

Personal Relationship Policy – Staff Guidance

Click on the section you require, and you will be taken directly to the correct section of this document.

Contents

Familiarise yourself with the Personal Relationship Policy	2
What type of relationship is covered by the Personal Relationship Policy?	2
Examples of Personal Relationships Prohibited	2
Examples of Personal Relationships where a Disclosure is Required	2
Purpose of the Personal Relationships Policy	3
Requirement to Maintain Professional Boundaries between Staff and Students	3
Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour	4
Failure to Comply with the Personal Relationship Policy	4
What to do when a personal relationship comes to an end	5
Key Steps of Disclosure Process	5
Additional Support & Resources	6

Action	Supporting information
Familiarise yourself with the Personal Relationship Policy	The Personal Relationship Policy must be read in conjunction with this guidance.
What type of relationship is covered by the Personal Relationship Policy?	<p>The Personal Relationship Policy covers personal relationships between staff members and between staff and students, in certain circumstances. A Personal Relationship for the purpose of this policy is defined as a consensual intimate relationship including but not limited to marital, life partner, sexual and/or romantic partner which goes beyond the bounds of a platonic or work relationship. The relationship may be an in person or online relationship. This includes a brief or one-off occurrence as the relationship may lead to real or perceived conflicts of interest, or misuse of power and authority.</p> <p>For all other types of relationships, e.g. familial, business/commercial/financial, staff should refer and adhere to the University's Conflict of Interest Policy.</p>
Examples of Personal Relationships Prohibited	<p>The University prohibits staff from having professional or pastoral responsibility, either directly or indirectly, with a student with whom they have a personal relationship. For example, a PhD supervisor should not directly supervise a student with whom they are in a personal relationship.</p> <p>However, a personal relationship between a PhD supervisor in one College and a student in a separate College, where there is no professional or pastoral responsibility held by the PhD supervisor in relation to that student, is not prohibited by the Personal Relationship policy.</p>
Examples of Personal Relationships where a Disclosure is Required	<p>If you are in a personal relationship with another member of staff, with whom you have a line management/supervisory connection, you must not be involved in any aspect of the direct or indirect recruitment, selection, review, recognition, promotion or other decision-making management activity or process involving the other member of staff.</p> <p>For example, you must disclose if you are in a relationship with someone who you support from a work perspective, carry out annual reviews for and are involved in their development and opportunity.</p> <p>If you are in an existing relationship with a student and you start to have professional or pastoral responsibility, either directly or indirectly, a disclosure must be made.</p>

<p>Purpose of the Personal Relationships Policy</p>	<p>The purpose of the policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ protect students and staff from real or perceived conflicts of interest ○ protect staff from allegations of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having exploited their position of power, trust and authority - improper conduct towards those to whom they owe a duty of care and trust. - bias and favouritism ○ support the University in being a fair and respectful place to work and study
<p>Requirement to Maintain Professional Boundaries between Staff and Students</p>	<p>The University recognises that personal interaction between students and staff, particularly academic staff, is key to a student’s educational development, and is intellectually stimulating and rewarding for both staff and students. Whilst this rapport and connection is important, and staff do need to show an interest in and care towards their students, it has to be recognised that such close interaction can blur the lines between the professional and personal and lead to real and/or perceived conflicts of interest.</p> <p>You should be aware that the following situations can be perceived as a conflict of interest, and so are not without risk. Therefore, to protect both parties, you are strongly advised to maintain clear professional boundaries and to “think twice” before, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ meeting a student one-to-one outside of office hours and off campus, particularly if such meetings will include the consumption of alcohol ○ corresponding with a student one-to-one on anything unrelated to the student’s course of study or their University residence ○ befriending and communicating with a student on a personal basis via Facebook or other social media channels ○ sharing their personal information or problems with a student ○ physically comforting/embracing a student and/or using terms of endearment ○ giving a student a gift or lending or borrowing items/money to or from a student. <p>You must also:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ acknowledge and respect that it is perfectly acceptable for a student to deem the above interactions as out of the ordinary and/or inappropriate and so fully within their right to decline ○ respect and take into account cultural and language differences which could lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding of, for example gestures, words, jokes, ‘banter’ etc ○ be mindful that it is a criminal offence, under the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, for someone in a position of trust to engage in any sexual activity with a person under 18 years of age to whom that trust is extended
<p>Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour</p>	<p>The University will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment, i.e. any unwanted conduct related to the protected characteristic of sex which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.</p> <p>It therefore considers the following to be examples of behaviour which are inappropriate and unacceptable and which could lead to disciplinary action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ any form of unwanted physical contact ○ unwelcome attention or advances of a romantic or sexual nature, in person or in writing (including electronic communication e.g. via text, email or social media) ○ use of sexually suggestive images and/or language ○ coercion, i.e. attempts to persuade someone to do something – e.g. engage in intimacy - by use of force or threat, including the threat of something not being granted or being withdrawn ○ suggestion of reward/privilege for sexual favours ○ grooming or predatory behaviour ○ public displays of affection at work (e.g., kissing or sexual comments) which could create a hostile, degrading, humiliating or an offensive environment for others <p>Please refer to the Dignity and Respect Policy for more information.</p>
<p>Failure to Comply with the Personal Relationship Policy</p>	<p>Failure by you to comply with the Personal Relationship Policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter, up to and including dismissal. Failure by a member of Staff who is not an employee (as defined in Section 3 of the policy) will be</p>

	<p>investigated and may bring the University’s connection with that party to an end.</p> <p>In failing to disclose a personal relationship with a student unintentional consequences and risk cannot be minimised by the University. In addition, the University cannot take steps to remove real or perceived conflicts of interest. The manager of the employee will investigate the matter further and decide whether to initiate the staff disciplinary procedure.</p>
<p>What to do when a personal relationship comes to an end</p>	<p>You must confirm that a personal relationship which you have disclosed under the policy has ended or there has been a change in circumstances in writing by completing section 5 of the original personal relationship disclosure form that was submitted.</p> <p>Your line manager will meet with you in order to confirm matters and to assess what if anything needs to be put in place to continue to protect the interests of both parties.</p> <p>Your manager will put in place a system to ensure any new arrangements are regularly reviewed and take action if required.</p>
<p>Key Steps of Disclosure Process</p>	<p>The following are the key steps of the disclosure process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a personal relationship falls within the categories of relationships that must be disclosed, do so using the Disclosure Form. Complete the form and send to your line manager. • Your line manager will review the disclosure form submitted and will assess if there is any real or perceived conflict of interest. • If there is no identified conflict of interest your manager will complete the form accordingly and share a copy of the form with you. The form will then be saved by HR on your SharePoint employee file. • If a conflict of interest is identified your line manager will discuss what alternative arrangements need to be put in place. If reporting lines are to be re-arranged, it may be necessary to inform other staff members of the relationship. • These alternative arrangements will be discussed and agreed with you. The form will be shared with you and saved on your SharePoint employee file. • You must confirm that a disclosed personal relationship has ended or there has been a change in circumstances

	<p>in writing by completing section 5 of the original personal relationship disclosure form that you submitted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your manager must complete Section 6 of the form confirming any measures that have been put in place or action taken as a result of the disclosed change. A revised form will be saved on your SharePoint employee file.
<p>Additional Support & Resources</p>	<p>Further support, information and resources are:</p> <p>Conflict of Interest policy Dignity and Respect policy; Disciplinary procedure</p>