

 S P Jain London School of Management	Staff Student Relationships
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1) Introduction

- a) This policy outlines the S P Jain London School of Management's (the School's) position on relationships between members of staff and students. The relationship between students and staff are central to the student experience and this policy is intended to ensure that these relationships are professional, have boundaries, and are founded on mutual trust and confidence.
- b) In the context of this document, a personal relationship is defined as:
 - i) a family relationship;
 - ii) a business/commercial/financial relationship; or
 - iii) a sexual/romantic relationship, however brief.
- c) A professional relationship is defined as:
 - i) a teaching, assessing, supervising, tutoring, mentoring role; or
 - ii) a pastoral or welfare role; or
 - iii) an administrative or technical support role.
- d) The difference in power between a member of staff and a student makes any personal relationships potentially vulnerable to exploitation. They also generate real or perceived inequalities, not only involving the persons concerned, but also affecting other members of the School, whether students or staff.

2. Scope of the policy

- a) This policy applies to all staff members of the School, including adjunct lecturers and other contracted staff engaged by the School.
- b) The policy also applies to staff who are enrolled as students.

3. Relationships with other policies

- a) This policy is part of a suite of policies and guidelines that have been designed to protect staff and students and ensure all members of the School community can enjoy a positive environment in which to work and study. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
 - i) Guidance on Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour
 - ii) Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
 - iii) Dignity at Work
 - iv) Declarations of Interest Policy
 - v) Guidance on the use of social media for staff

4. Policy statement

- a) The staff-student relationship should be one of trust and confidence in order that students can benefit from the learning experience offered by the School. It is also vital that students benefit from equality of treatment and so it is important that a personal relationship between a member of staff and a student does not in any way prejudice that equality, in reality or perception.
- b) Staff members should not enter into a personal relationship with any student and this policy covers all students regardless of their programme. Although undergraduate students and postgraduate research students (given the nature of the supervisor/student relationship) are seen to be more vulnerable, all students are affected by the imbalance of power in any such relationship. It should be noted that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2000 it is an offence for a person over 18 to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.
- c) The School regards it as unprofessional for any staff member to actively seek to initiate a personal relationship or to pursue such a relationship with a student in any circumstance. It has a duty of care to its students to ensure that they can study in a safe environment and that their welfare is protected. The School will, therefore, take disciplinary action under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure where there is any behaviour by members of staff that undermines the professional staff/student relationship such as texting, inappropriate communications, asking them to socialise outside organised events etc. Such behaviour or that of a more serious nature such as asking for sexual favours or other forms of abuse, will lead to action.

The School does, however, recognize that such relationships may nonetheless develop where it may not have been initiated by the staff member or may pre-exist. Where a member of staff has a professional role in relation to a student with whom they have a pre-existing personal relationship, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to inform the Dean or Head of Service promptly. The Dean/Head will review teaching, tutoring, assessment, administrative or any other arrangements to ensure the interests of the student are protected. Where a personal relationship develops with a student, the member of staff must inform the Dean or Head promptly in accordance with 6 below.

5. Guidance on maintaining professional relationships

- a) Staff should aim to develop good professional relationships with students. Within this, certain boundaries are important to maintain to ensure that these relationships remain professional as follows:

- i) Although staff should aim to develop a professional relationship they should not see themselves as friends;
- ii) Staff should maintain an appropriate boundary between work and home including not sharing personal information with students or socialising with them except on any appropriate programme related functions or School organized extracurricular activities;
- iii) Staff should only communicate with students through official School channels such as email or Blackboard. They should not give out personal phone numbers or email addresses. They should also not use social media platforms for communication such as WhatsApp or request students to be a 'friend' on Facebook or respond to such requests from students – staff should refer to the guidance on the use of social media for further information about what is acceptable.

6. Declarations

- a) Staff must declare to the Dean/Head of Service where they have an existing personal relationship with a student. Where this exists, the Dean/Head should ensure that the members of staff do not teach or assess the student or otherwise have any professional responsibility for them. Such relationships should also be declared and it is important that the student is not advantaged by the relationship above their peers.
- d) Where a personal relationship develops, it is the member of staff must inform the Dean/Head Service promptly. The Dean/head of Service will review with the Chief Operating Office and HR what action to take, although this will normally be disciplinary action under the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

7. Reporting concerns

- a) Students who are concerned about a relationship with a member of staff will be encouraged to use the Guidance on Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour where applicable (see 8 below).
- b) Staff who have concerns about the relationships of other member of staff with students should inform the Dean/Head of service or HR.

8. Dealing with unacceptable behaviour

- a) The School is committed to providing and supporting an environment that promotes equality and diversity. It values the diverse community and aims to create an environment of respect where all are treated equally and where staff and students can reach their full potential.
- b) Sexual misconduct, harassment, bullying and discrimination can lead to fear, stress and anxiety and may be unlawful. The School finds any form of such behaviour unacceptable. If a student is unsure whether a relationship or interactions with a member of staff could be defined as sexual misconduct, harassment or bullying, they should be encouraged to act promptly and seek advice from the Director of Student Experience or the Student Welfare Officer.

9. Related policies

- a) Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- b) Guidance on Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour
- c) Staff Social Media Policy