



POLICY TITLE	Instructional Physical Contact in Academic, Clinical, and Training Settings	Policy Number	617
Section	Academics	Approval Date	May 26, 2026
Subsection	Instruction and Curriculum	Effective Date	May 26, 2026
Responsible Office	Office of the Provost/Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs	Last Review	May 26, 2026

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 Utah Valley University is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is safe, respectful, and free from harassment, discrimination, and misconduct. In some academic, clinical, athletic, performance, and laboratory settings, physical contact may be necessary for instructional, demonstrational, assessment, clinical, or safety purposes. This policy establishes guidelines for appropriate instructional physical contact while protecting the dignity, autonomy, privacy, and comfort of all participants.

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure instructional physical contact occurs only when educationally necessary; is limited to the minimum contact required; and is conducted in a respectful, professional, and consent-based manner.

2.0 REFERENCES

2.1 *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)*, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

2.2 *The Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, Pub. L. 93–112, Title V, § 504

2.3 *Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972*, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.

2.4 *Sexual Battery*, Utah Code. § 76-5-418 (2025)

2.5 UVU Policy 162 *Title IX Sexual Harassment*

2.6 UVU Policy 165 *Discrimination and Harassment*

2.7 UVU Policy 541 *Student Code of Conduct*

2.8 UVU Policy 633 *Faculty Performance Evaluation and Feedback*

2.9 UVU Policy 635 *Faculty Rights and Professional Responsibilities*



2.10 UVU Policy 649 *Faculty Sanction and Dismissal for Cause*

2.11 UVU policy 704 *Minors on Campus and at University-Sponsored Events*

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 Appropriate safeguards: Protections meant to prevent inappropriate physical contact. These safeguards may include advance notice of instructional physical contact in course materials; use of draping, gowns, personal protective equipment (“PPE”), or similar measures; use of same-role or otherwise appropriate personnel; pausing or stopping the process; and alternative means of participation where feasible.

3.2 Consent: A voluntary, informed, and specific verbal or written agreement to allow the proposed contact at the time it is requested.

3.3 Emergency protective contact: Physical contact used to prevent or minimize imminent injury or harm to a person. Emergency protective contact is not considered instructional physical contact under this policy, and the consent requirements of this policy do not apply. In emergency situations, individuals should act immediately in accordance with applicable safety training and procedures. When appropriate, the instructor or supervisor should follow up with the injured or harmed person afterward regarding the contact.

3.4 Instructional physical contact: Physical contact between an instructor and a student, or between students under instructor supervision, that occurs for a legitimate educational purpose as part of teaching, coaching, clinical instruction, supervised practice, assessment, demonstration, or safety-related instruction. Examples include the following: (a) demonstrating clinical examination techniques; (b) guiding body positioning during physical training, performance, or skills instruction; (c) correcting posture, alignment, or technique during instruction; (d) assisting with laboratory, simulation, or clinical procedures; (e) adjusting personal protective equipment or similar instructional equipment; (f) practicing physical clinical or therapeutic techniques between students in supervised settings; (g) positioning a student’s body to ensure safe and correct execution of choreographed movements; and (h) physically moving a student’s leg or torso to demonstrate balance. Instructional physical contact must always be directly related to a specific educational objective.

3.5 Lead faculty: Refers to the instructor of record or other faculty member formally assigned responsibility for instructional oversight and addressing instructional concerns within a given course, rehearsal, production, or training context.

3.6 Minor: For the purposes of this policy, an individual younger than 18 years of age.

3.7 Sensitive area: An area of the body for which a reasonable person would expect heightened privacy which may include the chest, buttocks, groin, breasts, upper thigh, and lower back.



3.8 Staged intimacy: The simulation of intimate physical contact, including but not limited to kissing and embracing for theatrical, performance, or artistic purposes. Staged intimacy is subject to the heightened requirements of this policy as it applies to sensitive areas and higher-risk activities and may require the involvement of a trained intimacy coordinator or director.

4.0 POLICY

4.1 Scope

4.1.1 This policy applies to UVU students and employees including full-time, adjunct, part-time, and hourly faculty, staff, teaching assistants, coaches, clinical instructors, student employees, and students participating in instructional activities involving physical contact, enrolled for credit or participating in non-credit programs.

4.1.2 This policy applies to instructional and training environments including but not limited to classrooms, laboratories, clinical training settings, simulation labs, studios, athletic facilities, field instruction sites, performance and rehearsal spaces, and other supervised instructional environments operated or authorized by the University.

4.1.3 This policy applies to both on-campus and off-campus instructional activities occurring under university supervision including clinical rotations, field placements, internships, and other experiential learning contexts.

4.2 Guiding Principles

4.2.1 Consent. Consent (a) must be obtained before instructional physical contact occurs; (b) may be withdrawn at any time; and (c) is not implied by silence, lack of objection, prior participation, or a prior relationship between the instructor and the student. Consent obtained through coercion or pressure is not valid consent.

4.2.2 Educational Necessity. Physical contact may occur only when it is reasonably necessary to achieve a legitimate educational objective and when less intrusive alternatives are not adequate for the instructional purpose. Programs should provide reasonable alternatives when possible.

4.2.3 Alternatives. Alternatives that instructors must consider include, where feasible, verbal instruction, visual demonstration, video instruction, self-demonstration by the instructor, simulation models or training manikins self-guided student practice, peer observation, and the use of props, positioning aids, or mirrors.

4.2.4 Respect and Professionalism. Instructional physical contact must be professional in nature and limited to the minimum contact necessary to achieve the educational objective. Instructional physical contact must not be prolonged beyond what is necessary, excessive or



repeated without need, unrelated to the instructional objective, or intimate, sexualized, or reasonably perceived as inappropriate.

4.2.5 Student Autonomy. Students must be able to decline, pause, limit, or withdraw consent to instructional physical contact at any time without fear of retaliation, embarrassment, coercion, or academic penalty. Declining instructional physical contact will not, by itself, result in a lower grade; however, students remain responsible for meeting essential course competencies, which may require demonstration of physical skills.

4.2.6 Unequal Power Dynamics. Because faculty, staff, coaches, and supervisors hold positions of authority over students, they must exercise heightened care, professionalism, and sensitivity when seeking or engaging in any physical contact. The existence of an instructor-student relationship does not reduce or substitute for the requirement to obtain consent.

4.2.7 Privacy and Dignity. Instructors must conduct all instructional activities involving physical contact in a manner that protects the privacy and dignity of participants to the greatest extent feasible. Students may not be exposed to unnecessary observation or disclosure of instructional physical contact activities.

4.3 Prohibited Conduct

4.3.1 Physical contact is prohibited when it

4.3.1.1 serves no legitimate educational purpose;

4.3.1.2 occurs without consent, except in an emergency as described in section 3.3;

4.3.1.3 continues after consent has been declined, withdrawn, or limited;

4.3.1.4 is sexualized, intimate, exploitative, or harassing;

4.3.1.5 is excessive, prolonged, unnecessary, or retaliatory;

4.3.1.6 is used to embarrass, control, intimidate, or punish a student;

4.3.1.7 occurs between an instructor and a student in a one-on-one setting, except as stated in 5.7.1 and as designated by the appropriate dean;

4.3.1.8 creates or contributes to a hostile, intimidating, or uncomfortable learning environment;
or

4.3.1.9 involves a minor student without the advance written consent of a parent or guardian, except in an emergency as described in section 3.3.



4.3.2 The University is responsible to establish a process to determine if the student is a minor and to notify the faculty member, staff, or coach of minors in their courses.

4.3.3 Conduct that violates this policy may also violate other university policies, including policies addressing sexual harassment, discrimination, student conduct, workplace conduct, or professional misconduct, and may subject the responsible party to discipline, up to and including termination or dismissal from the University.

4.4 Oversight and Compliance

4.4.1 The Office of the Provost is responsible for the overall administration and oversight of this policy. The Provost or their designee will coordinate with deans, department chairs, program directors, and the Equity and Title IX Office to promote awareness, implementation, and compliance.

4.4.2 Deans are responsible for ensuring that academic units within their college or school establish discipline-specific protocols and that the faculty and staff receive appropriate training as described in section 5.1.

4.4.3 Department chairs, program directors, coaches, and any other employee supervising an employee who engages in instructional physical contact are responsible for the following:

4.4.3.1 Ensuring that instructors under their supervision are (a) informed of this policy before they begin instruction in any class requiring instructional physical contact; and (b) sign an acknowledgement, available through the Office of the Provost, that they read this policy, understand it, and agree to comply with it;

4.4.3.2 Reviewing and approving discipline-specific protocols; and

4.4.3.3 Escalating concerns to the dean and the Equity and Title IX Office as appropriate.

4.4.4 Compliance with this policy may be considered in faculty performance evaluations, in accordance with UVU Policy 633 *Faculty Performance Evaluation and Feedback*.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Training and Implementation

5.1.1 The University must provide training to faculty, staff, and students in programs where instructional physical contact is reasonably anticipated.



