

# Personal Relationships Policy

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Final v1.0	Human Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Original version formerly known as “Policy on personal relationships between employees and between employees and students.”</li> </ul>
Draft v0.1	Acting Director of Human Resources and HR Business Partner Human Resources	April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor updates:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy name change.</li> <li>Refreshed with updated reporting details for declaring personal relationships.</li> <li>Transferred onto the new policy template.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Final Draft v0.1	A/DoHR and HRBP Human Resources	May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted to the Executive Team for approval. No revisions.</li> </ul>
Final v1.1	A/DoHR and HRBP Human Resources	May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised policy.</li> </ul>

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## **Policy Statement**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This Policy applies to all employees who are employed by, or who work for, Leeds Trinity University.
- 1.2 The Policy is intended to provide direction in areas where personal relationships overlap with working relationships and to ensure that employees do not confer unfair advantage or disadvantage on any student or employees, that they do not abuse their authority and that they do not lay themselves open to allegations that they have done so.

### **2. Principles**

- 2.1 It is expected that all parties will demonstrate a commitment to observing the University's core values and behaviours throughout this process.
- 2.2 Leeds Trinity University values and relies upon the professional integrity of relationships between employees and in the employee/student relationship. In order that the institution's business is conducted and perceived to be conducted in a professional and proper manner it is necessary to take account of personal relationships which overlap with professional ones.
- 2.3 In the context of this document, a personal relationship is defined as a consensual relationship which is:
  - a family relationship; and/or
  - a business/commercial/financial relationship; and/or
  - a sexual/romantic relationship (in the case of individuals aged 18 and over); and/or
  - a close personal friendship.
- 2.4 It is not the intention of Leeds Trinity University to infringe personal freedoms or to intrude on the privacy of individuals. The institution will not seek to influence whether or not such personal relationships continue. However, the institution has a statutory obligation to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all those affected by its operations and activities and it will, therefore, take any steps it deems necessary to satisfy these responsibilities.
- 2.5 The institution requires that, if personal relationships exist, they be conducted with the utmost discretion and entirely outside the professional context.
- 2.6 Relationships which are not consensual may be dealt with through the Protection of Dignity at Work and Study Policy, which can be found on the Human Resources Intranet site or obtained in printed form from Human Resources.
- 2.7 Relationships which pre-date the introduction of the Policy remain subject to its provisions.

- 2.8 Any employee or student who has substantial reason to believe that a violation of this Policy has occurred should discuss their concerns in confidence with their line manager or Human Resources.
- 2.9 Any breach of this Policy is a potentially serious matter and could result in disciplinary action being taken.

### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees who are employed by, or who work for, Leeds Trinity University.
- 3.2 Students may seek guidance on the implementation of the Policy, on a confidential basis, from the Director of Student Support and Engagement.

### **4. Relationships Between Employees and Students**

- 4.1 The institution believes that the professional relationship between a student and an employee is vital to a student's educational development and affirms that the teaching relationship is based on trust, confidence and dependency. In this context a professional relationship is defined as one where there is an assessing, supervising, tutoring, teaching or pastoral role or a role providing administrative or technical support. Students are entitled to equality of treatment and it is important that a personal relationship between an employee and a student is not perceived by others to prejudice that equality of treatment.
- 4.2 Employees are strongly advised to consider the implications very carefully before entering into a sexual/romantic relationship with a student for whom they have a responsibility for assessing, supervising, tutoring, teaching, for pastoral care or for whom they are required to provide administrative or technical support. Furthermore, employees should not enter into a business, commercial or financial relationship with a student which could compromise, or could be perceived to compromise, the objectivity and professional standing of the professional relationship.
- 4.3 It is recognised, however, that such relationships may exist when an employee is appointed or when a student enrolls, or that a relationship may develop between an employee and a student during a programme of study. Where an employee has a professional role in relation to a student with whom they have a personal relationship, it is the responsibility of the employee to inform their Head of School/Service (or the Leadership Team member or the Executive Team member if the employee is a Leadership Team member), in order that alternative teaching, tutoring, assessment or administrative/technical support arrangements may be made.
- 4.4 Employees may seek guidance on the implementation of this Policy, on a confidential basis, from the Director of People and Culture or designate. Students may seek guidance on the implementation of the Policy, on a confidential basis, from the Director of Student Support and Engagement.

## **5. Relationships Between Employees**

- 5.1 The existence of a personal relationship between employees does not affect the employment or prospects of either party. However, employees should declare to their Head of School/Service (or the Leadership Team member or the Executive Team member if the employee is a Leadership Team member) any personal relationships which may give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest, trust or breach of confidentiality.
- 5.2 Where a personal relationship exists or develops between employees who are in a line management or supervisory relationship at work, they must not be involved in recruitment, selection, PDR, promotion or in any other management activity or process involving the other party. Additionally, employees in a personal relationship should not work together in any circumstance whereby a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage may be gained or perceived to be gained from the overlap of a personal and professional relationship. In any such circumstances, the relationship must be declared in confidence to the Head of School/Service (or the Leadership Team member or the Executive Team member if the employee is a Leadership Team member). The line manager to whom the information is disclosed will then, in consultation with the Director of People and Culture or designate, make alternative management arrangements and confirm them in writing to the individuals concerned. If it is considered unavoidable to inform other employees about the relationship in order to explain a change in management arrangements, this will be discussed with the individuals concerned before it is disclosed.
- 5.3 The institution is not obliged to provide different arrangements for those involved in personal relationships.

## **6. Declaration of Personal Relationships where they Overlap with Professional Roles**

- 6.1 Employees who are uncertain about whether they should declare a personal relationship are advised to seek guidance, in confidence, from the Director of People and Culture or designate, or their trade union representative.
- 6.2 If a personal relationship as defined within this Policy is not declared and this gives rise to the conferment of an unfair advantage or disadvantage on either of the parties to the relationship or on any other employee or student, this will be considered a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- 6.3 Although the existence of a personal relationship is not a bar to employment with the institution, applicants for employment will be asked to declare any personal relationship with existing employees or students.

## **7. Related Policies & References**

7.1 This policy should be considered in conjunction with, but not limited to the following policies and references:

- Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
- Protection of Dignity at Work and Study Policy
- Student Support and Engagement policies:
  - Policy for Students Under the Age of 18 Years
  - Sexual Misconduct Policy