

Policy concerning personal relationships between staff and students

1. A personal relationship of a sexual or other intimate nature between a member of staff and a student, with whom that member of staff also has a professional connection, gives rise to an actual or apparent conflict of interest. In particular, such a relationship creates, or may reasonably be perceived to create, a risk of favouritism or abuse of authority. It also undermines the relationship of trust and confidence which is intrinsic to interactions between staff and students.

2. Members of staff are under a duty to act with integrity and not to place themselves in a position of actual or apparent conflict. A personal relationship in the circumstances described above should consequently be avoided.

3. In the event that:

3.1 a personal relationship arises between a member of staff and a student with whom that member of staff also has a professional connection; or

3.2 there is or has been a personal relationship between a member of staff and a student with whom that member of staff is due to have a professional connection;

the member of staff in question must disclose the relationship immediately to the member of staff's Head of Department (or equivalent post-holder) or (if the member of staff would prefer) to a senior member of the HR Division who will speak to the Head of Department (or equivalent post holder) on their behalf.. If a member of staff is unsure whether or not a relationship with a student should be disclosed under this policy, the member of staff should disclose it.

4. Following disclosure, the person to whom the disclosure has been made will ensure as appropriate that the student is aware of the disclosure and that alternative arrangements are put in place to avoid the member of staff having any professional connection with the student.

5. Failure to comply with this policy, or any arrangements which are put in place under it, may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

6. For the purposes of this policy:

6.1 'member of staff' includes any person who is engaged by the University as an employee or worker and/or who holds a University office or post, as well as any person to whom the University makes available any of the privileges or facilities normally afforded to its employees - where graduate students are working for the University in a teaching or related capacity, this policy will apply to them in that capacity as if they were employees of the University;

6.2 'student' includes any person pursuing a course of study leading to the award of a degree, diploma, or certificate of the University;

6.3 'professional connection' means any arrangement where a person in his or her capacity as a member of staff has any academic, pastoral or administrative or similar responsibility for a student, including for supervising, tutoring, teaching, selecting, assessing, protecting, safeguarding, or providing a reference for, the student; and

6.4 'personal relationship' means any association, however brief, of a sexual or other intimate nature, either in person or remotely (for example, via social media, email or text messaging).