

General Considerations: Purpose

The Academic Code of Conduct comprises one of several policy statements covering faculty rights and responsibilities.

Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty

The faculty of the American University of Armenia are entrusted with creating and maintaining the academic life of the institution. They exercise broad rights in their roles as leaders in the academic community.

- a. The faculty of the American University of Armenia has the right to freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression. See the AUA Statement on Academic Freedom.
- b. The faculty has the right to set academic standards in the classroom, to assign grades, and to govern and maintain the learning environment.
- c. The faculty has the right to determine the content of the courses that they teach, within the competencies and objectives of the curriculum, and collectively, the structure and content of the academic curriculum at the University.

These rights flow from the integrity of faculty in adhering to the central obligations of academic life and professional collegiality. These obligations encompass their roles as teachers, researchers, and as colleagues.

As teachers and researchers:

- a. The primary academic responsibilities of faculty at the American University of Armenia are to seek and to state the truth as they see it and to encourage the free pursuit of learning.
- b. As members of the academic community at AUA, faculties are expected to uphold the best scholarly and ethical standards of their disciplines.
- c. In the classroom, faculty have the responsibility to demonstrate respect for students as individuals, to protect students' rights as described in this code of conduct, and to serve as intellectual guides and counselors.
- d. AUA faculty have a special responsibility to foster honest academic conduct and to provide student evaluations based on academic criteria which honestly reflect each student's merit. A specific requirement under this standard is that any component of evaluation for class participation must be communicated clearly to students and be assigned on the basis of academic merit.
- e. Faculty must respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student, protect confidentiality of the student record, and avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students.
- f. Faculty must acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from students and protect the academic freedom of students.
- g. Faculty must respect individual political and religious belief in the classroom and in all student relations.
- h. Faculty will not discriminate against or harass colleagues.
- i. Faculty show due respect for the opinions of others, taking care to defend free expression.

Ethical Principles

The integrity of the faculty-student relationship is the foundation of the University's educational mission. This relationship vests considerable trust in the faculty member, who, in turn, bears authority and accountability as mentor, educator, and evaluator. The unequal institutional power inherent in this relationship heightens the vulnerability of the student and the potential for coercion. The pedagogical relationship between faculty member or individual with academic instructional appointment^[1] and student must be protected from influences or activities that can interfere with learning consistent with the goals and ideals of the University. Whenever a faculty member is responsible for instruction, supervision, consultation, and evaluation of a student, a personal relationship between them of a romantic or sexual nature, even if consensual, is inappropriate. Any such relationship jeopardizes the integrity of the educational process.

Types of unacceptable conduct in relation to the integrity of the faculty-student relationship include but are not limited to:

- a. Entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with any student for whom a faculty member has, or should reasonably expect to have in the future, academic responsibility (instructional, evaluative, or supervisory);
- b. Exercising academic responsibility (instructional, evaluative, or supervisory) for any student with whom a faculty member has a romantic or sexual relationship.^[2]

[1] Academic instructional appointments include but are not limited to adjunct faculty, teaching associates, teaching assistants, and visiting faculty.

[2] A sexual or romantic relationship entails any intimate, sexual, or other type of romantic or amorous relationship, whether casual or serious, one-off or recurrent, and whether or not consensual. A single sexual encounter is considered a sexual relationship under this policy, although the relationship does not have to include physical intimacy if a romantic relationship exists beyond the reasonable boundaries of a professional relationship.

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