



Policy Number: IV.07

Policy Level: Operating Policy

Originally Issued: November 18, 2013

Reviewed: November 10, 2017

Reviewed: January 15, 2021

Reviewed: September 17, 2024

Revised: November 11, 2024

Policy Owner: VP for Financial Affairs and Provost/VP for Academic Affairs

Policy Implementation: VP for Financial Affairs, Chief Human Resources Officer

## **Nepotism/Employment of Relatives and Familial Relationships**

### **I. Policy Statement and Purpose**

This policy governs situations that may arise due to personal relationships among members of the Athens State University community.

### **II. Definitions**

**Member of the University Community** – any university employee, student, or member of the Athens State University Board of Trustees.

**Familial Relationships** – spouse, child, step-child, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, parent, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, dependent relative or a relative domiciled in the employee's household.

**Nepotism** – actions by a member of the university community that directly influence the university employment or academic progress of any other university member with whom they have a familial relationship.

### **III. Personal Relationships and Employment**

#### **Employment of Relatives of the President or a Member of the Board of Trustees**

Pursuant to Section 41-1-5 of the Code of Alabama, the President of the University and members of the Athens State University Board of Trustees are prohibited from appointing any person related within the fourth degree of affinity or consanguinity to an employment position.



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#### **IV. Employment of Relatives of Other Employees**

Athens State University does permit the employment of qualified relatives of employees (excluding those named above) as long as employment does not place a relative in the same chain of command. Specifically, no individual will be hired as a regular, temporary, or student employee either part-time or full-time, for a position over which a member of the individual's immediate family exercises supervisory or managerial authority or is within the chain of command where influence over work responsibilities, disciplinary actions, hiring, promoting, evaluating, compensating, or terminating of the individual being hired is present.

Should a personal or familial relationship develop during employment, both parties may retain their positions, unless a direct supervisory relationship results. If any employee enters into a familial relationship as listed in this policy, one of the employees must seek transfer or a change in reporting relationship. In the case of employment relationships that would otherwise violate this policy but were in place prior to this policy's implementation, there shall be no required change provided that the University takes appropriate action to ensure that employees neither initiate nor participate in decisions involving direct benefit to the relative.

Also, the University reserves the right to refuse employment to an individual in the same unit wherein his/her relationship to a current employee has the potential for an adverse impact on supervision, safety, security, morale, or where the employment presents a clear conflict of interest.

#### **V. Disclosure of Employment of Relatives**

As part of the employment process, within 15 calendar days of employment, an individual accepting employment at the University must complete the *Family Relationship Disclosure Form*. A copy of the completed form will be provided to the President of the University. The President of the University, at the next meeting of the Board of Trustees, will provide a notice of such disclosure.



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## **VI. Personal Relationships and Teaching**

In order to ensure the most objective evaluation of degree-seeking students, faculty members are prohibited from teaching a course when the faculty member and a student have a familial relationship. Similarly, faculty members are prohibited from serving as a formal advisor for immediate family members.

Under extraordinary circumstances, a student may seek an exception to this policy by making a written request to the Dean of the respective college, indicating why an exception is warranted. The Dean will, in consultation with the Provost, issue the decision.

In those instances, in which an exception must be made (e.g. the course is not taught by anyone other than the faculty member) every effort must be undertaken to have the student's coursework evaluated by another faculty member.

## **VII. Responsibility for this Operating Policy**

### **Policy Owner**

As part of the initial approval of this policy by the President and subsequent to the original dissemination of the policy, the Vice President for Financial Affairs and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services is the policy owner for the ongoing evaluation, review, and approval of this policy. Subsequent reviews and revisions to this policy must be in accordance with approved operating policy procedures and processes.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or more frequently as needed by the Policy Owner. Revisions will be reviewed/affirmed by the Cabinet and approved by the University President. This policy will be updated/published in the University's Policy Library.

### **Responsibility for Policy Implementation**

The President has assigned the responsibility of implementing this policy to the Vice President for Financial Affairs and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services and the Chief Human Resources Officer.