

STAFF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

FAQ for Managers and Staff

1. WHY HAS THIS POLICY BEEN INTRODUCED?

We need to be certain that we work in an environment that has an open and transparent approach to staff relationships. The policy ensures that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in respect of staff relationships and it enables the University to manage any potential conflict of interest that may arise when a member of staff has a relationship with a colleague, a student or an external partner. It also serves to protect us all from criticism, speculation or risk of disclosure by another person at a later date. As stated in the policy, staff-student relationships are of particular concern to the University.

2. WHAT CONSTITUTES A RELATIONSHIP?

Family ties, having a formal or informal relationship or friendship with another person that is close or intimate and where it would be reasonable to suggest that your judgement or decision making could mean the person gets or is perceived to get favourable treatment that would not apply to others. Conversely, that if the relationship were to end then the opposite may apply.

3. HOW DO I KNOW I NEED TO MAKE A DECLARATION?

Not all relationships need to be declared. For example, you may have family or friends working elsewhere in the University but neither of you are in a position to unduly influence any work or student related matter that impacts the other.

However, if you begin or already have an existing close relationship with another member of the University community, including a student, or someone who works elsewhere but has financial or contractual dealings with the University, then the relationship must be declared if you believe that it could give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Examples may include marking papers, financial decision making, outside influence on another person or opportunity to share confidential information that might result in unfair competitive gain. These examples are not intended to be exhaustive. You should make sure the person you are in the relationship with knows that you are declaring it. You can declare a relationship by way of a conversation with your Head of School or Department. If you are in a senior position, then it may be appropriate to declare it to a Senior Officer of the University.

4. WHAT SHOULD I DECLARE?

You need to declare your details and the details of the other person in the relationship. It is important to identify where you believe a conflict or perceived conflict of interest may arise and discuss any alternative arrangements that may need to be put in place.

5. WHAT RECORDS WILL BE KEPT AND FOR HOW LONG?

The person who is notified of the declaration will assess whether there is indeed a conflict or perceived conflict of interest and, if this is the case, they will make a file note of the relationship. They will also record any actions required to minimise risk. They will request that a copy be placed on your personnel file held confidentially in HR. If there is no risk of a conflict or perceived conflict of interest, then no file note will be made. However, were the relationship to change in the future (for example due to a change in your role or the role of the person with whom you

have a relationship) then you are required to declare the relationship again at the time of the change.

All declarations which are deemed to constitute a conflict or perceived conflict of interest will be kept on your HR file. HR files are retained for six years after employment ends.

6. CAN I REPORT A RELATIONSHIP I KNOW ABOUT?

If you believe that someone is in a relationship that should have been declared there are two possible routes to take. You can remind that person they do have a duty to declare this or you can raise the concern with your Head of Department. If you wish to talk this through before raising with your Head of Department or with the individual themselves, then you may wish to consider approaching your Human Resource team.

7. OTHER QUESTIONS

If this FAQ sheet has not addressed all your questions, or you are concerned or need further clarification, your HR team will be able to help.

8. EXAMPLES OF RELATIONSHIPS

Not all relationships need to be disclosed. Below are some examples of the way this policy would work in practice.

Relationship	Should I Declare it?	What action may be taken?
My partner is working in a department where I am their direct Line Manager.	Yes	This relationship would not ordinarily be permitted as it raises a high potential for conflict of interest.
My partner is working in a department in another faculty.	No	If this situation changes, for example were you or your partner to move to the same department or to otherwise have to work closely together, then you will need to declare it.
A close relation will be studying in my Faculty.	Yes	If there is direct supervision or marking of papers, mitigating actions would be put in place.
I have a close emotional bond with a student and we communicate regularly about matters not strictly linked to their studies.	Yes	This relationship is likely to cause unease amongst other students and academic staff. Actions as described above will need to be quickly put in place.
A close relation will be studying/working at the University but I am unable to influence or otherwise affect their performance.	No	If this situation changes you will need to declare it.
A close family member or friend works for a company	Yes	Most decisions are made collectively however it may be necessary to

<p>who will be tendering for services where I may be involved in decision making.</p>		<p>exclude you from the decision making in this instance or for the others involved in the decision making to know that there is a personal relationship.</p>
---	--	---