BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY

Staff and Student Personal Relationships Policy

Version 0.1

Document Profile and Control

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1.0 Scope and purpose of the policy

1.1 The policy sets out the expectations and obligations of all staff (including but not limited to academic, research and professional services staff and postgraduate teaching assistants), visiting staff and emeritus staff, with respect to personal relationships between students and staff and between colleagues.

1.2 All Birmingham City University staff are in a position of trust. It is important that they demonstrate exemplary behaviour at all times and always give due consideration as to what is an appropriate environment and what is appropriate conduct in relation to the activities they are undertaking.

1.3 The University recognises that socialising on a friendship basis between colleagues and staff and students is often a positive aspect of being an active member of the University community, however the nature of staff/student and staff/staff relationships imposes particular responsibilities and duties on staff.

1. 4 This policy is intended to ensure that appropriate safeguards and processes are in place to prevent abuses of power and sexual misconduct. This policy aims to protect students and staff and to limit circumstances where a position of power may be abused. In doing so, it seeks to ensure a positive and supportive working environment where all are treated fairly.

1.5 This policy prohibits intimate or close personal relationships between staff and students.

1.6 This policy prohibits intimate or close personal relationships between colleagues where there is a direct supervision arrangement in place.

1.7 Where an intimate or close personal relationship exists (at the time this policy is effective) between a staff member and student or between colleagues where the relationship may give rise to real or perceived conflict of interest or breach of trust or confidentiality, there must be a clear declaration of the relationship. The form in Appendix B should be completed and submitted to the People Partnering team in the People and Culture department.

An assessment of the declaration should also be completed by a Responsible Officer (see Appendix C), normally the line manager of the staff member with support from their Dean of School or Head of Department.

1.8 The Policy will be regularly reviewed, and if necessary updated, to ensure it remains effective and aligned with requirements outlined by the Office for Students.

2.0 Freedom of Speech

This Policy will be interpreted and applied in a manner compatible with the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (the "Code"). The University has a duty to take reasonably practicable steps to secure freedom of speech within the law for students, staff and visiting speakers. In particular, no member of academic staff will be subject to disciplinary action as a consequence of exercising their academic freedom within the law. For the avoidance of doubt, if there is a conflict between this Policy and the Code, the Code will prevail.

The Code sets out the University's values relating to freedom of speech, the procedures to be followed by staff, students and members of the University when arranging events on University-controlled premises, the University's expectations regarding conduct at such meetings and the criteria the University uses when considering event approval.

3.0 Summary

3.1 There is a potential for abuse or the perception of abuse in any intimate or close personal relationships between individuals in unequal positions where one individual is expected to deliver their teaching or supervisory responsibility for the other.

3.2 Due to the potential for conflict of interest, exploitation, favouritism or bias, such relationships may undermine the integrity of the supervision or evaluation provided or may have adverse effects on the working or learning environment for those directly involved, as well as for the broader team and departmental culture.

3.3 Relationships in which one party is in a position to evaluate the work or influence the career of the other, may also provide grounds for complaint by third parties when that relationship gives undue access or advantage, restricts opportunities, or simply creates a perception of these problems.

3.4 To ensure all staff and students are able to work and study in a safe and supportive environment, the University prohibits close or intimate personal relationships between staff and students.

3.5 Where students also undertake work for the university, either voluntarily or have an employment contract, they will be defined for the purposes of this policy as students.

3.6 Where staff become enrolled as students during their employment at the University they will be defined for the purposes of this policy as an employee.

3.7 When staff and students leave the University (e.g. a student is withdrawn or completes their course and exits the University) the policy will no longer apply.

4.0 Relationships with students or staff under the age of 18 or who are an "adult at risk"

4.1 Members of staff must not be in, or enter into, an intimate or close personal relationship with a student or staff member under the age of 18, or an adult known or suspected to be at risk. This would not apply to students who are children of staff, or where the staff member has legal responsibility for the student. In these cases, staff must not be in a position of influence.

4.2 Staff must not engage in sexual behaviour with someone with whom they are in a position of trust. Whilst a young person can consent to sexual activity once they reach the age of 16, the Sexual Offences Act (2003) makes it a criminal offense for a person to engage in sexual activity of a person under the age of 18, where the adult is in a position of trust.

