

Teacher, Student and Staff Relationships Policy

Purpose and Scope

The University does not wish to, nor can it, legislate against the development of personal relationships between staff and students, or staff and staff.

The policy is based on very simple precepts:

- there is no abuse of a position of power
- all teaching or staff management must be (and be seen to be) unbiased.

The scope of this policy includes anyone in an academic contact with a student, including teacher, tutor, examinations officer and external examiner. This list is not exhaustive.

Relationships that pre-date the partners entering into a student-teacher relationship are also subject to these guidelines. The general principles of this policy also apply to members of staff who have children in attendance at the University as students.

Policy

- It is the responsibility of any member of staff who has developed emotional or physical relationships with a student to immediately declare that to the Head of Department and/or Dean as appropriate, as well as the Director for Academic Services.
- It is the responsibility of the Head of Department and/or Dean to ensure that all teaching/supervisory, assessment and examination responsibilities are thereafter distributed in the appropriate and obvious ways.
- It is the responsibility of the Director for Academic Services to confirm that the arrangements at the level of examinations are made in the appropriate and obvious ways.
- It is the responsibility of the Head of Department and/or Dean to advise both the member of staff *and the student* appropriately.
- It is the responsibility of the Head of Department and/or Dean and of the Registrar to chronicle all relevant matters appropriately. It is also their responsibility to inform HR and the Vice Chancellor of the facts.

All information will be held in confidence. Failure to declare a relationship may result in disciplinary action being taken.

General advice

Because of the risks to the reputation of staff, and the unequal power relationship between staff and students, it is inadvisable for a teacher to pursue a personal relationship or make any sexual approach to a student he or she is currently teaching. It is unacceptable to form a relationship with a student based on a promise of preferential treatment in return for sexual favours etc. Teachers must also resist, and if they persist report, any such approaches from a student.

Any incident of harassment or attempt to trade sexual favours by either party for altered marks, if proven, will be treated as gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal of the member of staff, or discipline of the student.

Students who have been involved in such a relationship with a member of staff, and who do not consider their involvement to be truly consensual, have the right of complaint under the University's Policy.

Relationships between members of Staff

The University employs a number of people who are related by blood or partnership. It is also accepted that personal relationships will exist or develop between members of staff and these situations are usually welcome. However, in any process of recruitment, selection, appointment, promotions, salary review or appraisal, three criteria must be met by those involved in the process:

- Any interest must be declared before the process commences
- The process must be transparent, and the relation/partner must not be involved
- Any process that causes a directly hierarchical relationship between the parties should be avoided. Where such a relationship is unavoidable (e.g. through one of the parties being appointed an academic Head of Department), subsequent opportunities to achieve a hierarchical separation should be pursued, or mitigating action taken.

All information will be held in confidence. Failure to declare a relationship may result in disciplinary action being taken.