



## POLICY

Title: Ethics	Code: C0700
Authority: Board Minutes, 9/16/81; 11/22/94; 9/25/07	Original Adoption: 09/16/81
	Last Revised: 08/15/25
	Reviewed: 2025
	Effective: 10/01/2025

### BACKGROUND

Milwaukee Area Technical College's Code of Ethics policy applies to all MATC employees. It is MATC's commitment that our actions will be conducted in accordance with the highest moral, legal, and ethical standards.

Our integrity is one of our most valuable assets, and every employee contributes to upholding this standard. A reputation built over years can be significantly damaged by one person's inappropriate actions. While this policy provides guidance to help strengthen MATC's reputation, we recognize that no written code can replace the thoughtful judgment of our employees, whose daily decisions are crucial to maintaining our standing in the community.

Nothing in this policy shall deny the rights of an employee under the Constitutions of the United States, and of this state, and the Wisconsin Statutes or any other laws of this state.

In addition to this Ethics Policy, the College Board has also approved a Conflict of Interest Policy (C0700-1), which is a sub-policy of this policy.

### Definitions

For purposes of this policy:

- 1) **Family:** any family member by blood or marriage up to and including the level of first cousin, corresponding "step" relationships or any individual with whom an employee has a close personal relationship such as domestic partner, co-habitant, significant other, or any other person residing in an employee's household.
- 2) **Violence Against Women Act:** creates and supports comprehensive, cost-effective responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.
- 3) **Consensual Relationship:** a romantic or sexual relationship that both parties have entered willingly
- 4) **Authority:** supervisory, advisory, evaluative, or other power or influence over another person
- 5) **Partner/Affiliate Group:** any organization, entity, or association other than MATC in which an employee has a personal or professional interest, or which they are formally or informally associated with.



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## Policy

It is essential that each employee abide by the following principles:

1. Carry out in good faith and with due diligence all policies and regulations established by the college Board and all procedures established by the administration.
2. Treat everyone with respect and in alignment with the College's WE CARE standards.
3. Engage honestly and fairly.
4. Abide by all laws and regulations including Wisconsin's Code of Ethics for Local Government Officials and Employees as set forth in **Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 19, Subchapter III**, as applicable.
5. Use all institutional resources, including but not limited to, educational technology, video conferencing, and generative AI tools, responsibly to support academic and professional work while respecting the intellectual property of the college and others, and upholding standards of integrity, data privacy, and security.
6. Observe high moral and ethical standards in fulfillment of job responsibilities. In the case of faculty, staff and administrators who are required to maintain professional affiliations or certifications as part of their jobs, the College expects these faculty, staff and administrators to:
  - Follow and uphold their specific professional code of ethics
  - Meet all requirements of state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to their education and certification
  - Meet all regulations of the Wisconsin Technical College System Board (WTCSB), the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Education and the Higher Learning Commission or any successor entities.
7. Provide a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written or verbal intimidation, slander or harassment.
8. Accept the responsibility to protect children under the age of 18 from all forms of abuse and report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the state authorities.

### I. Romantic or Sexual Relationships

There are inherent risks in any romantic or sexual relationship between individuals in unequal positions (such as faculty and student, supervisor and employee). The relationship may be less consensual than the person who has greater power perceives and may therefore be exploitative in nature. The relationship also may be viewed in different ways by each of the parties, particularly in retrospect. Furthermore, circumstances may change, and conduct that was previously welcome may become unwelcome.

Even when both parties have consented at the outset to a romantic or sexual involvement, this past consent may not remove grounds for a later charge of a violation of applicable College policy.



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The college does not wish to interfere with private choices regarding personal relationships when these relationships do not interfere with the goals and policies of the College. For the personal protection of members of this community, relationships of a romantic or sexual nature in which power differentials are inherent (employee-student, supervisor-staff) **are violations** of this policy.

Any consensual relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate, or an employee and a student, must be immediately reported to both the employee's direct supervisor and Human Resources. If the direct supervisor is in the relationship, it needs to be reported to their supervisor instead. The supervisor in consultation with Human Resources will determine, on a case-by-case basis what, if any, action will be taken by the college. These reports will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Failure to report romantic or sexual relationships of this nature will result in discipline, up to and including termination.

A. In general, the following types of Relationships between Employees and Students are a violation of this policy:

1. **Faculty Member and Student:** Consensual romantic or sexual relationships initiated by a faculty member with a student who is currently enrolled in their course or who the instructor reasonably anticipates may be enrolled in their course(s) in the future;
2. **Pre-existing Relationship:** Failure to disclose that a faculty member is already engaged in a consensual or romantic relationship with a student when the student enrolls in the faculty member's course, the faculty member must immediately disclose the relationship to their supervisor/department chair/dean or Human Resources and must fully cooperate in any actions taken to resolve the conflict;
3. **Other Employee and Student, or Pre-existing Instructor-Student Relationship:** A consensual romantic or sexual relationship between:
  - a) An employee (who is not the student's instructor) and a student over whom the employee has supervisory, advisory, evaluative, or other authority or influence; or
  - b) An instructor and a student where the instructor has supervisory, advisory, evaluative, or other authority or influence over the student, and the relationship began before the student came under the instructor's authority;



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B. In general, the following types of Relationships between Supervisors and Employees are a violation of this policy:

1. **Relationships with Power Imbalance:** A consensual romantic or sexual relationship between two employees is a violation of this policy if one employee has supervisory, advisory, evaluative, or other authority or influence over the other, or if the employee reasonably believes they will have such authority in the future.
2. **Former Relationships:** If an employee has engaged in and terminated a romantic or sexual relationship with another employee, such relationship shall be deemed a violation of this policy if one or both employees have obtained restraining orders that prevent the other employee from contacting them or there is evidence of a situation that violates the Violence Against Women's Act.

## II. Political Activities

In general, the following political activities are prohibited:

1. Using governmental authority to interfere with or affect nomination or election for any public office or position within any political party.
2. Using governmental authority or influence to intimidate, threaten or coerce any person to vote contrary to their own voluntary choosing.
3. Using governmental authority to directly or indirectly intimidate, threaten or coerce any person to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value, including services, to any party, organization, group, or individual for political purposes.
4. Using any governmental authority or influence to coerce any individual or group for political action or to confer benefits or effect reprisals to secure desired political action or inaction.
5. Soliciting or receiving subscriptions or contributions for any partisan political purpose while on college time while in a building, office or room occupied for any purpose by the college.
6. Using your official position at the College to advance a personal political agenda, rather than acting in the College's best interests.

## III. Confidential Information

1. No employee shall use confidential information gained in the course of or by reason of their public position or official duties solely for either financial or non- financial private gain.
2. No employee may exploit their position with the college or confidential information gained through their employment with the college, for the benefit of family members or friends in seeking employment with the college or other remuneration.



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#### IV. Financial Matters

1. Employees shall not, in their capacity as employees, make an entry in an account or record book or application, certificate, report, or statement, which is intentionally falsified.
2. Employees shall not engage in any external activity or programming, where the employee selects MATC to work in partnership with an external entity and also is the beneficiary, **or family member of the beneficiary**, of such selection through payments from MATC to support the external programming.

#### PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS

Any employee who violates this policy, shall be subject to appropriate discipline including discharge.

Those employees whose conduct is governed by the State of Wisconsin Ethics Board in addition to action by the college Board, could be sanctioned by the State of Wisconsin Ethics Board.

Office of Responsibility: Office of General Counsel