4.3 Anyone suspecting a member of staff of acting inappropriately towards a student or staff member under the age of 18 or an adult at risk should refer to the University Safeguarding Policy and reported through Report and Support. Individuals may also wish to speak to the Designated Safety Officer (DSO) or a Deputy DSO ahead of reporting the concern but in all matters of safeguarding unnecessary delays should be avoided.

5.0 Relationships between staff and students

5.1 Birmingham City University prohibits intimate relationships between staff and students.

5.2 Where students also undertake work for the university, either voluntarily or have an employment contract, they will be defined as students.

5.3 Where staff become enrolled as students during their employment at the University they will be defined for the purposes of this policy as an employee.

5.4 Students on a placement in an external organisation, for example students on health-related courses, apprentices and teaching students, must adhere to any policies on personal relationships within the external organisation. In the absence of a policy at the external organisation, students must continue to follow this policy and should not enter into any intimate or close personal relationships with their placement supervisors, any staff or any individual within that organisation who are under the age of 18 or is regarded as an adult at risk.

5.5 In order to maintain appropriate relationships with students, staff should:

- Maintain an appropriate physical and emotional distance from students and perform their University duties in the best interests of the University without favour towards any individual student over another student;
- Avoid creating special friendships with students as this may amount to, or be seen as, grooming;
- Ensure that online meetings and communications use a University email account, University mobile/laptop, University software and applications for all communications. Avoid personal and/or direct messaging through social media;
- Follow the same guidelines, where logistically possible, when participating in fieldwork with a student, attending conferences and any other University activities whilst aware from the usual workplace.

5.6 Where staff have a primary role of providing supervision, teaching or pastoral care to students (including personal tutors), staff should;

- Where possible, ensure that any in person meetings and discussions take place on campus or other University approved premises. Where this is not possible, ensure the meeting occurs in a public place or an approved organisation’s premises, in the case of placement or exchange visits.
- Refer students with additional support needs to Student Support Services.
- Refrain from contacting students outside of reasonable working hours unless there is an urgent or emergency situation and contact needs to be made immediately.
- Not ask for personal information from a student except as relevant to a University process, for example medical information for special consideration or personal circumstances information as part of an academic process. In all cases GDPR must be followed.

6.0 Relationships between members of staff

6.1 Consensual intimate and close personal relationships between colleagues are permitted at the University, however in order to prevent potential abuse of power or perceived or real conflict of interest, colleagues must declare personal relationships in either of the following situations:

- Where a relationship begins that may give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest, exploitation, favouritism or bias.
- Where a relationship already exists and a new situation arises that may give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest, exploitation, favouritism or bias. For example, two staff members in a relationship who work in different departments who now work in the same department. Please refer to section 8 for the declaration process.

6.2 Where colleagues are in a consensual intimate or close personal relationship, consideration will be given on how to prevent conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage gained (or perceived to be gained) from the overlap of a personal and professional relationship. This may include finding alternative line management arrangements.

6.3 The line manager will only inform other relevant members of staff about the relationship if the individuals concerned agree. In order to maintain appropriate relationships with colleagues, and help reduce the risk of abuse of power or conflict of interest, staff should:

- Ensure that online meetings and communications, use a University email account, University mobile/laptop, University software and applications for all communications. Avoid personal and/or direct messaging through social media;
- Where possible, ensure that any in person meetings and discussions take place on campus or other University approved premises. Where this is not possible, ensure the meeting occurs in a public place or an approved organisation's premises.
- Establish boundaries between professional and non-professional communication with colleagues and following the same guidelines, where logistically possible, when you and the staff member are participating in fieldwork, conferences and other University activities away from your usual workplace.

6.4 Where an intimate or close personal relationship ends it is expected that all parties will continue to conduct themselves in a professional manner and avoid personal disputes which impact on the working environment or other colleagues and students. It may also be appropriate for some of the actions, put in place by the University during the relationship, to continue for a period of time following the end of the relationship. The staff members involved will be consulted and required to comply with reasonable actions.

7.0 Inappropriate conduct by students and staff members

7.1 Inappropriate conduct by staff towards a student or staff member is not acceptable. The conduct may breach the relevant Code of Conduct Policy, and other relevant University guidance and procedures.

7.2 A student or staff member should seek advice immediately if they feel they have been subject to unprofessional or inappropriate conduct from a student or a colleague, by speaking to their Personal Tutor, Line Manager, Head of School, Dean of School, Head of Department or People & Culture to ensure appropriate support is provided.

