
Staff and student relationship policy

Status: Approved

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Audience: Public

Responsible person: Student Support Manager

Approved by: Institute Management Board

1.0 Scope and Purpose

The Dyson Institute is committed to the promotion of an inclusive, respectful, and considerate community, and in taking steps to protect students from conflicts of interest and abuse of power that can arise from personal relationships between staff and students. The Institute expects every staff member and student to behave in a respectful, inclusive, and responsible manner to all members of the Dyson community.

Personal relationships between staff and students could raise potential for a conflict of interest, create challenges regarding trust and confidence in working relationships, and give rise to a perceived or realised imbalance or abuse of power and authority. The Institute is committed to equal treatment in teaching, learning, supervision, selection, assessment, research, and pastoral support. Where a student is also a staff member, their status as a student takes priority in this policy.

2.0 Institute Principles

2.1 Intimate relationships

The Office for Students (OfS) define 'Intimate Personal Relationship': "as a relationship that involves one or more of the following elements:

- physical intimacy including isolated or repeated sexual activity; or
- romantic or emotional intimacy."

Given the small specialist nature of the Dyson Institute it is assumed that all members of Institute staff have direct or indirect professional or pastoral responsibility for students' wellbeing and development. Therefore, to maintain a professional relationship with students based on trust, confidence and equal treatment, staff are prohibited from entering an intimate or sexual relationship with any student at the Dyson Institute.

Any member of Institute staff entering an intimate or sexual relationship with a student under the age of 18 will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer in accordance with the Dyson Institute Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.

Students and staff are encouraged to read the Sexual Violence, Harassment and Misconduct policy alongside this policy if they believe they have experienced or are at risk of experiencing harassment and/or sexual misconduct because of the actual or potential abuse of power and conflicts of interest that can arise from relationships between staff and students. Reports can be made through the Safeguarding Portal or seeing a member of the team.

If a relationship exists prior to a student enrolling or a member of staff joining, then the policy for personal relationships (section 2.2) should be followed.

Failure to comply with this policy will result in an investigation and potentially disciplinary action in accordance with the [Dyson Disciplinary Policy](#).

2.2 Close personal relationships

Examples of what may amount to a close personal relationship is defined as a personal or familial relationship include a partner, family member, or close friendship. This list is non-exhaustive and if you are in doubt about the nature of a relationship, you should discuss the matter with your line manager or HR business partner.

Close personal relationships may have formed prior to a member of staff's appointment or a student's enrolment at the Institute. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to inform their Head of Department and to disclose the relationship as described in [Dyson's Global Conflicts of Interest policy](#). This will allow arrangements to be made to mitigate any risks that may arise on a case-by-case basis.

Staff members who have a close personal relationship with a student must always act with integrity and must not be placed in a position where there is an actual or perceived conflict of interest. This includes ensuring that they do not have any influence over processes or other aspects of provision which could unduly benefit the student or place them at risk of harm from abuse of power.

The OfS defines 'abuse of power' as: "a situation where a relevant staff member exploits a position of power in relation to a student to apply pressure in a way which:

- may result in the student doing something, or refraining from doing something, that they may not have otherwise done; and
- that action or inaction could reasonably result in something that falls within the scope of an intimate personal relationship."

It is the responsibility of the Institute's management team to ensure that action is taken to proactively mitigate against potential conflict of interest, including by removing or transferring responsibilities where appropriate.

Relevant responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Recruitment and selection
- Teaching
- Supervision and assessment
- Exam invigilation
- Pastoral support including reasonable adjustment decisions.
- Student conduct issues (complaints against the individuals or complaints made by the individual)
- Complaints and appeals.
- Mitigating circumstances

3.0 Dyson principles

Institute students are all employees of Dyson Technology Ltd. Any close personal relationship between employees of Dyson, direct or indirect, must be declared. Once declared, roles will usually be adjusted to mitigate the risks that may arise from any perceived or actual conflict of interest. Further information, including how to disclose and record a relationship can be found in [Dyson's Global Conflicts of Interest policy](#).

Failure to comply with the [Global Conflict of Interest Policy](#) will result in an investigation and potentially disciplinary action in accordance with the [Dyson Disciplinary Policy](#).

4.0 Speaking up

Students and staff are encouraged to refuse and report inappropriate behaviours from staff and can gain support through the student support and safeguarding teams via the Institute Hub.

Where a member of staff or student feels that this policy or the Dyson Conflicts of Interest Policy has not been followed they should report this through the [safeguarding portal](#), or by contacting legal compliance and ethics at Lce@dyson.com or SpeakUp@dyson.com.