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| Policy Name: Policy on Personal Relationships | | P No: P1314- 499 |
| Policy Owner: P J Cox | | |
| Issue Date: July 2001 | Review Date: January 2015 | |
| Relevant Legislation / Relevant external guidance if applicable: N/A | | |
| Documents being replaced (<i>quote P or L No.</i>): Code of Conduct on Personal Relationships (L1377) | | |
| <p>Policy Statement</p> <p>Swansea University values good professional relationships between work colleagues and between staff and students.</p> <p>Relationships between Members of Staff and Students</p> <p>Good professional relationships between staff and students are heavily reliant on mutual trust and confidence and can be put at risk where members of staff have close familial relationships with students, where they enter into sexual/romantic relationships with students, or where students are friends or business associates of staff.</p> <p>The conduct of members of staff in these circumstances should be based on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) members of staff should recognise a personal and ethical responsibility to protect the interests of students, to respect the trust involved in the staff/student relationship and to accept the constraints and obligations inherent in that responsibility; (b) members of staff should recognise that the establishment of an academic relationship with students who are close family members, or friends or business associates raises ethical and professional issues; (c) members of staff should recognise that to embark on a sexual/romantic relationship with a student involves serious difficulties rooted in unequal power as well as problems in maintaining the boundaries of professional and personal life. Such relationships can also disrupt the teaching and learning environment of other students and colleagues. <p>If a member of staff has a close familial relationship, a sexual/romantic relationship or some other association, financial or otherwise, with a student to whom they have, or are scheduled to have, professional responsibility, the member of staff has a responsibility to inform the Head of College in confidence, as soon as possible. The Head of College should act to separate the member of staff from such responsibilities. Such action is for the protection of both parties. Where the involved member of staff is a Head of College, he/she should inform the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer in confidence, who will advise the member of staff as to the appropriate course of action: usually this will involve delegating responsibility for the supervision/assessment of the student to another member of staff. The aim is to ensure the integrity of the study and assessment of the student and to avoid any question of bias at a later stage. Failure to inform the relevant authority in such cases may result in disciplinary action.</p> <p>Relationships between Members of Staff</p> <p>Good professional relationships between work colleagues are heavily reliant on mutual trust</p> | | |

and confidence and can be put at risk where members of staff have close familial relationships, where they enter into sexual/romantic relationships, or business associates.

The conduct of members of staff in these circumstances should be based on the following principles:

- (a) members of staff should recognise a personal and ethical responsibility to respect the trust involved in the working relationship with colleagues and to accept the constraints and obligations inherent in that responsibility;
- (b) members of staff should recognise that working with close family members, or business associates raises ethical and professional issues;
- (c) members of staff should recognise that a sexual/romantic relationship with a work colleague raises ethical and professional issues problems in maintaining the boundaries of professional and personal life.

Members of staff should take care that financial relationships, close familial relationships, sexual/romantic relationships or close associations of any other kind do not advantage or disadvantage any members of staff or any other individuals, do not undermine harmonious working relations with other colleagues, and do not put at risk the integrity of Swansea University's policies and procedures, including its policy on equality of opportunity.

Where such relationships exist or occur between members of staff, it is the responsibility of both individuals to deal appropriately with any conflict of interest. Members of staff needing advice should approach their own Head of College/Department or the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer.

Members of staff should note the following in respect of the above:-

- (a) if a member of staff has a financial, close familial, a sexual/romantic relationship or close association of any other kind with an applicant for employment in Swansea University (whatever the source of funding for that appointment), that member of staff is required to make the relationship known to the Head of the College/Department or other relevant authority. That authority will then ensure that the member of staff is not involved in the appointment process.
- (b) if one member of staff of Swansea University has a financial, a close familial, a sexual/romantic relationship or other close relationship with another member of staff of the University, both hold an obligation to inform the Head of College/Department if they find that either may be in a position to affect the outcome of an independent procedure concerning the other. Thus one party to the relationship must not act in judgement of the other as a Committee or Panel member in matters relating to probation, promotion or appraisal or in grievance or disciplinary matters. Once the report of the relationship is received by the Head of College/Department, then the latter must act to change the membership of the Committee or Panel. Where one of the involved members of staff is the Head of College/Department, he/she should inform the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer who will change the membership of the Committee or Panel.
- (c) if one member of staff of Swansea University has a financial, a close familial, a sexual/romantic relationship or other close relationship with another member of staff of the University, both hold an obligation to inform the Head of College/Department if they find that either may be in a position to affect the outcome of any process which may result in professional advantage or advancement for one or other of them. Once the report of the relationship is received by the Head of College/Department, then the latter must act to ensure that there is no unfair advantage gained. Where one of the involved members of staff is the Head of College/Department, he/she should inform the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer who will act to ensure that there is no unfair

- advantage gained.
- (d) where financial, close familial, sexual/romantic relationships occur between members of staff of the same Department, both members of staff are expected to inform the Head of College/Department as soon as they perceive any potential conflict, so it can be minimised. Where Heads of College/Department are so involved they should inform the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer.

Heads of College/Departments or other relevant authorities are expected to treat all such matters in confidence at all times and attempt to find ways in which conflict might be avoided.

Members of staff should be aware that a breach of this code may lead to disciplinary action.

Non Consensual Relationships: a student or a member of staff who is, or who has been involved in, a sexual/romantic relationship with a member of staff, and who does not consider their involvement to be truly consensual, will have the right to complain under the University's harassment policy.

Definitions of HR terms used in this policy:

Professional responsibilities of staff towards students may be academic, administrative in the widest sense, or advisory.

Supporting Procedures/Guidance Documents/Codes of Practice with P Nos. and hyperlinks: