



Scope and purpose

The University is committed to the promotion of an inclusive, respectful and considerate community. The University expects every staff member to behave in a respectful, inclusive and responsible manner to all members of the UK University community.

At the University of Nottingham, members of staff will have a variety of relationships with colleagues across the institution that are entirely beneficial in, for example, promoting positive working, research collaboration or teaching partnerships.

However, there may be occasions when personal relationships between staff may lead to, an actual or a perceived, conflict of interest. A personal relationship for the purposes of this policy is defined as either:

- a family relationship, for example, a relationship to a parent, child, sibling or other family member
- individuals in marriages or civil partnerships
- a romantic and/or sexual relationship

The existence of a personal relationship between staff members will not generally pose a conflict of interest. However, where personal relationships occur in shared working environments or power/management structures, for example, between a supervisor and a team member, an actual or perceived conflict of interest may arise.

In line with our University values of inclusivity, fairness and respect, the purpose of this policy is to recognise that different types of relationships, personal, family and romantic, will occur and exist between staff in our University community, and to ensure that we protect individuals, colleagues and students from any conflicts of interest, actual or perceived, that might arise from such relationships.

Personal relationships principles

Where personal relationships occur between a line manager or supervisor and a team member, an actual or perceived conflict of interest may arise. This applies both to pre-existing relationships and those that begin and/or end whilst working together.

The University's principles in relation to personal relationships are that members of staff must:

- not solely line-manage, or be line-managed solely by, anyone with whom they have a personal relationship as defined in the scope and purpose
- ensure that they are not involved in any decision-making processes relating to the conduct, employment or performance management of those with whom they have a personal relationship
- ensure that they are not involved in any practices within the University which could be viewed as canvassing for a person with whom they have a personal relationship, for example through recruitment or promotion processes or via committees who influence decision making where that person or their work is discussed

Examples of decision-making processes to which these principles may apply are listed below. The list is not exhaustive, and staff must exercise care in the discharge of any decision making where a conflict of interest may arise.

- **Career:** recruitment and selection; promotion or re-grading; recognition or reward decisions, see also the [recruitment conflict of interest guidance](#)
- **Conduct:** disciplinary issues; handling of complaints against or by the individual
- **Conditions:** requests relating to working conditions, terms or benefits, for example requests for part-time/flexible working or contract extensions
- **Workload:** allocation of workload, or workload resources such as equipment, funding, technical support or space
- **Financial:** approval of any financial payment, for example timesheets, expenses claims or allocation of external funding

Declaring a personal relationship

-Where there is a potential conflict of interest personal relationships must be declared. This should be declared to your line manager or a more senior manager if the direct line manager is the person involved in the relationship. This declaration will enable all practical measures to be taken to protect individuals from any conflicts of interest, actual or perceived, that might arise from such relationships. Where the individual feels uncomfortable with declaring the relations to their line manager, or a more senior manager, can declare to or seek advice from their [HR Business Partner](#). Failure to declare a relationship may result in an investigation and could lead to disciplinary action.

Where personal relationships **commence between members of staff**, both individuals are responsible for declaring the relationship and acting appropriately to manage any potential conflict of interest.

Where an employee is **promoted into a leadership role** and this leads to them line managing someone they have a personal relationship with, alternative line management must be agreed by all parties.

There are occasions when staff are **recruited to the University** when they are in a personal relationship with an existing employee, or both are recruited simultaneously. In those circumstances, it must be declared as part of the appointment process on the offer of appointment. There is support for panel member in the [recruitment conflict of interest guidance](#).

There are occasions where a **specific task** could lead to a potential conflict and this should be declared at the time so that adaptation to the task can be made.

The manager to whom the relationship is disclosed will make all suitable arrangements with the staff members involved to remove any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

All practical steps must be taken to avoid conflicts of interest, for example allocating an alternative manager to process and approve expenses, assigning alternative colleagues to conduct annual reviews. It will be noted on both member of staff's personal file that a personal or family relationship has been declared; where steps have been taken to avoid conflicts of interest these will be outlined on the personal files.

Where it is unavoidable to remove the manager involved in the relationship from certain situations, an alternative independent person or HR Business Partner will also be involved in the decision-making process.

All those informed of the staff relationship are required to keep this information confidential.

If you have any questions about anything in this policy, and if it applies to you, please seek advice from your line manager or [HR Business Partner](#).

Existing or previous relationships

This section applies to relationships, which are in existence at the time this policy is published and to relationships which have occurred in the past.

Members of staff must, within two months of this policy being published, declare any existing and/or previous close personal or intimate relationships with another staff member where there remains a potential conflict, in confidence to their Head of School/Department or HR Business Partner.

Support

There is support available for staff who need guidance with this policy, or to address matters where they feel that this policy not been adhered to:

- Your line manager
 - [Dignity Adviser](#)
 - [HR Employment Relations Team](#)
 - [Trade Union Representative](#)
 - [University Counselling Service](#)
 - [Employee Assistance Programme](#) – access via the Employee Hub
 - [Chaplaincy and Faith Support](#)
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