

Anti-Nepotism/Family Relationships Policy

SUNY Cortland upholds the standards set forth in New York Public Officers Law. Under no circumstances will the College allow an employee or student to report to another employee who is to be considered a relative. Family relationships between a faculty member and a student, or between members of the College community other than students, can present a conflict of interest in violation of the New York Public Officers Law. There can be a conflict of interest whenever one party has any position of power over the other, or when a perception of favoritism can occur. These relationships can undermine the trust upon which professional and educational relationships are built. Ethical principles preclude individuals from evaluating the work or academic performance of those with whom they have these relationships. The party with the power or status advantage may not officially approve, recommend, or vote on such approval or recommendation of, the appointment, reappointment, promotion, or salary adjustment of the other, nor may that party evaluate the performance of the other. In situations involving a student the faculty member is expected to notify their direct supervisor so that arrangements can be made to eliminate the conflict.

Definitions:

Nepotism: favoritism in the workplace based on kinship, which ordinarily consists of making employment or other business decisions based on a family relationship.

Relative: the spouse, domestic partner, anyone in a romantic relationship and, whether by blood, adoption, marriage or domestic partnership, the child, parent, grandparent, sibling, grandchild, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew, or any person residing in the immediate household (or the household of the spouse or domestic partner of any of these relatives) of the University employee, or his or her spouse or domestic partner, or person in a romantic relationship.

NYS Joint Commission on Public Ethics

Giving preferential treatment to a relative in the workplace may be considered nepotism. [Public Officers Law § 73](#) prohibits State employees from:

- *participating in any decision to hire, promote, discipline, or discharge a relative.*
- *awarding contracts to a relative or investing public funds in any security in which a relative has a financial interest.*

Procedures:

Questions regarding nepotism or family relationships should be brought to the Human Resources Office.