bias and to maintain the integrity of the academic experience.