



**OPERATING POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**OP 801.43: Hiring of Friends or Relatives**

**DATE:** April 2, 2019

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to provide guidance on the responsible hiring and supervision of close friends, significant others, or relatives of current employees. The University seeks to avoid the appearance of favoritism or discrimination in its hiring practices as well as avoid or minimize the challenges of emotional overflow from personal conflicts, scheduling issues, and internal control complications that can arise from employing persons with such close relationships.

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed in April of odd-numbered years by the Director of Human Resources and the Vice President of Business and Finance/CFO.

**POLICY/PROCEDURE**

1. Averett University encourages employees to recommend their friends or relatives for a job opening at Averett University for which the person is qualified. Averett seeks to hire the best-qualified candidate for the job and does not show a special preference for Averett University employees’ friends, significant others, or relatives. Except as specified within this policy, the existence of such a relationship shall function as neither a preference nor restriction from employment provided the individual meets or exceeds the University employment qualifications. The requirements of this policy apply to all employees of the University, including student and part-time employees.
  - a. Friends or relatives referred to Averett will go through the same application process as independent candidates applying for the position. To be hired, they must meet or exceed the established qualification requirements for the position, or be among the most qualified members of the applicant pool.
  - b. The relationship between the applicant friend or relative and the employee must be disclosed no later than the time of the first-round of interviews for the position.
  - c. The phrase, “friend(s) or relative(s)” is defined as persons who are:
    - i. A spouse or domestic partner
    - ii. A person residing in the same household as the employee, regardless of relationship
    - iii. A dependent of the employee
    - iv. A person related to the employee with a close family relationship, including those established by birth, adoption, marriage (step), or fostering: children,

parents, grandparents, siblings/half-siblings, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and first cousins

- v. Significant others with whom the employee has a long-term, close relationship to include engagements and other romantic relationships
2. If the hiring manager is considering a friend or relative of an employee, as defined in paragraph 1.b., as a candidate for employment, the hiring manager must discuss the disclosed relationship with the appropriate area Vice President to determine if there is a concern or potential conflict in hiring the friend or relative. The relationship must also be disclosed on the “*Authorization to Hire*” form.
  3. If a friend or relative is hired, the University policy is the person may not work in the same department as the current Averett University employee(s) who are their friends or relatives as defined within this policy. The term, “department” is defined as having a direct reporting line between them or to work for the same manager or within one reporting level of the employee’s manager.
    - a. An example of a compliant reporting relationship would be a current employee is a faculty member in the art department and that employee’s child is hired to work in the admissions department.
    - b. An example of a noncompliant reporting relationship would be if a current employee’s manager reports to the Dean of Students and the friend or relative is applying for a position which also reports to the Dean of Students.
  4. Student-workers may not report (directly or indirectly) to a friend or relative employee
  5. Certain current employees hold positions that would be covered under this policy. All permanent employees as of the effective date of this policy are considered to be grandfathered under this policy and shall not be affected in their current positions at the University. This protection also applies to adjunct faculty members who have contracted and taught, within the most recent two years preceding the policy effective date, within departments with employee friend or relative relationships as defined in the policy.
  6. Violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary action commensurate with the severity of the offense, up to and including ineligibility for hire or termination of employment.
    - a. An applicant who fails to disclose the identity of a friend or relative employed at the University as required by this policy may be considered ineligible for employment or may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
    - b. A hiring manager who violates the policy by failing to obtain approval to make an offer of employment to an individual who has a relationship identified as requiring approval pursuant to paragraph 2 of this policy is subject to disciplinary action under this section.