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# Staff and Student Relationship Policy

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**Audience:** Public

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**Responsible person:** Student Support Manager

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**Approved by:** Institute Leadership Group

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**dyson**

institute of  
engineering+  
technology

Dyson Technology Limited – Public

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# 1.0 Scope and Purpose

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The Dyson Institute is committed to the promotion of an inclusive, respectful, and considerate community, and in taking steps to protect students from conflicts of interest and abuse of power that can arise from personal relationships between staff and students. The Institute expects every staff member and student to behave in a respectful, inclusive, and responsible manner to all members of the Dyson community.

Personal relationships between staff and students could raise potential for a conflict of interest, create challenges regarding trust and confidence in working relationships, and give rise to a perceived or realised imbalance or abuse of power and authority. The Institute is committed to equal treatment in teaching, learning, supervision, selection, assessment, research, and pastoral support. Where a student is also a staff member, their status as a student takes priority in this policy.

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## 2.0 Intimate relationships vs Close Personal relationships

### 2.1 Intimate Personal Relationships

For the purpose of this Policy, 'Intimate Personal Relationship' is defined: "as a relationship that involves one or more of the following elements:

- Physical intimacy includes isolated or repeated sexual activity; or
- Romantic or emotional intimacy."

### 2.2 Close Personal Relationships

For the purposes of this policy, 'a close personal relationship' is defined as a personal or familial relationship include a partner, family member, or close friendship. This list is non-exhaustive and if you are in doubt about the nature of a relationship, you should discuss the matter with your line manager or HR business partner.

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## 3.0 Institute Staff and Students Relationships

### 3.1 Abuse of Power

For the purposes of this policy, 'abuse of power' is defined as: "a situation where a relevant staff member\* exploits a position of power in relation to a student to apply pressure in a way which:

- may result in the student doing something, or refraining from doing something, that they may not have otherwise done; and
- that action or inaction could reasonably result in something that falls within the scope of an intimate personal relationship.

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### 3.2 Intimate Personal relationships

Given the small specialist nature of the Dyson Institute, it is assumed that all members of Institute staff have direct or indirect professional or pastoral responsibility for students' wellbeing and development. Therefore, maintaining a professional relationship with students based on trust, confidence and equal treatment. The Institute has banned intimate personal relationships between Institute staff and students as a further measure to make a significant and credible difference in protecting students from any actual or potential conflict of interest and/or abuse of power.

Relationships that began **before** a Dyson Technology staff member enrolled in a professional development module at the Dyson Institute—and thus became a student in a staff-student relationship—will be reviewed individually. Such relationships may be exempt from this ban, based on the outcome of the case-by-case review. The review will be conducted by the Institute Director and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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### 3.3 Close Personal relationships

Close personal relationships may have formed prior to a member of staff's appointment or a student's enrolment at the Institute. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to declare the relationship to their line manager and via the Legal Compliance and Ethics Portal. This will allow arrangements to be made to mitigate any risks that may arise on a case-by-case basis.

Staff members who have a close personal relationship with a student must always act with integrity and must not be placed in a position where there is an actual or perceived conflict of interest. This includes ensuring that they do not have any influence over processes or other aspects of provision which could unduly benefit the student or place them at risk of harm from abuse of power.

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#### 3.3.1 Close personal relationship mitigations

It is the responsibility of the Institute's management team to ensure that action is taken to proactively mitigate against potential conflict of interest related to close personal relationships between Institute staff and students, including by removing or transferring responsibilities where appropriate.

Relevant responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Recruitment and selection
- Teaching
- Supervision and assessment
- Exam invigilation
- Pastoral support including reasonable adjustment decisions.
- Student conduct issues (complaints against the individuals or complaints made by the individual)
- Complaints and appeals.
- Mitigating circumstances

If a relationship exists prior to a student enrolling or a member of staff joining, then the policy for personal relationships (section 2.2) should be followed, see section 5 for definitions.

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### 3.4 Observing professional boundaries

The Institute requires staff to observe professional boundaries in all their interactions with students, whether social or professional.

In most circumstances, the professional boundaries that must be observed by staff with students will be clear. However, it is recognised that there will be some areas in relation to which guidance may assist to clarify the Institutes requirements of staff.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of example behaviours that the Institute would regard as being beyond these professional boundaries:

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### 3.4.1 Social Media

The Institute recommends that students and staff do not connect via social media and messaging platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok) other than those related to professional networking sites (e.g. LinkedIn).

All communications on professional networking sites should reflect the professional relationship between staff and students.

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### 3.4.2 Teaching and supervision activities

Ensure all teaching/ supervision activities are conducted in an appropriate environment or location. An example of an inappropriate location includes the student's or staff's home.

Ensure to engage the student in teaching/supervision during appropriate office/study hours whether in person or electronic communications. Avoid pressuring the student or being pressured by the student to engage in these activities outside of these hours.

Ensure you don't solicit student information of a personal nature which is unnecessary for the purpose of the teaching/supervision relationship.

Ensure that all behaviour in the context of teaching/supervision remains professional with appropriate confidentiality. For example, do not make critical comments regarding other students, comments that may be perceived as favouritism or treat others less favourably.

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### 3.4.3 Off-campus professional activities

Unprofessional behaviour, for example as described by the non-exhaustive list of behaviours from 3.3.1 – 3.3.2 by a staff member towards a student during Institute related events, conferences and other professional events/activities that are attended by both staff and students. For the avoidance of doubt, such behaviours would be deemed inappropriate if engaged in by a staff member when conducting off-site professional activities.

