



Name of Document:	Relations between staff and students (or between staff) Policy
Responsible area:	Student Experience and Wellbeing
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DGHE aims to provide a working and learning environment, which will enable staff and students to fulfil their personal potential. DGHE is committed to the creation and maintenance of a supportive and inclusive environment. It is recognised that in a healthy working environment staff and students form mutually rewarding relationships. This policy provides guidance in areas where personal relationships overlap with working relationships. It seeks to protect the integrity of all students and staff from allegations of actual or perceived conflicts of interest and avoid complaints of harassment and grievance or disciplinary action.

This policy covers all personal relationships, including:

- business, commercial, financial relationships
- close friendships/social relationships
- family relationships
- current and former intimate relationships (including marital, sexual, romantic, emotional whether heterosexual or same sex relationships)

This policy covers the staff and students of DGHE and 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 staff including career progression and staff development
 - deployment of financial and other resource
 - all aspects of teaching and learning
 - access to confidential information
 - contractual matters including employment, career opportunities, placements, complaints and discipline
 - assignment of work and facilities to students
 - maintenance of records and certification of student details and academic results by programme administration staff onto validation and accreditation computer systems.
- Note: these are to be signed off independently by the Programme Manager.

Staff should conduct themselves at all times in ways that are consistent with DGHE 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, staff 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.

Should a personal relationship already exist when the member of staff or student enters DGHE or develop while the student is registered, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to declare their involvement to the Head of Centre or senior management representative. There will not be a requirement to give details of the involvement.

Within DGHE, members of staff will have a variety of mutually rewarding relationships, which will not have a detrimental effect upon colleagues, or the good running of the organisation. Whilst most social and personal relationships are entirely beneficial in that they promote good working and academic relationships, there are occasions when personal relationships between staff may lead to actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

Members of staff are required to declare an interest where a personal relationship gives rise to a reasonable apprehension that a conflict of interest might exist, or that the integrity of the academic, administrative or institutional processes of DGHE could be threatened, in circumstances such as those detailed above. Such an apprehension will almost certainly arise where one party to a relationship has a direct line management responsibility for another.

It is the responsibility of the member of staff to make a declaration of interest to the Head of Centre or senior management representative. There will not be a requirement to give details of the involvement.

When DGHE is made aware of a relationship covered by this policy, it will consider the appropriate action in a manner that protects the integrity of all parties. The staff/student involved will be consulted and are expected to comply with reasonable action. DGHE will ensure that these matters are dealt with in confidence and as sensitively as possible.

Appropriate action could include:

- ensuring that the member of staff does not have sole responsibility for aspects of the student's work which require judgement, e.g. academic assessment;
- ensuring that the member of staff is not solely in a position to take decisions affecting the student;
- ensuring that appropriate action is taken to minimise the potential effect of the relationship on other staff or students;
- ensuring that the involvement of a member of staff in taking or influencing decisions affecting the other person's salary, terms and conditions of employment, role, workload, promotion, training and development, career development and staff appraisal etc is carried out in such a way as to protect the integrity of all parties and processes.

To protect the interests of all parties, a record of the declaration and action taken (if any) may be made.

Failure on the part of a member of staff to declare a conflict of interest which results in the academic, administrative or institutional processes being brought into question, may result in disciplinary action being taken and in the case of students result in the procedures outlined in the Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy.

Where staff or students believe themselves to have been personally adversely affected by a misuse of power/authority or conflict of interest, they should raise it with their line manager or personal tutor or directly with the Head of Centre or a senior member of staff.

Where DGHE is made aware of a relationship by another person or other means, appropriate action will be taken to protect the integrity of all parties and procedures, and deal with the matter as sensitively as possible.

Any of the parties involved who do not consider that satisfactory arrangements have been implemented have recourse to the Grievance Procedure or Student Complaints Procedure, as appropriate.

END.