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1. Policy statement

1.1 In order to maintain the University's academic integrity and reputation for inclusion, it is necessary to acknowledge when personal and professional relationships overlap. While most personal connections will be positive and will promote good team working and professional bonds, it is recognised that there will be some relationships that may require an employee to withdraw from undertaking certain duties or making some decisions in order to protect themselves and the University from any conflict of interest, misuse of power or unfair bias.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on managing personal relationships between members of the University community and students. The University definition of a personal, professional and working relationship is outlined in Appendix A.

2.2 This policy aims to protect the integrity of employees and to recognise any power imbalance that may affect welfare and inclusion. It is not about prohibiting personal relationships at work, but to provide guidance to manage actual or potential conflicts of interest, to establish appropriate standards and promote a safe and positive environment.

2.3 This policy sets out what constitutes a conflict of interest and the steps that must be taken where these exist to ensure that they are managed in an appropriate and timely manner. Where disclosures regarding personal relationships are made, these will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all members of the University community. For the purposes of this policy, employees, casual workers, GTAs (Graduate Teaching Assistants), agency workers, contractors and any third party engaged to work at the University, including students on work placements, visiting scholars and volunteers are included.

3.2 Where an individual has a student role that includes some employee responsibilities (e.g. postgraduate research students who teach or have wardenial and pastoral care duties), then this policy shall apply.

3.3 This policy applies in the workplace (whether onsite or remote working) and in any setting outside the workplace which involves individuals of the University community as outlined in 3.1 and University students.

4. Relationships between employees

4.1 Personal relationships between employees will normally pose no conflict of interest unless there is a professional or working relationship between those individuals.

4.2 It is understood that employees may develop close, personal friendships with individuals in the University community. If employees have a professional or working relationship with someone that they consider to be a close, personal friend, they must ensure that their friendship with the individual does not impact, or appear to impact, the ability to perform their role.

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personal information shared raises concerns, the employee must declare this matter to Student Services.

3. **Be mindful of students, in particular vulnerable students, who may appear to require extra assistance and support in their personal and academic lives.** It is not appropriate to give a student a gift or lend money to or from a student. In addition, employees must not offer accommodation to a student, for instance, an employee should not reside/lodge in the same accommodation or rent accommodation

7. Non-compliance

7.1 Failure to disclose a relevant personal relationship as per the procedures outlined in section 6 will be considered a disciplinary matter and could amount to a breach of trust.

7.2 Any breach of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 mentioned in 5.4 will lead to the University reporting the matter to the Police.

8. Concerns of inappropriate conduct/behaviour

8.1 If any employee or student finds themselves in receipt of unwanted or inappropriate conduct and behaviour, are

Appendix A: Definitions

A **personal relationship** is defined as a romantic, intimate, sexual and/or exclusive relationship; a family relationship; a business/commercial or financial relationship; or a relationship which involves an emotional attachment. **This definition is not exhaustive and therefore anyone who considers that they may be in a potential conflict of interest**