



Working Together

Professional Conduct Between Staff and Students Policy

May 2010



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Inappropriate behaviour between staff and students can adversely affect the professional relationship that should exist in a working or teaching environment.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that staff and students benefit from fair and professional interactions at all times and to protect staff from unfair allegations of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour by students.

3.0 Key Principals

3.1 Personal Relationships

Staff are strongly discouraged from forming personal relationships with students, particularly when the staff member has direct responsibility for the learning experience of the student, delivers any part of the student's learning programme, or is involved in supporting the student through their programme of study. Should such a relationship develop, the staff member should inform his or her line manager immediately. Where possible the staff member should be retimetabled or replaced in the capacity of supporting the student, in order to minimise or remove all professional contact with the student. The staff member must not be solely responsible for the assessment, guidance or support of a student with whom he/she has a personal relationship. The line manager should keep a written record of the action taken.

3.2 Pre Existing Personal Relationships

Where there is a pre-existing relationship between a staff member and a student with whom he/she comes into direct contact, the line manager should be informed that the relationship exists, as soon as the staff member becomes aware that the student intends to join the College. Arrangements should be made to reduce or remove all professional contact between the staff member and the student. The staff member must not be solely responsible for the assessment, guidance or support of a student with whom he/she has a pre-existing personal relationship. The line manager should keep a written record of the action taken.

- 3.3 Examples of 'personal relationships' would include: spouse or partner, parent, child, other family relationships, friendships where parties socialise together outwith the College and relationships of an intimate nature.
- 3.4 **Physical Contact between Staff and Students**
Staff should avoid physical contact with students. In one to one situations involving a staff member and a student, if either the student or staff member feels it necessary, they should ask for another responsible person to be present.
- 3.5 In some circumstances, for example, in a personal care situation or in the demonstration of activities associated with learning, appropriate physical contact may be necessary. Staff carrying out this role will have received appropriate training in order to carry out this role.
- 3.6 **Diversity**
Some religions expressly forbid physical contact between the sexes. In such cases the student's wishes must be respected at all times and any resulting difficulties reported to the line manager.
- 3.7 **References**
References for students must always be fair, relevant, factual and accurate. If a staff member has either a personal difficulty or a personal relationship with a student, they should pass the reference request immediately to the line manager.
- 3.8 **Socialising with Students**
Staff should be aware that their professional relationship with current students is still deemed to exist out with the College and any report by a student of misconduct would require to be investigated. Staff are therefore advised to avoid one to one contact with students in social situations, including electronic media, out with the College.
- 3.9 **Failure to follow the guidelines**
Staff who fail to follow the guidance contained within this policy should be aware that, by their actions, they may place themselves in a position where they may be subject to allegations of misconduct and disciplinary action could result.

4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Board of Management is responsible for approving this policy and for overseeing compliance with its principals.
- 4.2 The Head of HR is responsible for the implementation of this policy.
- 4.3 All staff are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

5.0 Related Documents

- 5.1 Discipline and Grievance Policy
- 5.2 Safeguarding Juveniles and Adults at Risk of Harm

Equality Impact Assessment

Person responsible for the assessment:	Debbie Kerr – Head of HR and Development		
Name of the policy/proposal to be assessed:	Professional Conduct between Staff and Students Policy		
Date of Assessment:	27th May 2009		
Is this a new or existing policy/proposal	Existing		
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives of the policy, please explain	To ensure that staff and student benefit from fair and professional interactions at all times and to protect staff from unfair allegations of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour by students.		
2. Are there any associated objectives of the policy, please explain	Student engagement.		
3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy and in what way	Staff and Students. To ensure fair treatment.		
4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy	To allow professional interactions and behaviours between staff and students.		
5. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes.	Location/subject area, for example during demonstrations, within gamekeeping to avoid danger and course tutor one to ones.		
6. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy?	Staff and Students.		
7. Who implements the policy and who is responsible for the policy?	Head of HR and Development and implemented by all staff.		
8. Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on minority ethnic groups?	Y	N	Please explain: Lack of understanding of the 6 strands of equality.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Some minority groups do not allow physical contact. Some minority groups culture are to be more touchy feely and may feel rejected.		

Professional Conduct Between Staff and Students Policy

9. Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact due to gender? If so, please outline what the impact might be.	Y Y	N	Please explain: During demonstrations as more men enter female dominated subject areas and more women into male dominated areas.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Some minority groups do not allow physical contact. Some minority groups culture are to be more touchy feely and may feel rejected.		
10. Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact due to disability? If so, please outline what the impact might be.	Y Y	N	Please explain: Some disabilities require a more hands on physical approach and therefore contact which under this policy may be seen to be inappropriate. e.g deaf or blind students may need more help.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Lifting and personal care requirements.		
11. Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on people due to sexual orientation? If so, please outline what the impact might be.	Y Y	N	Please explain: during one to one course tutor sessions. Confidentiality required.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Block reviews. Student disciplinary issues – Could be accused of physical contact during one to ones.		
12. Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on people due to their age? If so, please outline what the impact might be.	Y Y	N	Please explain: Older people have more personal relationships. Old people tend to relate more to old people and young people to young people. Older people can be accused of being on a different wavelength and of a different generation.

Professional Conduct Between Staff and Students Policy

What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Small community where more relationships exist.	
13. Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on people due to their religious belief? If so, please outline what the impact might be.	Y Y	N Please explain: These have been detailed at questions 8, 9 and 10.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?		
14. Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on people with dependants/caring responsibilities? If so, please outline what the impact might be.	Y Y	N Please explain: This is not applicable to this policy.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	If used to physical contact in this area it would not be thought to be inappropriate.	

Membership of E.I.A Team:	Debbie Kerr – Head of HR
	Heather Anderson – AP Curriculum & Quality
	Alan McConnell – EIS Representative
	Kenny MacLeod – President Student Association
Other Consultees:	

Professional Conduct Between Staff and Students Policy

Action to be taken as a result of the Assessment	By Whom	By When
Amend policy to allow for necessary physical contact	Debbie Kerr	September 2009
Roll out on-line equalities module to raise awareness of 6 strands	Cheryl Clarke	Autumn 2009
Investigate embedding equalities into citizenship	Heather Anderson	Autumn 2009
Communicate policy to all staff	Debbie Kerr	October 2009

Date proposed actions agreed by JCC (Policy):	
Date Policy/Procedure/Guidelines Amended:	
Method of Publicising/Publicising Amendments:	

Professional Conduct Between Staff and Students Policy

Status: Approved by JCC
Policy Dated: May 2010
Author: Head of HR and Development
Review Date: May 2012
Equality Impact Assessed: May 2010