

GRADUATE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Graduate students are expected to adhere to the ethical principles of psychologists/counselors in all domains of their professional career, including the roles of student, researcher, instructor and therapist. A statement of the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists/ACA Code of Ethics will be given to each graduate student in the UT Tyler Psychology and Counseling graduate program(s). It is also the responsibility of each graduate student to be familiar with the content of the relevant Ethical Principles/Code of Ethics, and to maintain awareness as the principles are changed or clarified by the APA/ACA, and to consult with his/her advisor and/or a trusted faculty member or administrator if they have questions or concerns about ethical issues. Each student will also be given this Graduate Student Code of Conduct and the UT Tyler Psychology and Counseling Faculty Code of Conduct, and is expected to become familiar with them. Each student will be asked to take and pass a brief quiz over these Code of Conduct policies during their first semester in the program. Some of the issues most relevant to graduate student training are discussed below. Students also need to be aware that violation of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists/Code of Ethics by a student is considered to be academic misconduct, and may lead to dismissal from the program. In a situation where different Ethical standards appear to be inconsistent, the standard that offers the strongest protection for the most vulnerable party (e.g., client, student, subordinate) is expected to be followed.

Graduate students assume a variety of roles during professional training, some of which are subordinate in nature and some of which entail influence and responsibility over others. It is important that students be aware of both their rights and their responsibilities with respect to issues of sexual harassment and dual-role relationships. Any students with questions or concerns about these issues should discuss them with their advisor, the Department Chair, or another trusted faculty member, with the assurance that confidentiality will be maintained unless we are legally required to report the information. Issues pertaining to sexual harassment, multiple relationships, and exploitation are covered in Section 3.

From the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists:

3.02 Sexual Harassment. Psychologists do not engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, that occurs in connection with the psychologist's activities or roles as a psychologist, and that either (1) is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile workplace or educational environment, and the psychologist knows or is told this or (2) is sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts.

3.05 Multiple Relations: A psychologist refrains from entering into a multiple relationship if the multiple relationship could reasonably be expected to impair the psychologist's objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her functions as a psychologist, or otherwise risks exploitation or harm to the person with whom the professional relationship exists.

3.08 Exploitation. Psychologists do not exploit persons over whom they have supervisory, evaluative, or other authority such as clients/patients, students, supervisees, research participants and employees.

From the ACA Code of Ethics:

F.10. Roles and Relationships Between Counselor Educators and Students

F.10.a. Sexual or Romantic Relationships Sexual or romantic interactions or relationships with [between faculty members and] current students are prohibited.

F.10.b. Sexual Harassment

Counselor educators do not condone or subject students to sexual harassment. (*See C.6.a.*)

F.10.c. Relationships With Former Students

Counselor educators are aware of the power differential in the relationship between faculty and students. Faculty members foster open discussions with former students when considering engaging in a social, sexual, or other intimate relationship. Faculty members discuss with the former student how their former relationship may affect the change in relationship.

F.10.d. Nonprofessional Relationships

Counselor educators avoid nonprofessional or ongoing professional relationships with students in which there is a risk of potential harm to the student or that may compromise the training experience or grades assigned. In addition, counselor educators do not accept any form of professional services, fees, commissions, reimbursement, or remuneration from a site for student or supervisee placement.

F.10.e. Counseling Services

Counselor educators do not serve as counselors to current students unless this is a brief role associated with a training experience.

F.10.f. Potentially Beneficial Relationships

Counselor educators are aware of the power differential in the relationship between faculty and students. If they believe a nonprofessional relationship with a student may be potentially beneficial to the student, they take precautions similar to those taken by counselors when working with clients. Examples of potentially beneficial interactions or relationships include, but are not limited to, attending a formal ceremony; hospital visits; providing support during a stressful event; or mutual membership in a professional association, organization, or community. Counselor educators engage in open discussions with students when they consider entering into relationships with students outside of their roles as teachers and supervisors. They discuss with students the rationale for such interactions, the potential benefits and drawbacks, and the anticipated consequences for the student. Educators clarify the specific nature and limitations of the additional role(s) they will have with the student prior to engaging in a nonprofessional relationship. Nonprofessional relationships with students should be time-limited and initiated with student consent.

The Department of Psychology and Counseling endorses these professional ethical principles and considers that they apply to faculty, graduate students and undergraduates in positions of responsibility over others in the department.

We recognize that a power differential exists and is inherent between faculty and students and we will make every effort to eliminate real, implied, or perceived biases. We as a faculty agree to engage in relationships that are for the professional benefit of students. We also recognize that inappropriate social relationships between faculty/students, faculty/faculty, and student/student can adversely affect students, faculty and the reputation of the Department and University.

