

THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON

GUIDELINES ON CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS (Applicable for Employees and Students at the University of Bolton)

1.0 Scope

These guidelines have been developed to provide employees and students with information on the nature of consensual relationships, the associated dangers of and the reporting requirements. This document covers consensual relationships between employees and also between employees and students. However, they should be considered for any personal relationship that could result in a conflict of interest.

2.0 General

The term "consensual relationship" describes a situation where two individuals at the University willingly embark on a romantic/sexual relationship. One view is that such relationships are equal adult-to-adult relationships and that interference would infringe on personal freedom. There are however a number of situations in the employment and educational contexts where such relationships may create a conflict of interest, breach of trust or compromise duty of care (e.g. a family relationship, a business / commercial / financial relationship).

Whilst the existence of consensual relationships between employees or employees and students does not necessarily consti 1 Z.024 2543 Tm0 G[)TJETC MC /P 113B0056m0--23

In all cases, whether the employee has a direct professional responsibility or not, the employee must also inform his/her AGL or Head of Department of any relationship with a student. The AGL or Head of Department will be responsible for ensuring that in any other responsibilities in respect of the student and will note the fact that a relationship exists . seeking advice from their HR Business Partner, as appropriate.

Failure to meet this requirement of notification may lead to formal disciplinary action. If the employee concerned is a AGL or Head of Department, then he/she should inform the Chief People Officer or Registrar.

Where a student is involved in a consensual relationship with an employee and wishes to discuss the possible impact on them/their studies, they may wish to raise this in confidence with the Student Services Manager or any other person who has an advisory role for students.

Please note: where any consensual relationship between an employee and a student creates a conflict of interest or has a significant detrimental impact on

- i) A students ability to complete their studies
- ii) The University's financial operations
- iii) The University's academic operations

The University retains the right to take approach action, in line with the relevant University procedure

4.1 Potential Consequences with consensual relationships between employees and students

4.1.1 Consequences for the student

Engaging in a relationship with an employee can have damaging effects on the student. He/she may, for example, suffer extreme distress upon discovering that the employee has no intention of sustaining the relationship for long, or is having a series of affairs with students. His/her physical and mental health may be affected. He/she can become isolated from peers and labelled by other students and employees.

In academic terms, the student may be subjected to over-severe marking as the employee tries to avoid any suggestion of preferential treatment.

If the relationship ends, or if the student seeks to terminate the relationship, he/she may be exposed to harassment by the employee but may well be afraid to complain. It may even be that the student will feel that he/she has no choice but to leave the course.