

## Policy on Relations between Staff and Students

### Purpose and Context

The University values and relies upon the professional integrity of relationships between staff members and students. The University recognises that there may be occasions when staff members or students are related or who become engaged in a relationship beyond the normal staff, student relationship, including becoming romantically involved. They may be faced with situations where personal interest may conflict with their duties and may be uncertain about how to deal with them. This policy seeks to establish acceptable treatment and guide behaviour in such situations.

### Scope

This policy applies to all staff.

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### Policy

- 1.1 The University believes the professional relationship between a student and a member of staff is a central part of the student's educational development. It is vital that trust and confidence exist between staff and students.
- 1.2 Staff have a professional duty to develop their students' abilities and a responsibility to safeguard students' welfare. Given the imbalance of power between staff and students, any abuse, or perceived abuse, by staff of this relationship will be viewed with concern and could result in action being taken in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.3 The professional responsibilities of staff towards students may be academic (including assessment), administrative or advisory. If a member of staff is related to or who becomes engaged in a relationship beyond the normal staff, student relationship for whom they have or are scheduled to have, any such responsibility, then the member of staff must inform their line manager who will be responsible for ensuring that the member of staff will have no involvement in the student's assessment and, as far as practical, will separate the member of staff from other responsibilities in respect of that student. Where this is impossible given the subject or alternative available staffing, arrangements must be made to ensure that the member of staff does not directly or indirectly assess the student's work. It is important that the staff member is not in a position whereby their actions could be seen to advantage or disadvantage the student. Failure to declare a relationship may lead to disciplinary action.
- 1.4 The University further requires that if a relationship arises, they must be conducted with the utmost discretion and entirely outside the professional/academic environment.

- 1.5 Upon a staff member declaring a conflict of interest with a student to their line manager, the line manager will need to report this to their Head of Department/Division and the Dean/Director of their School/Service. The Dean/Director will be responsible for ensuring that a local Register of Interests is maintained as part of good governance. It should be reviewed and updated annually by the Dean/Director to ensure it is current, comprehensive and addresses potential conflicts as fully as possible. A template Register of Interests is available as a download from the HR webpages.

## POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS

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<b>Compliance Checks:</b>	HRG SMT regularly review to ensure compliance
<b>Related Policies/Procedures:</b>	Disciplinary Procedure Disciplinary Rules

## REVISION HISTORY

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision description/Summary of changes</b>	<b>Author</b>
V1.1	October 2016	Formatting updates (minor amends not requiring committee approval)	HR Manager
V1.2	November 2019	Formatting updates (minor amends not requiring committee approval) and transference to new template.	HR Manager
V1.3	February 2022	Formatting updates (minor amends not requiring committee approval).	HR Manager