



Selwyn College Cambridge

Staff and Students Relationships Policy

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Selwyn College has endorsed the University's Policy concerning personal relationships between staff and students.

Refer to: [Personal relationships between staff and students policy](#) which includes guidance on detailed interpretation of the Policy is available.

The following Policy is intended to align with the University Policy with minor changes which reflect the College context. This Policy complements the University Policy and does not replace it. The College has approved this policy on the assumption that collegiality can involve a strong professional bond between Tutors, Directors of Studies and others and their students. Such relationships are individual and can be close. However, the policy seeks to define a line that distinguishes these types of relations from those where power dynamics or issues of bias or exploitation might be at issue. As clause 7.4 of the University policy states:

If there is any uncertainty, the best course is to declare a relationship, or any interaction with a student that is of concern, so that appropriate measures (to protect both the student and the member of staff) can be considered.

In other words, 'If in doubt, ask and be cautious; even if not in doubt, ask yourself whether you should be.'

1. Positive professional relationships between members of staff and students are an essential part of supporting our students' educational development and ensuring their welfare whilst at Selwyn College. However, when relationships between staff and students become personal in nature, they may lead to actual or perceived imbalances of power or authority, accusations of bias or exploitation, and questions about the nature of consent. This can undermine trust and confidence in the academic process, impair academic progress and negatively affect the welfare of the student.
2. The Policy applies to all staff, this includes any person who is engaged by the

College as a Fellow, employee or worker and/or who holds a College office or post, as well as any person to whom the College makes available any of the privileges or facilities normally afforded to its employees - where postgraduate students are working for the College in a teaching or related capacity, this Policy will apply to them in that capacity as if they were employees of the College. Particular provisions are set out for those members of staff who have direct or indirect academic responsibilities, or other direct professional responsibilities, in relation to a student (referred to as Relevant staff members).

3. Relevant staff members are prohibited from pursuing or entering into an intimate relationship with any student for whom they have any direct or indirect academic responsibilities, or other direct professional responsibilities. Failure to comply with this Policy will be considered as a disciplinary matter.
4. Relevant staff members are strongly discouraged from entering into a close personal relationship with any such student for whom they have any direct or indirect academic responsibilities, or other direct professional responsibilities. When such relationships do occur, they must be declared so that an assessment can be made of any potential conflict of interest and influence. Failure to comply with this Policy will be considered as a disciplinary matter.
5. All staff have a duty to behave appropriately towards students, to act with integrity in their work and to avoid placing themselves in positions of actual or perceived conflict.
6. Where an intimate or close personal relationship exists when a member of staff is appointed or when a student enrolls at the College and the member of staff would ordinarily be a Relevant staff member to a student, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to inform the appropriate person in order that alternative arrangements can be made where a direct or indirect academic responsibility or other professional responsibility may potentially become relevant.

TERMS AND DISCLOSURE

1. Relevant staff members are prohibited from pursuing or entering into an intimate relationship with any student for whom they have any direct or indirect responsibility. Failure to comply with this Policy will be considered as a disciplinary matter.
2. Relevant staff members are strongly discouraged from having any close personal relationship with any student for whom they have any direct or indirect responsibility and must declare if such a relationship has developed, is developing or appears likely to develop between them and any student. A failure

to declare will be considered as a disciplinary matter.

3. Relevant staff members must not take on or assume a professional responsibility for a student:
 - i. with whom they are in an existing intimate relationship or with whom they previously had such a relationship; or
 - ii. with whom they are in any close personal relationship or with whom they previously had such a relationship without first declaring this to the Head of HR or Senior Tutor, to enable them to assess the risk of conflicts of interest and put appropriate measures in place as necessary.
4. If a member of staff is in an intimate or any close personal relationship with a student for whom they do not currently have any direct or indirect academic responsibilities, or other direct professional responsibilities, but where it would be reasonable to assume that the member of staff may in the future have responsibility for the student; the relationship must be disclosed to the Head of HR or Senior Tutor to assess the risk of any conflict of interest arising and put appropriate alternative and/or protective measures in place as necessary.
5. If it is found this Policy is breached unintentionally, for example where a member of staff is unaware that the other party is a student, and had no reasonable basis to suspect it, the member of staff must inform Head of HR or Senior Tutor as soon as they become aware of the situation. If a member of staff is unsure whether a relationship with a student should be disclosed under this Policy, the member of staff should disclose it.
6. A declaration of any close personal relationship should be made to the appropriate person. Typically, academic members of College are expected to report to the Senior Tutor while non-academic members of College would report to the Head of HR in the first instance.
7. If it is found that a person has made a complaint under this policy that is malicious or vexatious the College may, as is also envisaged in section 15.3 of the University policy, instigate a disciplinary process. Disciplinary action will not be taken in cases brought where the conclusion is that they were mistaken or otherwise ill-founded but not malicious or vexatious. The procedure in such cases will follow the principles in section 2.14 of the College's Complaints Procedure. A case may be terminated if it is considered frivolous or vexatious, examples of vexatious complaints are those which are obsessive, harassing or repetitive; insist on pursuing unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes and / or complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance.