



# UNIVERSITY OF HULL

## PERSONAL RELATIONS CODE OF CONDUCT

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# University of Hull

## Personal Relations Code of Conduct

### Introduction

1. This code of conduct sets out what is expected of all employees of the University in regard of their personal relations with other employees and students.
2. The University does not seek to intervene or regulate personal relations but has legitimate concerns about such relationships where they affect the good order, running, regulation and reputation of the University.
3. The provisions of the most recent version of this code will apply to all employees; however, it does not form part of an employee's contract of employment. It has been agreed with the campus trade unions, and any future changes will be made following consultation with the trade unions.

### Definition

4. A personal relationship may include amongst others the following
  - marital, romantic, emotional, sexual relationships
  - family relationships
  - social relationships
  - close friendships
  - former relationships including acrimonious relationships
  - business, commercial, financial relationships

### Purpose

5. This Code covers all areas where such relationships raise questions about conflict of interest, trust and/or confidentiality which may occur at the outset, during or on the termination of a relationship. Such conflicts may arise in relation to the following areas:
  - management and supervision of employees including career progression and employee development
  - deployment of financial and other resource
  - all aspects of teaching and learning
  - access to confidential information
  - access to Student Services including financial assistance, accommodation and other services
  - contractual matters including employment, career opportunities, placements, complaints and discipline
  - assignment of work and facilities to students.
6. The University expects employees to be aware that personal relationships may give rise to a conflict of interest and employees should be conscious of the effect on, and the perception of, other employees / students.

7. An individual must observe this code of conduct whenever s/he:
  - operates and acts as an employee of the University
  - conducts the business of any office to which s/he has been elected or appointed by the University
  - acts as a representative of the University.

## **Relationships between employees and students**

8. Employees must conduct themselves at all times in ways that are consistent with University policy and procedures and acknowledge their professional and ethical responsibility to protect the interests of students and accept the obligations and constraints inherent in that responsibility. To maintain the relationship with students based on trust, confidence and equal treatment, Employees are strongly advised not to enter into an intimate relationship with a student for whom they have a responsibility in the areas of teaching/learning, assessment, selection, pastoral care or research. Such relationships can lead to perceived or actual conflicts of interest, which can have a detrimental effect on the teaching and learning environment for other students and colleagues.
9. Should a personal relationship already exist when the employee or student enters the University or develop while the student is registered, it is the responsibility of the employee to declare their involvement to their line manager at the earliest opportunity.

## **General Obligations**

10. Employees:
  - must promote equality by not seeking to prefer or disadvantage any person with whom they have or have had a personal relationship
  - must not do anything which compromises or which is likely to compromise the impartiality of other employees. An employee in a personal relationship with another employee or student of the University must regard herself or himself as having a personal interest in any matter which affects that other employee or student including their interests, advancement, academic wellbeing, promotion or reward.

## **Specific Obligations**

11. Employees who have a personal relationship are expected to ensure that its existence is disclosed in such a way (normally to their line manager or more senior manager where appropriate) that appropriate employees are aware of this. The manager will consider the implications of this, and with support from more senior managers and HR where necessary, ensure that steps are taken to remove or minimize the risk of a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest wherever possible.
12. Where appropriate to ensure good practice in line with this code, an employee with a personal relationship with another employee / student shall collaborate with their colleagues and line manager to establish an alternative deputy to carry out their authority in such matters covered by this code.

13. In matters of appointment to an office, position or post at the University and of grading/promotion the employee with a personal interest shall normally be excluded from the decision- making process.
14. In processes of re-structuring the employee with a personal interest shall normally be excluded from the identification of posts to be filled, altered or removed. Where the Dean, Director, Head of School, Department or Service has a personal interest, it may be appropriate that their view is taken into consideration in the initial planning processes only.
15. An employee with a personal relationship will not have sole responsibility for aspects of a student's work which require judgment, e.g. academic assessment.
16. In all financial matters, expense accounts documentation must not be signed or counter-signed by someone with whom the recipient or claimant has a personal interest.
17. An employee with a personal relationship will not solely be in a position to take decisions affecting the employee/student, including the provision or withholding of any of the following: facilities for research; the allocation of places on courses, bursaries or scholarships for research;
18. An employee who attends a meeting which considers a matter concerning an employee or student with whom the employee has a personal relationship, must disclose to that meeting the existence of that personal interest, in advance of the meeting.
19. An employee with a personal relationship with an employee or student who is required to make a management decision that affects that employee/student must ensure that any written statement of that decision records that personal interest.

## **Equality**

20. This code has been produced with the aim of supporting the university's overall strategy to embrace diversity and welcome individuals from all backgrounds on an equal and non discriminatory basis. When using this code, the university expects employees to treat all colleagues fairly and with respect and will take action against acts which breach the policy on diversity. Any change to this code must be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment prior to submission for approval, consistent with The Equality Act 2010. Advice may be sought from the Equality & Diversity Unit or HR in this regard.

## **Data Protection**

21. The data collected in the course of following this code, will be used only for the purposes of operating this code. Records will be kept on individual employees central electronic HR file, and where necessary in secure records within other relevant departments. Only employees who need the information in order to carry out the duties of their post will have access to this data. The information will be kept on computerised record for the life of those records, details of which can be found in the document: Data Protection – HR Records Retention.

## **Communication and training**

22. The University aims to raise awareness of these procedures and about the rights and responsibilities under this code.

## **Monitoring**

23. The effectiveness of this code will be ensured by continuous monitoring, regular review and consultation with the campus trade unions. It will be the responsibility of the HR Director to monitor the effectiveness of this code.