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## Travel Policy on Room Sharing Frequently Asked Questions

These questions and answers pertain to [Section IV.A \(Lodging Defined\)](#) of the Travel policy (Section 70) in the Manual of Business Procedures.

The policy defines two types of broad restrictions: 1) room sharing between employees and students, and 2) room sharing between supervisors and subordinates. These FAQs are organized accordingly.

This policy does not restrict the sharing of rooms between employees where a supervisory relationship does not exist (e.g., co-workers, peers). While room sharing in this circumstance is allowed, the University recommends that employees do not share a room when at all possible. As a best practice, it should be optional to share a room in this situation, but not required.

### Employee and Student

**How is “employee” defined? Does the employee definition include student employee or graduate employees?**

An employee is defined as a MSU faculty, academic staff (non-graduate student), executive manager, or support staff member (including temporary employees and on-call employees). At this time, graduate student employees and student employees are not prohibited from sharing a room with another student. However, the University is also assessing this and reserves the right to implement this additional measure.

**How does this policy apply if I am an employee and I am married or in a relationship with a student? Are they prohibited from sharing a hotel room with me?**

For faculty and academic staff:

Spouses and those meeting the definitions of [Other Eligible Individual](#) are allowed to share a room with an employee. The relationship must be in compliance with the [Consensual Amorous or Sexual Relationships policy](#).

For support staff:

Spouses and those meeting the definitions of [Other Eligible Individual](#) are allowed to share a room with an employee.

### Supervisor and Subordinate

**How is “supervisor” defined?**

A supervisor is one who possesses authority to hire, transfer, suspend, layoff, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward, or discipline other employees, or to effectively recommend such action. One is not a supervisor if they merely assign routine duties or perform routine direction and oversight of the daily work of other employees.

**How is “subordinate” defined?**

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A subordinate is defined as an employee under the authority or control of a supervisor; an employee who works for another employee. The term “subordinate” in this policy is not intended to cover those who are lower in rank or position compared to other employees in the unit. For example, it is not intended to prohibit a non-supervisory associate professor and an assistant professor from sharing a hotel room.

**Does the supervisor and subordinate restriction apply to this type of relationship within a department or across campus in general? For example, is it permissible under the policy for a director employed in Department A to share a room with a support staff employee employed in Department B (who does not report to the aforementioned director in this example)?**

The intent of the policy is to prohibit room sharing where the subordinate and the supervisor are in the direct chain of command. In this example, if the supervisor is not in the direct chain of command for the support staff employee, the policy does not prohibit these employees from sharing a room.

**How is “direct chain of command” defined?**

Direct chain of command is defined as a series of administrative positions in which each has direct authority over the one immediately below.

**Does the prohibition from sharing rooms with subordinates include everyone in a lower-level position, or only employees directly in the chain of command?**

The prohibition only applies to those with a supervisor and subordinate relationship, or a supervisor or subordinate relationship by virtue of a direct chain of command. In other words, the policy does not prohibit a supervisor from sharing a room with an employee who does not report directly to the supervisor or to the supervisor through the direct chain of command.

**I am a tenured professor and consistent with academic governance and department service requirements, I sit on peer review committees within the department. In this role, I make recommendations to the Chairperson with respect to granting tenure and promotion, annual reviews, etc. Does this arrangement prohibit me from sharing a room with a junior faculty member?**

No. The intent of the policy is to prohibit room sharing between a subordinate and a supervisor. Although the tenured professor may provide recommendations to the Chairperson, the tenured professor is not a supervisor.

**Can spouses and same-sex domestic partners room together if one is a supervisor and the other is a subordinate in the same unit?**

Yes, spouses and those meeting the definitions of [Other Eligible Individual](#) are allowed to share a room. However, the subordinate must report to a different supervisor, consistent with the [Conflict of Interest in Employment policy](#), which states that no employee should be under the direct control of a “relative.” The term “relative” is defined as a connection between persons by blood, marriage, adoption, domestic partnership, or other personal relationship in which objectivity might be impaired.

**Are graduate students considered supervisors for purposes of this policy?**

No, not at this time.

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## General

### **What are the requirements when the lodging is through Airbnb (e.g., rental home)?**

The intent of the policy is to prohibit the sharing of the same bedroom or sleep space. It is acceptable to use Airbnb as a lodging arrangement so long as separate bedrooms or sleep spaces are provided for in the travel plan.

### **In regards to field work, how would I handle lodging with students or employees if our lodging consisted of camping?**

Sharing of a camp site is permissible so long as individuals subject to this policy sleep in their own individual tent.

### **What are the requirements when the lodging consists of dorms at a research station?**

The intent of the policy is to prohibit the sharing of the same bedroom or sleep space. It is acceptable to utilize dorms so long as separate bedrooms/dorms are provided for in the travel plan.