5.1.2 Training may include professional boundaries; consent-based instructional practices; trauma-informed teaching practices; recognizing and responding to discomfort or withdrawal of consent; discipline-specific expectations and safeguards; and reporting obligations and resources.

5.1.3 Programs or departments may develop additional guidance consistent with this policy. Programs are encouraged to communicate relevant expectations in course materials, handbooks, syllabi, clinical manuals, and comparable guidance.

5.1.4 When possible, a faculty member facilitating a demonstration using a student should have the option to have another faculty member present.

5.2 Advance Notice Requirements

5.2.1 When a course, program, rehearsal, or training activity is reasonably anticipated to involve instructional physical contact, the instructor or program must provide students with advance notice of the nature and educational purpose of the anticipated contact prior to the beginning of the relevant activity or for regular course activities, prior to the first day of class.

5.2.2 For credit-bearing courses, advance notice must be provided in or through the course syllabus. The notice must describe: (a) the types of instructional physical contact that may occur; (b) the educational purpose of such contact; (c) the relevant areas of the body that may be involved; (d) the student's right to decline, modify, or withdraw consent; and (e) how students may request an alternative method of instruction or a disability-related accommodation.

5.2.3 For university-supervised clinical rotations, field placements, or off-campus instructional activities, advance notice must be provided in program handbooks, clinical orientation materials, or comparable program documentation, and must be acknowledged by the student in writing or through a documented orientation process before the student's first clinical or field contact (see section 5.9.2).

5.2.4 Advance notice does not substitute for in-the-moment verbal consent as required under section 5.5. Disclosure of anticipated instructional physical contact in a syllabus or program materials does not constitute student consent.

5.2.5 Schools and Colleges must have a clear process for obtaining parental consent forms.

5.3 Pause, Stop, and Alternative Participation

5.3.1 Programs and instructors should establish a clear process that allows participants to pause or stop an activity involving physical contact and to request an alternative approach. Participants must be able to ask questions before or during the activity; request clarification; request a pause or break; request a different instructional method when feasible; and communicate changes in comfort or boundaries without having to provide an explanation. In the event a faculty member



cannot provide an alternative teaching method, the student will be directed to the lead faculty for further guidance on alternative activities.

5.3.2 Programs are encouraged to establish and teach a specific stop-signal mechanism at the beginning of any course or training activity involving significant instructional physical contact, such as a verbal code word that any participant may use to pause or stop activity immediately. The mechanism should be explained to all participants before the activity begins. In the event a pause and stop in training results in a change of instructional method, the student will be directed to the lead faculty member for further guidance on alternative activities.

5.4 Consent Process

5.4.1 Before initiating instructional physical contact, the instructor must, to the extent feasible,

5.4.1.1 explain the educational purpose of the contact;

5.4.1.2 describe the nature of the physical contact, including where the physical contact will occur;

5.4.1.3 offer a reasonable alternative method of instruction;

5.4.1.4 request permission before proceeding; and

5.4.1.5 immediately respect any refusal, hesitation, or withdrawal of consent.

5.5.2 For recurring or predictable activities, instructors may obtain consent at the activity level, with brief verbal confirmation at the moment of contact.

5.5.3 To the extent feasible means where it can be reasonably accomplished without compromising safety, instructional integrity, or materially disrupting the activity.

5.5 Student-to-Student Instructional Physical Contact

5.5.1 In certain programs, students may practice techniques on one another as part of supervised instruction. When student-to-student instructional physical contact occurs, instructors must

5.5.1.1 clearly explain the activity and its educational purpose in advance;

5.5.1.2 require students to obtain explicit verbal consent from their partner before beginning any contact;

5.5.1.3 establish and communicate a clear pause and stop process that any student may invoke at any time;



5.5.1.4 remain present, engaged, and prepared to intervene when student-to-student contact is occurring; and

5.5.1.5 provide course materials or program guidance addressing appropriate areas of contact, communication, consent practices, safety, and professional conduct.

5.5.2 Students may decline participation or withdraw consent at any time without academic penalty. When possible, programs should provide alternative means of achieving the relevant learning objective when a student exercises this right during such exercises.

5.5.3 Instructors must set clear expectations and watch for compliance, but they are not responsible for every individual instance of consent unless they have been made aware of a problem.

5.5.4 Students should be aware that although they may participate in an alternative activity, some skills and assessments are still required to meet course and program competencies. Alternatives may not always provide the level of training a student needs to meet the required competencies. If a student is unable to meet the required competencies, the student may not be able to successfully complete the course or program requirements.

