

**SUBPART 8-7**  
**EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT DIGNITY**

**Sec. 8-701. Employee and Student Dignity.** The University expects all students and employees to conduct themselves with dignity and respect for students, employees and others. It is each individual's responsibility to behave in a civil manner and to make responsible choices about the manner in which they conduct themselves. Harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, racial harassment, or harassment based upon any status protected from discrimination under the Policy on Non-Discrimination or State or federal law, is not acceptable at the University. The University does not condone or allow harassment of others, whether engaged in by students, employees, or by vendors or others doing business with the University. Harassment is the creation of a hostile or intimidating environment in which verbal or physical conduct, because of its severity or pervasiveness, is likely to significantly interfere with an individual's work or education, or adversely affect a person's living conditions. It is the responsibility of the President or his/her designee, to establish and administer University policy to support this principle.

*Prior Board Action:*

May 8, 2015.

**Sec. 8-702. Prohibited Romantic Relationships.** Ferris State University is committed to maintaining an academic and work environment (including associated teaching, research, working, and athletic environments) free from conflicts of interest, favoritism, and exploitation. It is expected that employees interact with students in a manner that is professional and appropriate and avoid conduct towards students that is unprofessional or inappropriate. All employees must recognize and maintain professional boundaries, and protect the interests of students. In order to reduce the risk of undermining the University's mission, this policy sets forth specific limitations on romantic relationships and/or sexual interactions between staff, faculty, coaches, affiliates, students, and student employees at Ferris State University.

Romantic relationships and/or sexual interactions, even when consensual, must not put at risk the fundamental interest of any member of the University community to participate in University activities free from conflicts of interests, favoritism, and/or exploitation. Considering the potential for exploitation and/or favoritism where differences in authority exist, romantic relationships and/or sexual interactions are prohibited between the following:

- (1) Employees (excluding student employees) with undergraduate students.
- (2) Employees (including student employees) with other employees and students over whom there exists a position of authority.
- (3) Faculty and staff members who work within an academic unit or College with graduate or professional students taking or expecting to take classes within the same college.
- (4) Graduate assistants who work within an academic unit, College, University Athletics, or non-academic unit on campus with undergraduate students over whom there exists a position of authority.

(5) University affiliates with graduate, professional, and undergraduate students employed by the University as either graduate assistants or student employees.

For definitions, exceptions, process, reporting, retaliation and further information concerning violations of this policy, see FSU-Human Resources Policies and Procedures, *Prohibited Romantic Relationships Policy*.

*Cross Reference:*

Human Resources Policies and Procedures, *Prohibited Romantic Relationships Policy*.

*Prior Board Action:*

December 18, 2020.

**Sec. 8-703. Importance of Free and Open Discussion.** Nothing in this subpart shall be construed as limiting free and open discussion of all matters, including matters of morality and public safety.

*Cross Reference:*

Subpart 5-2. Student Community Standards – General.

Subpart 7-3. Policy on Non-Discrimination.

Subpart 8-6. Sexual Assault Policy.

Business Policy, *Sexual Assault Policy*

Business Policy, *Clery Act Compliance Policy*

Business Policy, *Campus Violence and Weapons Prohibition*

Student Affairs Policy, *Code of Student Community Standards*

Human Resources Policies and Procedures, *Employee Dignity/ Harassment/Discrimination*

Human Resources Policies and Procedures, *Consensual Relationship*

*Prior Board Action:*

Entire Subpart 8-7 included in October 19, 2001 Codification, Phase I.

Entire Subpart 8-7 included in October 22, 2004 Codification, Phase II.