



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY

Page 1 of 2

Human Resources  
NEPOTISM AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Adopted: September 10, 1971

Amended: September 10, 1993; December 11, 1998; November 10, 2005

NEPOTISM AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

**SECTION I. SCOPE.**

This policy governs conflicts of interest that may arise due to personal relationships among members of the University of Minnesota (University) community.

**SECTION II. DEFINITIONS.**

**Subd. 1. Nepotism.** *Nepotism* shall mean actions by a University member that directly influence the University employment (e.g., hiring, promotion, supervision, evaluation, and determination of salary) or academic progress (e.g., grading and advising) of any other University member with whom he or she has a personal relationship.

**Subd. 2. Personal Relationship.** *Personal relationship* shall mean a marital or other committed relationship, significant familial relationship, or consensual sexual or romantic relationship.

**Subd. 3. Member of the University Community.** *Member of the University community (University member)* shall mean any University faculty member, staff member, student, or other individual engaged in any University activity or program.

**SECTION III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES.**

(a) Nepotism is prohibited.

(b) Faculty members and advisors are cautioned that personal relationships with current students are unwise and may violate other University policies, even when activities prohibited by this policy have been avoided. This caution is based on the following:

- (i) the trust accorded to faculty members and advisors by students;
- (ii) the power disparity inherent in academic associations;
- (iii) the difficulty of making alternative arrangements for grading and evaluation;
- (iv) the risk of real or perceived favoritism toward the student in the personal relationship; and
- (v) the potential harm to the student and other students.



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY

Page 2 of 2

Human Resources  
NEPOTISM AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Adopted: September 10, 1971

Amended: September 10, 1993; December 11,  
1998; November 10, 2005

**SECTION IV. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY.**

Administration of this policy by the president or delegate shall include the following:

**Subd. 1. Consultation.** Consultation shall be mandatory for University members who are or will be in a position to engage in activity prohibited by this policy. Such consultation shall ensure that:

- (a) appropriate steps are taken to avoid the prohibited activity;
- (b) steps taken do not unreasonably disadvantage either University member;
- (c) the consultation is with an appropriate administrator; and
- (d) appropriate confidentiality is maintained.

**Subd. 2. Compliance.** Compliance may be achieved either by structuring the conditions of the employment or academic association of the related parties to avoid or eliminate prohibited activities or by avoiding the personal relationship that may lead to prohibited activities. Such structuring shall occur after appropriate consultation and shall not unreasonably disadvantage either University member.

**Subd. 3. Protection of Subordinate Interests.** When a power disparity exists in the employment or academic association of the individuals in the personal relationship, the employment or academic interests of the subordinate must be protected when structuring the association to avoid a prohibited activity.

**Subd. 4. Exceptions.** In unusual circumstances, an exception may be granted when eliminating a prohibited activity would unreasonably disadvantage one or both of the University members involved in a personal relationship. In the event that an exception is granted, safeguards must be implemented to ensure that any subsequent employment or academic decisions are made impartially.

**Subd. 5. Exclusion.** This policy does not prohibit noncompetitive appointments of spouses and partners otherwise authorized by University policy.

**Subd. 6. Disciplinary Action.** Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or academic dismissal. Participation in and adherence to the consultation process may mitigate disciplinary action.