

Relationships Code of Conduct

Last updated 21 08 2018

The University of London is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Personal/Familial relationships within the University

Whilst the University wishes to encourage good working relationships and recognises the importance of these in creating an effective work environment, in line with Ordinance 8, staff of the University are obliged to avoid conflicts of interest, including personal/family relationships. Where these relationships overlap with working relationships, individual members of staff must not abuse their authority, or act improperly or with bias, and should not lay themselves open to allegations that they have done so.

Relationships Between Staff

Where relationships occur between members of staff, it is the responsibility of both individuals to deal appropriately with any potential conflicts of interest. Staff must ensure that personal relationships do not advantage, or unfairly disadvantage, any member of staff or other individuals (such as applicants for jobs or service providers).

Existing Relationships Prior to Employment

Where a member of staff is involved in a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant for a job, they must not be involved in the selection process.

If appointed, the successful candidate cannot under any circumstances be placed in a direct line management relationship with the existing staff member.

The allowable proximity within which two related employees will be permitted to work cannot be laid down precisely as it will depend on the nature of the work and their positions within the University.

Relationships Between Staff and Students

If a member of staff has a personal relationship with a student to whom they have, or are scheduled to have, a professional responsibility, he/she must inform the Human Resources Department as soon as practicable and should separate his/her self from these responsibilities. Failure to do so may make the member of staff open to accusations of bias, abuse of trust and conflict of interest. As a result of the power dynamic between a member of staff and a student, consent in a relationship may be coerced to compliance. For this reason, the University strongly discourages personal

relationships with students. Any allegations of bullying and harassment will be dealt with under the relevant procedure.

Procedures

Employees have a right and a duty to raise concerns which they may have about breaches of this code of conduct. This should normally be through their direct line manager/Director but in circumstances where this is not appropriate they may approach a member of Human Resources in confidence. No individual who expresses their views in good faith and in line with this guidance will be penalised for doing so. If appropriate, the issue may be raised by the Public Interest Disclosure ('whistleblowing') Policy.

Confidentiality of Disclosure

Declarations concerning personal/family relationships will be kept confidential where possible however it may be necessary to share information to deal appropriately with any conflict of interest and / or to enable the University to meet its legal obligations.

Individuals who elect to make written declarations of conflicts of interest concerning personal relationships, should be aware that under data protection legislation the University is likely to be under an obligation to reveal the declaration to the other person said to be party to the relationship, should he/she make such a request. Further information on data protection can be found on the University website and is also available on request from the Data Protection Officer at data.protection@london.ac.uk.

This code of conduct has been drawn up to provide a source of guidance to the University's employees, in line with Ordinance 8. It is not a contractual document and can be amended at any time by the University. All staff must comply with both the provisions of this code and the University's policies and procedures, breaches of which will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. For further information, please refer to the Disciplinary Policy.

Further advice is available from the Human Resources Department.