7.3 Students who have experienced sexual misconduct or any other unacceptable behaviour are encouraged to seek support by logging a report via Report and Support.

8.0 Declaration of intimate or close personal relationship

8.1 All declarations must be made as soon as reasonably practicable and always within one month of the relationship starting. As the declaration contains sensitive personal data it will be stored securely in compliance with GDPR legislation. Such declarations will be treated respectfully, sensitively and confidentially, and the wishes of both parties respected as far as is possible.

98.2 The member of staff should submit the Declaration of Personal Relationships Form (Appendix B).

8.3 The Responsible Officer (normally the staff member's line manager with the support of their Dean of School/Head of Department) will complete the Assessment of Potential Risk form (Appendix C).

8.4 Appropriate action should be taken, which may include in some cases, initiating an investigation under the University Staff Disciplinary Policy.

8.5 Once signed the form should be returned to the People Partnering team.

9.0 Breach of policy

9.1 An intimate or close personal relationship between a staff member and student is prohibited and would be a breach of this policy. Any potential breaches would be investigated under the University's Staff Disciplinary Policy.

9.2 Whilst intimate or close personal relationships between a staff member and a student are prohibited, a student can report and seek support for harassment or sexual misconduct within a relationship with a member of staff should one occur.

9.3 In this instance, a student would not be penalised by the university for participating in the relationship, and they would be protected from retaliation by the staff member if they reported harassment or sexual misconduct. This does not affect the further application of the Student Disciplinary Procedure, if deemed appropriate upon further investigation and in the full circumstances of the case.

9.4 Failure to disclose a consensual intimate or close personal relationship with a colleague or where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest, breach of trust or confidentiality, may be investigated under the University Staff Disciplinary Policy.

Appendix A

Definitions

Definitions (which include substantive requirements)

a. **‘abuse of power’** means a situation where a relevant staff member exploits a position of power in relation to a student so as to apply pressure in a way which:
    i. may result in the student doing something, or refraining from doing something, that they may not have otherwise done; and
    ii. that action or inaction could reasonably result in something that falls within the scope of an intimate personal relationship.

b. **‘appropriate support’** means the effective deployment of assistance, including but not limited to:
    i. support targeted at the needs of students involved in any way in an incident of harassment and/or sexual misconduct, including but not limited to during an investigatory and decision-making process;
    ii. personal support, including in the form of counselling where appropriate;
    iii. academic support, including in relation to decisions about attendance, continuation, suspension or cessation of study.

c. **‘appropriately informed to ensure understanding’** includes, but is not limited to ensuring that:
    i. students understand the content of the single comprehensive source of information required by paragraph E6.2 when they register at the start of each year of study; and
    ii. induction sessions for new students contain training to ensure they understand behaviour that may constitute harassment and/or sexual misconduct.

d. **‘appropriately trained’** means staff have and maintain:
    i. up-to-date understanding of the content of the single comprehensive source of information required by paragraph E6.2 and all the requirements of this condition;
    ii. up-to-date understanding of behaviour that may constitute harassment and/or sexual misconduct;
    iii. the required knowledge and skills to support students who:
        A. wish to make allegations or complaints about harassment and/or sexual misconduct;
        B. have alleged and/or experienced incidents of harassment and/or sexual misconduct; and
        C. are the actual or alleged perpetrators of incidents of harassment and/or sexual misconduct; and
    iv. the required knowledge and skills to undertake investigations or make decisions in relation to incidents of harassment and/or sexual misconduct.

e. **‘ban on intimate personal relationships’** means a policy or rule which provides for both of the following elements:
    i. with the exception of excluded relationships, any relevant staff member is prohibited from having an intimate personal relationship with one or more students; and
    ii. any breach of such prohibition by a relevant staff member would result in the provider taking appropriate steps in line with its usual disciplinary process,

including the possibility of the breach resulting in dismissal of the relevant staff member.

f. **'capacity and resources'** includes, but is not limited to:
   i. the financial resources of the provider;
   ii. the number, expertise, and experience of the staff employed or contracted by the provider; and
   iii. the resources deployed by the provider to undertake investigations or make decisions in relation to incidents of harassment and/or sexual misconduct.

g. **'comprehensive source of information'** means:
   i. a single document or webpage that comprehensively sets out all the information required in order to comply with E6.2 and E6.3; or
   ii. a single document or webpage that gives a clear summary of the information required by E6.2, complies with E6.3, and links to additional documents that comprehensively set out the remaining relevant detail as required by E6.2 and E6.3. If the provider adopts this approach, the single document or webpage must include a summary of the content to be found by following these links.

