

Academic Affairs Manual (ACD)

ACD 515: Nepotism

Effective: 4/1/1980

Revised: 11/1/2019

Purpose

To describe employment and instructional matters as they relate to supervision of relatives

Sources

Arizona Revised Statutes § 38–481

Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual - 6–704

Office of the Provost of the University

Applicability

Faculty

Academic professionals

Policy

Persons related to each other may be employed at the university, including the same department or unit. Each individual must be hired on his or her own merits and not because the individual is related to a person whom the university wishes to recruit. Hiring officials must determine that both individuals are qualified and suitable hires for the university. Similarly, there is no prohibition against relatives of faculty members or academic professionals being enrolled as students at the university.

However, no employee of the university may hire, appoint, review, supervise, direct, promote, or participate in decisions involving hire, renewal, retention, supervision, promotion, evaluation, instruction, or compensation of a [relative](#), or a member of the employee's established household, or a person with whom the employee is in a romantic or sexual relationship (referred to collectively as "relative").

Relatives Who Are Recommended for Hire Independently

If both individuals are recommended as finalists in independent searches, by search committees for example, for regularly advertised positions, and the hiring officials agree with the recommendations, the individuals may be hired. If one of the individuals will be in a position to appoint, renew, direct, supervise, evaluate, recommend for promotion, or influence compensation of a relative, the "Supervision of Relatives," below, must be followed.

An Applicant Is Recommended and His or Her Spouse or Another Relative Desires University Employment

If an individual is a recommended finalist for a position and the [applicant's](#) relative desires university employment, and the university has an available position for which the relative is qualified, a waiver of advertising for the second position

must be approved by the Office of Human Resources or the Office of the Provost of the University, as may be appropriate to the employment category. Faculty candidates seeking tenure and/or promotion through this hire will be reviewed through the expedited review in accord with [ACD 506–04](#), “Tenure” and/or [ACD 506–05](#), “Faculty Promotion.” Academic professionals seeking continuing appointment and/or promotion will be reviewed through the expedited review in accord with [ACD 507–06](#), “Continuing Appointment for Academic Professionals,” or [ACD 507–07](#), “Academic Professional Promotion.”

The chair/director/head of the unit that will hire the relative must be consulted regardless of whether or not the line and the funding will be provided by central administration, a dean or director’s office, or the unit. Before an offer letter is approved by the dean and Office of the Provost of the University (as appropriate), the letter must be accompanied by documentation from the chair/director/head of the hiring unit describing the credential evaluation process for the candidate and providing a recommendation for the hire.

Relatives of Employees Who Desire University Employment

Individuals who are related to current university [employees](#) may apply for and be considered without prejudice for any advertised positions at ASU. However, any ASU employee who is a relative of the applicant cannot participate in any aspect of the hiring process.

Supervision or Instruction of Relatives

The instruction, employment, and supervision of staff members involves:

1. key personnel decisions on initial [appointment](#), hire, renewal, or continuation of appointment, retention, probationary review, annual and other performance evaluations, evaluation for promotion, salary determination, and merit or other salary adjustment, or for instruction, participation in decisions determining admission, enrollment, assignments, or grades, or having the relative as a student in their specific course (see “Key Decisions,” below). Students who may require a course taught by their relative will have to alert the appropriate chair or director who will make alternative arrangements for the student.

and
2. the day-to-day decisions such as work assignments, office space, travel, and other benefits (see “Day-to-Day Assignments,” below).

Key Decisions

An employee cannot participate in [key decisions](#) involving a relative who is a university employee or student. The responsibility for key decisions must be assigned to another individual who is higher in administrative rank than either relative (an [alternate administrator](#)). In some cases, it may be necessary to assign the responsibility to someone of an equal rank (e.g., another dean, director, chair, or coordinator), but the responsibility for key decisions cannot be given to someone whose own evaluation will be supervised by one of the relatives.

The arrangement must be put in writing and placed in the personnel file of each relative. The appropriate dean or director is responsible for establishing administrative review and for responding to complaints or concerns about the review process. If a dean, director, or [vice president](#) is one of the related family members, then the provost of the university or the [president](#) (if the provost of the university is one of the related family members) will be responsible for arranging alternate administrative review.

Day-to-Day Assignments

[Day-to-day assignments](#) normally will be handled by the person assigned such responsibilities (the [supervising administrator](#)) whether or not he or she is a relative of an individual who is subject to such assignments except for matters involving instruction where the relative is a student. The alternate administrator should do periodic monitoring to avoid either actual or perceived biases. Individuals perceiving a conflict of interest or bias may discuss it with the alternate administrator. The identity of the alternate administrator may be obtained from the supervisor of the higher ranking family member. If the alternate administrator agrees that there is a problem, he or she should consult with the dean, director, or vice president about how to remedy the situation. If a dean, director, or vice president is one of the relatives, then the alternate administrator should consult with the provost of the university or the president (if the provost is the relative). If a satisfactory solution is not provided, a complaining party may file a grievance.

Cross-References

For further information, see:

1. [ACD 509–02](#), “Grievance Policy for Faculty”
and
2. [ACD 509–03](#), “Grievance Policy for Academic Professionals.”