

## Suggested guidance for maintaining professional boundaries

In order to maintain appropriate relationships with students, and to avoid perceived or actual abuse of power or conflict of interest, all staff should:

- maintain appropriate physical and emotional distance from students;
- use a University email account, [University telephone](#), University software and applications and internet access for communications with students where possible, avoiding personal messaging (such as through Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp or Twitter). Staff are also encouraged to use their work telephone numbers which may be diverted to the staff member's personal mobile;
- avoid developing close friendships with students or singling out one student repeatedly for attention, as this may be seen as grooming or open staff to allegations of bias;
- set an example by writing and communicating with students in a professional and business style;
- adhere to the same guidelines, where logistically possible, when participating in fieldwork with a student, attending conferences and any other University activities whilst away from the usual workplace.

Where staff have a primary role of providing supervision, teaching, or pastoral care to students (including personal tutors), staff should:

- ensure that meetings and discussions occur on campus or other University-approved premises where possible. Where this is not possible, ensure the meeting occurs in a public venue, such as a library or a café;
- refer students with support needs to a relevant University support service and limit your role in providing personal support to a student where this is not part of your role at the University;
- refrain from contacting students outside of reasonable working hours;
- refrain from asking students questions about their personal life except as relevant to a University process (e.g. medical information for special consideration, or personal circumstances information as part of an academic progress process) or sharing details about the staff member's personal life with a student;
- avoid socialising with students on a regular basis or expending money on students (such as gifts or drinks).

The following are examples of unacceptable behaviour towards students. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list:

- predatory, coercive or non-consensual behaviour;
- physical touching, that could be construed as sexualised or over-familiar (e.g. touches of the shoulder, greeting with a hug or squeezes of the leg), or comments or questions of a sexual or personal nature (whether verbally or electronically);
- paying undue special attention to a particular student which may be seen as grooming or evidence of bias;
- accepting gifts from a student, unless it is following final assessment completion and deemed to be a minor token of thanks in accordance with the University's Acceptance of Gifts Policy, or giving gifts to, or expending money on, a student;
- Connecting with, or communicating with, students on personal (as opposed to Professional) social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tiktok;

- inviting an individual student to your private home or room without others present, or visiting their home or room, including while at conferences, overseas trips, or on placement;
- suggesting to a student that their academic studies or future career will be negatively impacted if they do not maintain an intimate relationship, friendship or social relationship with the member of staff;
- asking a student to care for your child, or to house sit whilst on holidays, or perform any other personal services or work-related duties when not formally employed or engaged by the University to do so.