

Consensual Relationships Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 University of Manchester Conferences Ltd (UMC) (“the company”) values and relies upon the professional integrity of relationships between staff members.
- 1.2 In order that UMC business is conducted and is perceived to be conducted in a professional and proper manner it is necessary to distinguish between, and take account of consensual/personal relationships which overlap with professional ones.
- 1.3 There may be occasions when staff members are related or become close or romantically involved with another member of staff.
- 1.4 They may be faced with situations where personal interest may conflict with their duties and may be uncertain about how to deal with them.
- 1.5 This policy seeks to establish acceptable treatment and guide behaviour in such situations.
- 1.6 In the context of this document a **consensual/personal** relationship is defined as:
 - i. A family relationship;
 - ii. A business/commercial/financial relationship or
 - iii. A sexual/romantic relationship.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the correct procedure is followed so that employees are not susceptible to allegations of impropriety, bias, abuse of authority, discrimination, conflict of interest or favouritism.

3. Aims

- 3.1 The aim of the policy is to set out some principles to help staff avoid conferring (or being perceived as conferring), unfair advantage or disadvantage on colleagues or other individuals due to **consensual/personal** relationships (as referred to in 1.6, above).

4. Relationships between Members of Staff

- 4.1 Where romantic/sexual relationships occur between staff, it is their responsibility to deal appropriately with any potential conflicts of interest.
- 4.2 It may be necessary to review the relevant reporting structure if the relationship is between a line manager and a member of their team.
- 4.3 Any staff needing advice should approach his/her own manager or, if deemed initially more appropriate and or discreet, Human Resources.
- 4.4 Staff should take care that any financial, familial or personal relationships entered into on a consensual basis do not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any member of staff, or other individual e.g. - job applicants or service providers.
- 4.5 The following should be noted and observed:
 - i. Should such relationships occur then the individuals involved will be expected to inform their manager as soon as possible to ensure that the potential effects can be considered.
 - ii. The manager must treat these matters in confidence at all times and will, in consultation with those involved, find ways in which actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest might be avoided.
 - iii. If the individuals involved are working in the same team and/or work area and any actual or perceived conflict of interest cannot be resolved by other means it may be necessary to explore the possibility of moving one party to another team and/or work area.
 - iv. If a member of staff has a close personal or familial relationship with a job applicant it would normally be necessary for him/her to avoid any involvement in the recruitment/selection process.
 - v. External and internal applicants for posts will be asked to declare relevant personal relationships on appointment.
 - vi. A member of staff who is, or who has been, involved in a romantic/sexual relationship with another member of staff and who does not consider their involvement to be truly consensual will have the right of complaint under the Dignity at Work Policy.

5. Relationships between Staff and Students

- 5.1 The company values good professional relationships between its staff and students at the University, which are reliant on mutual trust and confidence; however this can be jeopardised when a member of staff enters into a romantic/sexual liaison with a student.

- 5.2 Staff should recognise a professional and ethical responsibility to protect the interests of students, to respect the trust involved in the staff/student relationship and to accept the constraints and obligations inherent in that responsibility.
- 5.3 Staff must be aware that students who are, or who have been, involved in a romantic/sexual relationship with a member of staff and who do not consider their involvement to be truly consensual will have the right of complaint under the University of Manchester's Dignity at Work and Study Policy, which may lead to formal proceedings being considered against a member of staff under the applicable UMC Ltd procedures.

6. Consequences of Non-compliance

- 6.1 Employees should be aware that a breach of this Policy could lead to action under the Disciplinary Procedures.

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