



Title: Staff Student Relationship Policy

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Approval Authority: Board of Trustees

Document Owner: University President

Review: The policy is subject to a periodic review every 4 years or in a shorter cycle as per amendments of university policies

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles of the university in protecting staff and students against any misconduct, misunderstandings, and abuse of power. The policy aims to resolve issues involving conflict of interest in the context of personal relationship.

2. Scope

This document applies to all the academic and administrative staff employed at the university. Students (registered in both local and franchised programs) are not directly bound by the policy but are required to understand the implications of the policy.

3. Acronyms

GU	Gulf University
HR	Human Resources

4. Definitions

Relevant staff member: It means a staff member who has direct or indirect academic responsibilities, or other direct professional responsibilities, in relation to that student.

Personal relationship: In this context, personal relationships refer to any romantic, sexual, or close personal connections between staff and students.

Professional relationship: Professional relationship is based on fairness and ethical behavior to maintain integrity.

Intimate relationship: An intimate relationship is a consensual relation marked by emotional, physical, and/or sexual closeness. It can take place in person, online, or through any form of communication. These relationships range from short-term encounters or one-time experiences to long-term commitments.

Student: Any person currently studying in the university in any undergraduate or postgraduate program. Those who completed the study is excluded in this definition. If the status shows suspended/withdrawal for temporary period for the person s/he is included within this definition.

Adult at risk: An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or older who may require

community care services due to a mental or other disability, age, or illness, and who may be unable to care for themselves or safeguard themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

5. Policy Statement

5.1 The University acknowledges the importance of professional, and supportive relationships between staff and students in ensuring student academic and personal wellbeing.

5.2 The university acknowledges that personal relationships especially those of an intimate nature between staff and students possess inherent risk of power imbalance, perceived or actual conflicts of interest, exploitation, and reputational threat. These relationships can undermine trust in academic processes and impact student welfare and academic progression.

5.3 GU ensures that staff members with direct or indirect academic or professional responsibilities for a student are strictly prohibited from initiating or engaging in intimate relationships with that student. Non-compliance with this policy results in disciplinary action.

5.4 GU is committed to refrain staff from developing close personal relationships with students for whom they hold academic or professional responsibilities.

5.5 GU ensures that any relationship that is coercive, exploitative, or sexual in nature is unacceptable and must not occur under any circumstances. All staff are expected to behave within professional limits, demonstrate integrity, and avoid situations that may give rise to actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

5.6 GU commits that relevant staff members shall not undertake any academic or professional responsibilities for a student with whom they either had currently/previously intimate relationship or close personal relationship. Such relationships shall be declared immediately and assessment of potential conflict shall be undertaken.

6. Policy Principles

6.1 GU encourages positive and supportive interactions between staff and students. It is acceptable to engage together in informal, social, or recreational activities between staff and students in appropriate and ethical manner. However, such engagement shall not result in potential conflicts of interest, follow professional

boundaries and norms, and shall be perceived by others within similar expectation.

- 6.2 Where a staff member does not hold responsibility for a student, they should carefully consider the risks of entering into an intimate or close personal relationship. These include potential or perceived power imbalances, accusations of bias or exploitation, and issues surrounding consent. These risks are more when there is a significant age gap, or where the student may be more vulnerable for any reason.
- 6.3 GU ensures that any form of emotional, practical, financial attachment, sign of favoritism, such as exclusive or preferential treatment toward a student shall be disclosed for proper action.
- 6.4 Staff members who have any form of responsibility for students must not, under any circumstances, engage in an intimate relationship with a student or any individual under the age of eighteen, or with a student who is considered an adult at risk regardless of whether they have direct responsibility for that individual.
- 6.5 If a student displays behaviour toward a staff member that could be perceived as flirtatious or suggestive of a desire to initiate a personal or intimate relationship, the staff member shall report the incident to their line manager/HR manager.
- 6.6 Any student behaviour towards staff or other students that involves sexual misconduct, physical misconduct, abusive behaviour, or otherwise violates the code of conduct shall result in disciplinary action under the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.
- 6.7 Inappropriate or coercive behaviour is not tolerated. Students shall contact support services, while staff shall contact HR for appropriate remedy.
- 6.8 False or intentionally harmful complaints may lead to disciplinary action. Honest but mistaken complaints will not be penalized.

7. Responsibilities

Academic and administrative staff are responsible for:

- appropriate implementation of this policy.

Heads of Departments are responsible for:

- ensuring that all faculty members are fully informed of this policy.
- appropriate implementation of this policy.

Students are responsible for:

- appropriate implementation of this policy.

University Policy Development and Review Committee is responsible for:

- systematic review of the effectiveness of this policy.

8. Related Policies

- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Whistle blowing Policy
- Anti-slavery Policy

9. Related References and Standards

BQA	Institutional Reviews Handbook
HEC	Academic Regulations and Resolutions