

Staff Personnel Manual (SPP)

SPP 205: Nepotism and Relationships Between Employees

Effective: 4/1/1980

Revised: 12/23/2024

Purpose

To provide procedures for the employment and supervision of relatives as employees

Sources

Arizona Revised Statutes § 38–481

Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual - 6-704

University policy

Applicability

All regular [classified employees](#), [university staff](#), and [non-faculty administrators](#)

Policy

Persons related to each other may be employed at the university, including the same [department](#) or unit. Individuals must be hired on their own merits and not because the individual is related to a person that the university wishes to recruit. Hiring officials must determine that both individuals are qualified and suitable hires for the university.

However, no employee of the university may hire, review, supervise, direct, discipline, promote, influence, or participate in decisions involving hire, retention, supervision, promotion, evaluation, or compensation of a relative or member of the employee's established household, or a person with whom the employee is in a romantic or sexual relationship (also referred to as "relative" in this policy).

Note: Per this policy, a relative is defined as a parent, step-parent, parent-in-law, brother, step-brother, sister, step-sister, spouse, son, step-son, daughter, step-daughter, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, great-grandparent, grandchild, great-grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or cousin. This policy also applies to individuals in a romantic or sexual relationship, and members of the same household.

Hiring

Relatives Who Are Recommended for Hire Independently

If both individuals are recommended as finalists in independent searches 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 direct, supervise, evaluate, discipline, and/or recommend for promotion, or influence compensation of a relative, the procedures listed under "[Supervision](#)" must be followed.

An Applicant Is Recommended and His or Her Spouse or Another Relative (“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 recruitment for the second position must be obtained from the Office of Human Resources Business Partners.

The head of the unit or department 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. If offer letters are given, they must be accompanied by written documentation from the appropriate dean, director, chair, or coordinator of the unit in which the relative is being hired. This documentation must describe the process of evaluating the credentials of the candidate and must provide a recommendation from the unit head.

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 related to the applicant cannot participate in or influence any aspect of the hiring process. Examples of this would include contacting OHR Talent Acquisition or the hiring manager on behalf of the applicant.

Supervision

The employment and supervision of employees involves:

1. key personnel decisions on hire, retention, annual, and other performance evaluations; evaluation for promotion or discipline; salary determination, merit, or other salary adjustment
and
2. the [day-to-day decisions](#) such as work assignments, office space, travel, and other benefits.

Key Decisions

An employee cannot participate in key decisions involving a relative who is a university employee. 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 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. 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 president (if the provost is the relative).