

Guidelines for SchARR Staff-student Relationships and Professional Boundaries for Postgraduate and Undergraduate Taught Students

Why this is needed:

- o Concerns that staff may be *perceived* as giving favouritism to certain students
- o Staff need to protect themselves from possible *perceived (and actual)* compromising situations
- o Creating acceptable norms for when students can expect access to staff
- o Avoiding *perception of (and actual)* misuse of power or authority over students

What we recommend as usual practice:

Staff should declare any personal relationships they have with students to their line manager and withdraw from being involved in assessing their work (if it is not anonymised) or other situations where there is a perceived or real conflict of interest. If it comes to staff attention that a student feels there has been an issue of misuse of power/authority, the member of staff should raise this with the section directors or Director of Learning and Teaching directly. In addition:

- o Staff should arrange to meet students on University premises, not in private cafes, bars or restaurants around SchARR (or other places)
- o Staff should not usually meet students on a personal level outside of SchARR (formal student socials, such as course meet and greets, are acceptable)
- o If staff have prior friendships/relationships with students before they come to study at SchARR, staff should be discrete about these when other students are present to avoid any perception of favouritism.
- o Staff should use email or work telephone, where possible, to manage their communications with students.
- o Staff should not give out their mobile number to students or take numbers from students (except for dissertation students where ethical procedures require this).
- o Staff should not skype or speak on their home/mobile phone at weekends with students unless there is an emergency
- o Staff should usually only respond to individual student's queries within office hours (8am to 6pm), unless there is an emergency or where particular conditions require this, for example online learners.

- o Staff should not accept friend requests or seek them from students whilst they are studying on facebook etc. If staff wish to accept students on their LinkedIn networks or as Twitter followers, they need to let students know that this is open to all.

It is not possible to provide guidance on every eventuality and common sense should dictate other contexts where these issues may arise. If in doubt, staff should seek a second opinion from their line manager or section DLT.