

WORCESTER COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

POLICY ON STAFF-STUDENT ROMANTIC OR SEXUAL RELATIONS

Worcester College explicitly prohibits:

1. Any romantic or sexual relationship between anyone teaching on behalf of the College and any student they are currently teaching.
2. Unless the person teaching is themselves an enrolled student at the University of Oxford who does not otherwise hold a substantive post with the College, any romantic or sexual relationship between anyone teaching on behalf of the College and anyone they have taught who is themselves still an enrolled student of the University.
3. Any romantic or sexual relationship between any employee, Trustee or Senior Member of the College and any current Worcester student. For the avoidance of doubt, this prohibition does not apply to anyone undertaking teaching or casual work for the College if they are themselves an enrolled student at the University of Oxford who does not otherwise hold a substantive post with the College.

This policy exists to ensure a safe environment for all students in a context where there is the potential for multiple real or perceived imbalances of power. Any member of staff found to be engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with a student, even with consent, will be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

If a College employee or senior member begins a consensual sexual relationship with someone outside of the College context and subsequently discovers that their partner is a Worcester student, they should speak to their manager / the Senior Tutor as soon as they discover this. If it is determined following appropriate investigation that the employee was genuinely unaware that their partner was a Worcester student and that they discontinued the relationship immediately on discovering this, they will not be subject to disciplinary action in respect of this policy.

Where a relationship is pre-existing (for example, if an employee's partner becomes a Worcester student and the relationship pre-dates their matriculating), paragraph #3 of this policy will cease to apply solely in respect of that relationship, provided that the employee discloses the relationship to their manager / the Senior Tutor before the employee's partner begins their studies. Paragraphs #1 and #2 will continue to apply in all cases. It should be noted that, depending on the employee's role, such a relationship would nonetheless be likely to constitute a conflict of interest which might require adjustments to an employee's duties and/or prevent that employee from holding certain positions of authority over students while their partner is a Worcester student, regardless of whether or not the relationship continues. In some cases (for example, senior officers of the College) it may not

be possible for an employee to continue in their role if their partner becomes a Worcester student.

This policy applies to consensual relationships. Some relationships also have the potential to fall within the definition of harassment. Harassment is a serious offence which is subject to the College's disciplinary procedures. Where necessary, complaints of harassment, bullying or other inappropriate behaviour, including all forms of sexual and racial harassment, will be investigated in line with the appropriate procedures.