

## **Policy on hiring spouses/partners or relatives using federal research grants**

Vassar College is an affirmative action and equal opportunity employer with a strong commitment to increasing the diversity of the campus community and promoting an environment of equality, inclusion and respect for difference. The College holds to this commitment for all positions at the College, *including positions that are funded by extramural grants like federal and private research grants.*

Vassar College acknowledges that employees often refer relatives for positions at the College, especially spouses and partners of individuals who are relocating in order to accept a position at Vassar. The College encourages search committees to review applications of relatives who are qualified for particular positions, and, if appropriate, arrange an interview. The hiring process in such cases must accord with the policies of equal opportunity and affirmative action that govern all recruitment and hiring.

Vassar acknowledges that employment of relatives in the same area of an organization can cause conflicts and problems with favoritism and employee morale. In these circumstances, all parties, including supervisors, are open to charges of inequitable consideration in decisions concerning work assignments, performance evaluations, promotions, demotions, disciplinary actions, and discharge. In addition to claims of partiality in treatment at work, personal conflicts from outside the work environment can be carried into day-to-day working relationships.

It is College policy that relatives of persons currently employed by the organization may be hired only if they will not be working directly for or supervising a relative or will not be directly above the relative's immediate superior or working directly for the relative's immediate subordinate. If already employed, they cannot be transferred into such a reporting relationship. The [Faculty Handbook](#) describes a conflict of interest policy regarding faculty reviews.

A relative is defined to include spouses/domestic partners, parents, children, brothers, sisters, brothers- and sisters-in-law, fathers- and mothers-in-law, stepparents, stepsiblings, and stepchildren. This policy also applies to individuals who are not legally related but who reside with another employee.

Under exceptional circumstances, such as difficulty in finding suitable other candidates, Vassar would allow the hiring of a spouse/partner or relative of the principal investigator of a federal grant, provided the hiring process is guided by the following principles:

1. The job ad for the position is posted on the Vassar employment website, and a suitable period of time is allowed for the accumulation of applications.

2. The spouse/partner/relative application, as well as the other applications, are viewed by a committee that includes at least one individual not subject to conflict of interest.
3. Should the spouse/partner/relative applicant prove to be the best candidate for the position, arrangements should be made with the department chair for disbursement of pay and review/approval of other expenses, direct supervision, and evaluation of work performance by individual(s) not subject to conflict of interest.
4. The PI must maintain records to indicate the number of candidates screened and the number of candidates interviewed, including the number of women and members of minority groups at each stage, for each appointment. Data on all candidates, those not hired as well as those who are hired, must be kept on file and should include the application and the letters of recommendation.
5. Vassar College, as the recipient of federal funds, requires that all individuals in a potential supervisory position submit a conflict of interest form disclosing the relationship.