Students will demonstrate professional and appropriate behavior in relation to other students and faculty. This includes avoiding gossip, negative comments/criticisms, whether verbal, written or electronic, to other students or faculty regarding other students or faculty members. Further guidance about how to communicate professionally are provided at: <http://www.uttyler.edu/psychology/documents/Communicating%20Compliments%20&%20Concerns%20Effectively.pdf>

Students shall not engage in social relationships **such as mutually beneficial friendships or romantic relationships** with faculty members who have or will likely have evaluative role(s) in relation to the student. (i.e., comps, yearly student evaluations, course work). A faculty member should reasonably expect to have in the future academic responsibility (instructional, evaluative, or supervisory) for (1) students whose academic program will require them to enroll in a course taught by the faculty member, (2) students known to the faculty member to have an interest in an academic area within the faculty member's academic expertise, or (3) any student for whom a faculty member must have academic responsibility

(instructional, evaluative, or supervisory) in the pursuit of a degree. Graduate students in a professional role (e.g., GTA, GRA) with responsibilities for other subordinate students (e.g., undergraduate students) shall not engage in social relationships, **such as mutually beneficial friendships or romantic relationships** with other students over whom they have an evaluative or instructional role.

The University policy prohibiting sexual harassment states:

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1972, and the Texas Commission on Human Rights Act, Article 5221k, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes, and it is illegal, and actionable under civil and criminal law.

Persons affected: This policy applies to all University administrators, faculty, staff, students, visitors and applicants for employment or admission. It applies not only to unwelcome conduct that violates state and federal laws concerning sexual harassment but also to inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature. It is also applicable regardless of the gender of the complainant or the alleged harasser.

C. Definitions

1. **Sexual Misconduct**. Sexual misconduct includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed towards another individual that does not rise to the level of sexual harassment but is unprofessional and inappropriate for the workplace or classroom.
2. **Sexual Harassment**. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
 - a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or student status;
 - b. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or academic decisions affecting that individual; or
 - c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance as an administrator, faculty member, staff or student, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
3. **Examples**. Examples of behavior that could be considered sexual misconduct or sexual harassment include but are not limited to:
 - a. physical contact of a sexual nature including touching, patting, hugging, or brushing against a person's body;
 - b. explicit or implicit propositions or offers to engage in sexual activity;
 - c. comments of a sexual nature including sexually explicit statements, questions, jokes or anecdotes; remarks of a sexual nature about a person's clothing or body; remarks about sexual activity; speculation about sexual experience;
 - d. exposure to sexually oriented graffiti, pictures, posters, or materials; and/or
 - e. physical interference with or restriction of an individual's movements.

D. Policy and Procedures

Consensual Relationships

Every consenting romantic and sexual relationship between a faculty member and a student or between supervisor and employee may potentially evolve into a sexual harassment case with serious implications, either from a subsequent change of attitude by the parties involved or from a contemporary complaint from a disadvantaged third party. Faculty members exercise power over students, as do supervisors over employees, whether in evaluating them, making recommendations for their promotion or future employment, or conferring other benefits. Others may be adversely affected by the relationship in that it places the faculty member or supervisor in a position to favor or advance one student or employee's interest at the expense of others.

As provided in the American Association of University Professors policy on consensual relationships, faculty are expected to be aware of their professional responsibilities in their relationships with students and "avoid apparent or actual

conflict of interest, favoritism, or bias.” These relationships are viewed as damaging to the University environment and therefore are strongly discouraged.

Complaints concerning consensual relationships by non-participating individuals will be treated as third-party sexual harassment or sexual misconduct complaints.

Sexual harassment is an unlawful employment practice, and is contrary to the University's equal opportunity and nondiscrimination policy. Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other sexually degrading verbal or physical conduct constitutes sexual harassment. Courteous, mutually respectful, non-coercive interaction between two people that is acceptable to both parties is not considered to be sexual harassment. University policy requires that all employees and students share the responsibility for assuring that sexual harassment does not take place, and that the working and educational environment of the University is not sexually intimidating, hostile, or offensive to individuals on campus. Anyone who feels that there has been a violation of this policy has the right, and is encouraged, to discuss their complaint with the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. That office can also provide additional information about what types of behavior constitute sexual harassment.

(UT Tyler HANDBOOK OF OPERATING PROCEDURES)

Plagiarism

Plagiarism consists of any attempt to present as one's own the ideas or work of another. The department considers such behavior unethical and unprofessional. Evidence of plagiarism should be reported to the course instructor and/or Department Chair. In many cases, however, it is perfectly acceptable for students to form study groups or work together in preparing for exams. Students should consult with the course instructor if they are uncertain about the acceptability of such study groups.

Confidentiality

Principle 5 of the APA Ethical Principles states that psychologists have a primary obligation to respect the confidentiality of information obtained from persons in the course of their work as psychologists. The principle of confidentiality applies to information gained in clinical or consulting relationships, in departmental committee work, and in research settings. With regard to research, students should establish a means of maintaining confidentiality in storing and disposing of data (with IRB approval) and in reporting research results. Confidential information (including lists of research participants, or participants and their code numbers) should not be stored on a computer available to others, including unauthorized use by others (e.g., “hackers”).

Publication Credit

APA Principle 6.23/ACA Principle G.5. address issues concerning authorship credit on multiple co-authored papers. Discussion regarding authorship credit and order should routinely occur amongst authors when beginning research projects and working on articles. Please note that principle c states that "A student is usually listed as principal author on any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on the student's dissertation or thesis." Authorship order, however, may sometimes need to be changed as authors assume more or less responsibility on revisions of manuscripts (see article by Fine and Kurdek in American Psychologist, November 1993 and “Get the Credit you Deserve” in gradPSYCH January 2006).