



Jesus College Oxford

STAFF-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP POLICY

The policy generally relates to all fellows and all members of staff, academic or otherwise, having or have had a relationship with a student.

The College regards the professional relationship between fellows or staff and students as central to the student's academic success and wellbeing. Professional relationships are any in which the fellow or staff member has any academic, supervisory, administrative, or pastoral involvement with a student. The College reminds fellows and staff of the importance of maintaining academic and professional integrity and of their responsibility for the welfare of students.

While the College does not wish to regulate the private lives of its fellows and staff, it strongly advises them not to enter into a close personal or intimate relationship with a student, and alerts them to the complications and conflicts of interest that may result. To have such a relationship with a student may create difficulties (because of the influence and control that fellows and staff may have over the progress of a student in the College) as well as problems in maintaining the boundaries of professional and personal life. Such relationships may also have an impact on other students and colleagues and might lead to accusations of favouritism or bias and undermine trust in the academic process.

This policy covers current and former close personal or intimate relationships, however brief, between fellows or members of staff and current students. These include, but are not limited to: marital, sexual, romantic, or emotional relationships whether they are conducted in person or online.

For the purposes of this policy, a 'member of staff' should be understood as including, but not limited to, any individual who is working at the College under a formal contract of employment or as a casual paid worker (including graduate students working as lecturers).

A student should be understood as any individual who is studying for an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification, or who is a student on any course arranged by or through the University or any part of the collegiate University.

Disclosing a relationship

The College requires that any close personal or intimate relationship between a student and a fellow or staff member is brought to the attention of the Academic Director in order that action can be taken to mitigate any unintended consequences. The fellow or member of staff should also disclose any former relationship with a current student. Any declaration of this kind will, so far as possible and subject to the specific provisions of this policy, be treated in confidence, and every effort will be made to ensure that it does not disadvantage either party with regard to their professional advancement or academic progress. In the case that the Academic Director is required to disclose such a relationship, the disclosure should be made to the Principal.

Disciplinary action may be taken against a fellow or member of staff who fails to declare a close personal or intimate relationship as required by this policy.

Attention is drawn to the fact that relationships involving students under the age of eighteen or vulnerable adults could fall within the scope of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 relating to persons in



positions of trust having sexual relations with children under eighteen or vulnerable adults. Fellows and members of staff must not enter into a close personal or intimate relationship with a student under eighteen years of age or a vulnerable adult.

If a close personal or intimate relationship is pre-existing between a fellow or member of staff and a candidate for admission as a student, the fellow or member of staff must make the Academic Director aware of it at the outset, so that steps can be taken to avoid any conflict of interest arising. This is in the interests of both candidate and admitting fellow/tutor.

Academic Director's responsibilities

If a fellow or member of staff has been, is currently in, or embarks upon a relationship with a student, this must be disclosed by the fellow or member of staff to the Academic Director as early as possible so the following steps may be taken:

- consultation with the fellow or member of staff and the student to identify any impact their relationship may have within the College;
- re-organisation of duties to minimise contact and ensure the fellow or member of staff is not tutoring, supervising, assessing, providing pastoral care, or professionally responsible for administering activities in which the student is involved; and,
- ensuring that appropriate action is taken to minimise the potential effect of the relationship on other fellows, members of staff and/or students.

In the case of a student whose studies are in a very specialised area, such that no alternative tutor or supervisor is available, the Academic Director should take further advice from the relevant Division. The Academic Director will inform both the fellow or member of staff and the student of the need to do this.

The Academic Director will deal with the situation in a manner that protects the dignity and privacy of all parties, and those involved will be expected to comply with any reasonable decision or action. There will be no obligation on the parties involved to keep their relationship confidential.

Guidance for students on relationships and the need for disclosure

The College strongly advises students not to enter into any relationship with a fellow or member of staff, as it may compromise the integrity of their professional relationship. If such a relationship develops, and the student is not sure that the fellow or member of staff has disclosed their relationship, they are encouraged to advise the Academic Director in confidence.

Non-consensual relationships or inappropriate behaviour

If any student finds themselves in receipt of unwanted or inappropriate behaviour or involved in a relationship that they do not consider to be truly consensual, or if they consider that they have been adversely affected by a misuse of power, authority, or conflict of interest, they should refer to the College's policy on harassment.

Fellows or members of staff who experience unwanted advances and other unwelcome behaviour should raise the issue with the Academic Director, Principal, or Human Resources Director.

Support and guidance

Any fellow or member of staff or student who has questions about this policy and its application should discuss them with the Academic Director in the first instance.

Additional support for students may be sought from the College's Welfare Team or the University's Student Welfare and Support Services.



Relationships in a University context

If a fellow or member of staff who has an appointment with the University enters into a close personal or intimate relationship with a student, then that member of staff may be bound by University's policy in addition to this policy.