

A19 Student-Staff Relationships

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

SAE Institute is committed to creating a safe, open, and fair learning environment for all students. Personal relationships of any kind between members of staff and students can impact the learning experience and disrupt the trust and confidence that is the core of a positive professional relationship between students and staff. SAE does not approve or condone staff members pursuing close personal or intimate relationships with students over whom they have responsibility. This policy provides regulation and guidance to avoid any negative consequences that may occur of personal relationships between staff and students.

1.2 Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- A18 Student Code of Conduct

2 Scope

This policy applies to staff and students of all SAE campuses involved in the delivery of validated programmes.

2.1 Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this policy.

Member of staff. A member of staff is any person who is engaged by SAE Institute as an employee, including permanent, fixed-term, casual and sessional employees as well as contractors and consultants, whether in an academic, administrative, support, corporate or other function.

Student. A student is any person enrolled or enquiring to enrol at any SAE campus in any of SAE's educational programmes.

Professional Relationship. A professional relationship describes the relationship between a member of staff and a student that is directed at supporting the student's learning process in any form including academic, administrative, and other support.

Personal relationship. Personal relationship means any association, however brief, of a sexual or other intimate nature, either in person or remotely (for example, via social media, email or text messaging).

3 Policy

3.1 Conflict of Interest

Academic staff have a particular responsibility to their students to assess their work fairly, objectively and consistently across the candidature for their particular module or programme.

Because personal relationships between students and staff may involve serious difficulties arising from the unequal power of the parties concerned, as well as difficulties in maintaining appropriate boundaries between professional and personal life, academic staff have a responsibility to declare such potential or actual conflicts of interest to their supervisor as soon as they are aware of them.

Staff or students who believe they may be involved in, or that a potential situation of involvement may give rise to perceptions of, a conflict of interest, must inform and should seek advice from their supervisor or relevant Campus Manager or Academic Coordinator, who will determine what action is to be taken. In the case of Campus Managers or other senior staff, advice should be sought and any potential conflict of interest discussed with the regional Operations Manager. Where relationships do arise, arrangements will typically result in changes to ensure that the staff member does not have responsibility for the student.

Members of staff should take particular care not to take part in the following matters in relation to any student with whom they have a personal relationship:

- selection for entry to any course where this depends on a judgement other than a predetermined score or grade in which they have not been involved

- teaching or supervision
- assessment procedures
- selection for any scholarship or prize.

Where a potential conflict of interest exists in relation to any student matters then the Academic Coordinator or Campus Manager should approve alternative arrangements.

Failure to disclose a potential or actual conflict of interest by staff or students of SAE Institute may render any associated decisions null and void, and may result in disciplinary proceedings.

3.2 Family Relationships

Staff members should disclose any close family relationships with a student for whom they have responsibility, or reasonably expect to have responsibility for during the course of their studies, so that appropriate arrangements to prevent conflicts of interest can be made.

3.3 Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour

In the event that a student wishes to report inappropriate behaviour with respect to a staff–student relationship, or they have concerns regarding a potential conflict of interests, they should speak to their Campus Manager or Academic Coordinator.

3.4 Confidentiality

So far as possible, and without undermining the purpose of this policy, SAE will preserve the confidentiality of any disclosed relationship, and will ensure that personal information about any staff or students involved will be treated respectfully and in accordance with applicable policies and legislation. Any student raising a concern (as per section 3.3) will also be able to do so confidentially.

It will usually be necessary for the relevant Campus Manager and Human Resources department to be informed, so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

4 Policy History

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