

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

Code of Conduct for Personal Relationships at Work

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This code of conduct applies to all staff of the College. It provides guidance in areas where personal relationships overlap with working relationships and is intended to ensure that individual members of staff do not act with impropriety, bias, abuse of authority or conflict of interest and do not lay themselves open to allegations of such conduct.
- 1.2 The College values and relies upon the professional integrity of relationships between members of staff and students. In order that the College operates and is perceived to operate in a professional and proper manner it is necessary to recognise, and take account of, personal relationships which overlap with professional relationships.

2 Relationships between staff and students

- 2.1 The College believes that the professional relationship between a student and members of staff is vital to the student's educational development and affirms that the teaching relationship is based on trust. Although students join the College as mature adults, any staff/student professional relationship embodies an imbalance of power. It is important that staff do not abuse this position, either intentionally or unintentionally. In this context a professional relationship is defined as one where there is an assessing, supervising, tutoring, teaching or pastoral role or a role providing administrative or technical support. Students are entitled to equality of treatment and it is important that a personal relationship between a member of staff and a student does not prejudice that equality of treatment. In this context, a personal relationship is defined as a family relationship, a business/commercial/financial relationship or a sexual/romantic relationship.
- 2.2 Staff should not enter into a sexual/romantic relationship with a student for whom they have a responsibility for assessing, supervising, tutoring, teaching, for pastoral care or for whom they are required to provide administrative or technical support. Staff should not enter into a business, commercial or financial relationship with a student which could compromise, or could be perceived to compromise, the objectivity and professional standing of the tutorial relationship.

- 2.3 The College recognises, however, that such relationships may pre-exist when a member of staff is appointed or when a student registers. Where a member of staff has a professional role in relation to a student with whom (s)he has a personal relationship, (s)he must inform his/her Head of Programme/Department (or Dean of School if the member of staff is a Head of Programme), in order that alternative teaching, tutoring or assessment arrangements may be made.
- 2.4 Staff may seek guidance on the implementation of this Code, on a confidential basis, from the Personnel department. Students may seek guidance on the implementation of the Code on a confidential basis from the Student Support Manager or from the Students' Union.

3 Relationships between members of staff

Where a personal relationship develops between members of staff who are in a line management or supervisory relationship, involvement in appraisal, promotion or any other management activity or process involving the other party must cease. Additionally, staff in a personal relationship should not work together in any circumstance whereby a breach of financial control may occur.

4 Declaration of personal relationships.

Where a personal relationship is not declared and results in an unfair advantage or disadvantage to either of the parties to the relationship (be they a member of staff or a student), this will lead to disciplinary action.