

# University of Sussex Relationships Policy

## Overall aim

This policy sets out the University's expectations and requirements regarding intimate relationships between members of the University community. It is designed to safeguard professional relationships and protect students and staff from inappropriate behaviour which may include violence, abuse of power and trust, controlling/coercive and predatory behaviour, and sexual exploitation.

## Scope

For the purposes of this policy:

*Intimate relationships* include all sexual or romantic contact, whether in person and/or online or via means of other electronic

1.3 If an intimate relationship develops between a student and a member of staff, that both parties regard as consensual:

1.3.1 The staff member is required to disclose this to their Head of Department, School or Unit, as appropriate. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action<sup>2</sup> being taken.

1.3.2 The student is encouraged to declare an involvement with a staff member to their Academic Advisor, Head of Department, or Head of School as soon as possible whether this is at any point during the relationship or after a relationship has ended.

1.3.3 The Head of Department, School or Unit (as appropriate) will inform their School's or Division's HR Business Partner. The HR Business Partner will inform the Director for Student Experience (DfSE) (or delegated nominee). The DfSE will ensure measures are put in place to assess any potential vulnerabilities for the student arising as a result of the intimate relationship. The appropriate measures can be discussed between the Head of Department, School or Unit (as appropriate), HR Business Partner and DfSE, with DfSE authorising the agreed measures in order to discharge the University's duty of care more widely in relation to the student. It may be required, as appropriate, that it is referred to the Safeguarding (Case) Panel for consideration.

1.3.4. Where a disclosure of an intimate relationship is made, the Head of Department, School or Unit (as appropriate) will ensure measures are put in place to prevent actual or potential conflicts of interest, while dealing with the matter in a manner that aims to protect the dignity and privacy of all parties. This will involve appointing a point of contact for the member of staff and student respectively. The member of staff and the student will be expected to comply with any reasonable decision or action.

1.3.5. If t orT5.2es.p13.5 (i)2.6 (l)-82 (l)2.6 ( be)T0 Tc5.337( )Tj-bnw 3.924 -2 (t)-6ee【dec】-2

1.5 Any student who exerts sexual pressure over a member of staff, or who behaves in a coercive or predatory manner towards a member of staff, will be subject to the University's student disciplinary procedure<sup>4</sup>