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## 4.0 Dyson Technology Staff and Student Relationships

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Institute students are all employees of Dyson Technology Ltd. Any close personal relationships or intimate personal relationships

between employees of Dyson Technology, direct or indirect, must be declared. The Institute discourages intimate personal relationships between Dyson Technology staff and students, particularly where the members of staff and student are in the same team. Therefore, staff and students must declare their relationship in the Dyson legal service portal. Once declared, roles will usually be adjusted to mitigate the risks that may arise from any perceived or actual conflict of interest. Further information can be found in the internal Dyson's Global Conflicts of Interest policy.

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## 5.0 Support and Report

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Students and staff are encouraged to read the Harassment and Sexual Misconduct policy alongside this policy if they believe they have experienced or are at risk of experiencing harassment and/or sexual misconduct because of the actual or potential abuse of power and conflicts of interest that can arise from relationships between staff and students.

Students can gain support or report via the following options:

- Using the Safeguarding and Prevent portal on [the Hub](#), selecting:
- Sexual Misconduct Support Service to request support from a sexual Violence liaison officer, or
- Safeguarding, to request support from a safeguarding officer for all other concerns including harassment.
- Emailing [DIETsafeguarding@dyson.com](mailto:DIETsafeguarding@dyson.com)
- to a member of the Institute's safeguarding team in D5, Malmesbury Office
- to any member of Institute staff
- to a member of the Dyson Human Resources Team
- to Dyson Security (<https://dysononline.sharepoint.com/sites/GroupSecurity>)
- Anonymously via Dyson's [Speak Up](#), inbox ([speakup@dyson.com](mailto:speakup@dyson.com)) or Hotline (UK 0800 915 1571)
- Email [LCE@dyson.com](mailto:LCE@dyson.com) to contact the legal compliance and ethics team.

For further information on ways to report, see the Single Comprehensive Source of Information on the Institute Webpage including information on relevant policies.

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### 5.1 What to expect

Concerns are taken seriously and followed up promptly. Students may wish to contact the team for support only. Reporting individuals will be asked to give their identity to help in an investigation, which will be kept strictly confidential. However, they may choose to remain anonymous.

There will be no retaliation for anyone disclosing information in good faith, whether that information is subsequently proven to be true or not.

Reporting individuals will be protected from any actions within Dyson that might occur as a result of their disclosure, providing it is made in good faith, and will be supported appropriately. Anyone who does retaliate against someone reporting a concern in good faith may themselves be subject to disciplinary action. If someone raises a concern that is subsequently found to be malicious, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

## 6.0 Consequences for breach of this policy

The Dyson Institute will take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, for any violation of this policy. To the extent that any failure to comply with this policy also constitutes an offence of any relevant legislation, the relevant employee may also be criminally liable and subject to severe fines and/or imprisonment.

Any member of Institute staff entering an intimate personal relationship with a student under the age of 18 will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in accordance with the Dyson Institute Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.

Where a matter is referred to the police or other law enforcement agency, Dyson will cooperate fully with any criminal investigation

## 7.0 Further Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and in accordance with the Office for Students Condition of Registration E6 Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, the following definitions apply:

<b>Harassment</b>	<p>Has the meaning given in section 26 of the Equality Act 2010 and section 1 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (in its entirety, and as interpreted by section 7 of the Act) includes unwanted behaviour or conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment because of, or connected to, one or more of the following protected characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• age</li><li>• disability</li><li>• gender reassignment</li><li>• race</li><li>• religion or belief</li><li>• sex</li><li>• sexual orientation</li></ul> <p>The Institute would also consider harassment to include any incidents of physical violence towards another person(s) on the basis of a protected characteristic and hate crimes, such as those criminal offences, which are perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; or religion or perceived religion; or sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation or transgender identity or perceived transgender identity.</p> <p>The institute accepts the OfS definition of harassment to include domestic violence and abuse (which can also involve control, coercion, threats), and stalking. The OfS and Institute also consider harassment to include any incidents of physical violence towards another person(s) on the basis of a protected characteristic, and hate crimes, such as those criminal offences which are perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; or religion or perceived religion; or sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation or transgender identity or perceived transgender identity.</p>
<b>Staff</b>	Includes but is not limited to employees and contractors of the Dyson Institute.
<b>Sexual Misconduct</b>	Includes, means any unwanted or attempted unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and includes, but is not limited to. sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. but it is not limited to: Rape (Sexual Offences Act 2003) Sexual Assault, including by penetration or groping (Sexual Offences Act 2003 and includes

Policy/standard

	Physical unwanted sexual advances, unwanted kissing, propositions and or demands for sexual favours including catfishing, or employing deception in order to induce someone into sexual activity. (Equality and Human Rights Commission: Sexual harassment and the law, 2017)
<b>Sexual Harassment</b>	<p>is defined by Section 26 (2) of the Equality Act, 2010 as “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature” which “has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment because of, or connected to, one or more of the following protected characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• age</li> <li>• disability</li> <li>• gender reassignment</li> <li>• race</li> <li>• religion or belief</li> <li>• sex</li> <li>• sexual orientation</li> </ul>
<b>Students</b>	Includes, but is not limited to, persons who are registered on a higher education course and, at any point in time within the overall duration of that higher education course, are employed by, or otherwise providing services to, a higher education provider. For the purpose of this policy, students also apply to postgraduate research students from other education providers who are supervised by Institute staff.