5.6 Sensitive Areas

5.6.1 Instructional physical contact involving sensitive areas or circumstances involving partial undress may occur only when

5.6.1.1 the contact is essential to the educational objective and cannot be achieved through less intrusive means;

5.6.1.2 the activity has been approved by the academic department, program director, or clinical site as educationally necessary, as determined by academic leadership;

5.6.1.3 appropriate privacy, safety, and professional safeguards are in place;

5.6.1.4 explicit, specific, and informed consent has been obtained in advance of the contact; and

5.6.1.5 supervision or an additional trained person is present when appropriate as determined by department protocols and approved by the dean.

5.6.2 Programs in which such contact is reasonably anticipated must establish additional discipline-specific protocols approved by the dean and consistent with this policy.



5.7 Environment and Transparency

5.7.1 Instructional physical contact should generally occur in professional learning environments where the activity is observable by others or otherwise subject to appropriate supervision. Whenever possible, isolated or closed-door settings should be avoided for physical contact-based instruction, and one-on-one instructional physical contact should occur only when pedagogically necessary and directly relevant to learning outcomes. When privacy is required, it should be achieved using partial barriers (e.g., curtains) that allow for privacy while maintaining visibility and supervision.

5.7.2 When privacy is needed for legitimate instructional reasons, instructors should use appropriate safeguards to balance privacy with safety and accountability.

5.8 Documentation and Recordkeeping

5.8.1 When an instructor becomes aware of or involved in any incident in which consent was declined or withdrawn in a manner that disrupts instruction, gives rise to a concern or results in a dispute, the instructor must document the incident promptly and report it to their department chair or program director.

5.8.2 Department chairs and program directors must maintain records of

5.8.2.1 written program-specific protocols for instructional physical contact under section 5.7.2;

5.8.2.2 written advance consent or authorization forms obtained for sensitive-area or minor-participant activities, as applicable;

5.8.2.3 incident reports received from instructors regarding consent-related concerns; and

5.8.2.4 documentation of training completed by instructors under section 5.1.

5.8.3 Records under this section must be retained in accordance with the University's record retention schedule and applicable law and must be made available to the Office of the Provost, the Equity and Title IX Office, or People and Culture upon request.

5.9 Reporting Concerns

5.9.1 Faculty, staff, supervisors, and other UVU employees are mandatory reporters. If they become aware of conduct that may violate this policy, they must report the matter within 24 hours through the appropriate institutional reporting channels, consistent with their duties under university policy and applicable mandatory reporting obligations. (See UVU Policy 162 *Sexual Harassment*; UVU Policy 165, *Discrimination and Harassment*).



5.9.2 Students and other participants who experience, observe, or become aware of conduct that may violate this policy are encouraged to report their concerns promptly.

5.9.3 Reports may be made to the Equity and Title IX Office; Academic Affairs; People and Culture; department chairs or program directors; and Ethics Point. Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment) to the Title IX Coordinator using any of the following methods:

5.9.3.1 In person at the Browning Administration Building, Suite 203, 800 W. University Parkway, Orem, UT 84058 (M–F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.);

5.9.3.2 By mail to Utah Valley University, MS 272, 800 W. University Parkway, Orem, UT 84058 (any time);

5.9.3.3 By telephone at 801-863-7999 (any time);

5.9.3.4 By e-mail at TitleIX@uvu.edu (any time);

5.9.3.5 Online, anonymously or self-identified, at <https://www.uvu.edu/equityandtitleix/> (any time);

5.9.3.6 Or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person’s oral or written report. Reports will be reviewed and addressed in accordance with applicable university policies and law.

5.9.4 Retaliation against any person for declining instructional physical contact, reporting a concern, participating in an inquiry, or supporting another person in raising a concern is prohibited (see also Policy 162, *Title IX Sexual Harassment*; Policy 165, *Discrimination and Harassment*). Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, academic penalties, negative evaluations, exclusion from participation, hostile conduct, or other adverse action taken against an individual because of protected activity under this policy.

POLICY HISTORY		
Date of Last Formal Review: May 26, 2026		
Due Date of Next Review: May 26, 2027		
Date of Last Action	Action Taken	Authorizing Entity
May 26, 2026	Temporary policy approved. This policy will lapse in 12 months on May 26, 2027.	UVU President’s Council
June 23, 2026	Ratified.	UVU Board of Trustees

*More information on the formal review can be found in Policy 101 section 4.7.3.