

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE  
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)  
NUMBER 85)

17 AUGUST 2020

**Inappropriate Relationships Between Faculty/Staff & Cadets**

**1. Purpose**

This policy sets forth the expectations of all members of the faculty and staff of Virginia Military Institute with respect to engaging in personal relationships with cadets. It supersedes any and all policies regarding fraternization or personal relationships contained in the *Faculty Handbook*, the *Administrative and Professional Faculty Handbook*, and any other VMI policy or regulation.

**2. Definitions**

- A. Faculty/staff:** Any person currently employed by VMI or serving as a volunteer, either full-time or part-time, in any location and in any capacity. “Faculty/staff” include, but are not limited to, administrators, full-time and part-time faculty, administrative professionals, state classified employees, and hourly employees.
- B. Cadet:** Any person applying to the Institute or currently enrolled, either full-time or part-time, in any course, academic program, or athletic program associated with Virginia Military Institute.

**3. Policy**

Virginia Military Institute encourages the development of collegial and professional relationships among all members of the VMI community and is committed to a learning, training, and work environment that supports a culture of civility and respect. Inappropriate relationships between faculty/staff and cadets undermine the fundamental purpose of the Institute and disrupt the workplace and learning environment.

The relationship between faculty/staff and cadets is one of trust, and VMI holds its faculty and staff to the highest ethical and professional standards. As a matter of sound judgment and professional ethics, faculty and staff members have a responsibility to avoid any apparent, perceived, or actual conflict between their professional responsibilities and personal interests in terms of their dealings or relationships with cadets. Relationships between faculty/staff and cadets, regardless of gender, are inappropriate if they:

- Compromise or appear to compromise the integrity of supervisory authority or the chain of command
- Cause actual or reasonably perceived partiality or unfairness
- Involve, or appear to involve, the improper use of rank or position for personal gain

- Are, or are reasonably perceived to be, exploitative in nature
- Create an actual or clearly predictable adverse impact on discipline, authority, morale, or the ability of the Institute to accomplish its mission
- Are sexual, physically intimate, or romantic in nature
- Result in the violation of Cadet regulations, VMI regulations or General Orders, NCAA Rules, or federal or state law

It is important that the faculty and staff understand potential consequences of their interactions with cadets. Any questions regarding situations that could be perceived as inappropriate should be directed to the Commandant's Office, Athletic Department, Inspector General, or the Human Resources Office.

#### **4. Limitations**

Nothing in this General Order supersedes, replaces, or revokes any guidelines, requirements, or standards published in *General Order 13 – Superintendent's Statement on Equity* or *General Order 16 – Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and General Order XX - Retaliation Policy*.

#### **5. Sanctions**

If it is determined that conduct in violation of this policy has occurred, sanctions will be determined based on the faculty or staff member's employment classification and the disciplinary processes established for the classification. All such disciplinary processes may lead to discipline up to and including termination from employment.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT:

James P. Inman  
Colonel, US Army (Ret.)  
Chief of Staff