h. **'content principles'** means the following requirements:

   i. the provider may include other additional information and provisions in the single comprehensive source of information in addition to the minimum content requirements, but such other information and provisions must:
      A. not contradict, undermine or conflict with the minimum content requirements; and
      B. be subject to a provision which makes it expressly clear that the minimum content requirements take precedence over any other information and provisions;
   ii. the provider must not include information and provisions on subject matter relating to harassment and/or sexual misconduct (and/or any subject matter of a similar nature to matters covered by those defined terms) in any other documents which could reasonably be considered to contradict, undermine or conflict with the minimum content requirements.

i. **'excluded relationships'** means any ongoing intimate personal relationship that:
   i. existed before the date this condition comes into force and that remains in existence; or
   ii. existed before the date that the staff member became a relevant staff member in relation to that student.

j. **'freedom of speech principles'** means the following requirements:
   i. irrespective of the scope and extent of any other legal requirements that may apply to the provider, the need for the provider to have particular regard to, and place significant weight on, the importance of freedom of speech within the law, academic freedom and tolerance for controversial views in an educational context or environment, including in premises and situations where educational services, events and debates take place;
   ii. the need for the provider to apply a rebuttable presumption to the effect that students being exposed to any of the following is unlikely to amount to harassment:
      A. the content of higher education course materials, including but not limited to books, videos, sound recordings, and pictures;

B. statements made and views expressed by a person as part of teaching, research or discussions about any subject matter which is connected with the content of a higher education course.

k. **'harassment'** 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).

l. **'incidents'** includes, but is not limited to, circumstances where:
   i. allegations or complaints are made to the provider about harassment and/or sexual misconduct; and
   ii. the provider could reasonably be considered to have grounds for suspecting that harassment and/or sexual misconduct has taken place or is taking place.

m. **'intimate personal relationship'** means a **consensual** relationship that involves one or more of the following elements:
   i. physical intimacy including isolated or repeated sexual activity; or
   ii. romantic or emotional intimacy.

n. **'minimum content requirements'** means comprehensive and easy to understand provisions in respect of:
   i. in addition to any other steps required by virtue of the condition, multiple steps which could (individually or in combination) make a significant and credible difference in protecting students from behaviour that may amount to harassment and/or sexual misconduct, including, but not limited to, steps that may reduce the likelihood of harassment and/or sexual misconduct taking place;
   ii. the ways in which students, staff and other persons are able to report behaviour that may amount to harassment and/or sexual misconduct to the provider;
   iii. how information received or obtained in connection with incidents of harassment and/or sexual misconduct will be handled sensitively and used fairly;
   iv. how the provider ensures that students are appropriately informed to ensure understanding;
   v. the appropriate support that will be provided to students in response to incidents of harassment and/or sexual misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to, students who have alleged and/or experienced incidents of harassment and/or sexual misconduct and actual or alleged perpetrators;
   vi. how the provider ensures that staff and other persons responsible for receiving information about, investigating, or taking decisions on, matters relating to incidents of harassment and/or sexual misconduct are appropriately trained;
   vii. how the provider ensures that investigations undertaken and decisions made in respect of incidents of harassment and/or sexual misconduct are credible, fair and otherwise reflect established principles of natural justice;
   viii. how the provider ensures that persons directly affected by any decisions made in respect of incidents of harassment and/or sexual misconduct are directly informed about the decisions and the reasons for them. This includes, but is not limited to, persons who have alleged and/or experienced incidents of harassment and/or sexual misconduct and actual or alleged perpetrators.

o. **‘Prominence principles’** means the following requirements in respect of the single comprehensive source of information required by paragraph E6.2:
    i. the single comprehensive source of information is published in a prominent position in an area of the provider’s website which is easily accessible by students and those considering applying to be students without the need for any form of password or security check;
    ii. a clear and easy to understand statement about the existence of the single comprehensive source of information, the nature of its content, and how to access it is:
        A. communicated directly to all students and staff in writing at least once each calendar year; and
        B. set out in the main documents designed to promote the higher education services available from the provider (for example, any document that is commonly known as a prospectus);
        C. set out in any documents that are designed to provide a collection of useful information about rules, policies and procedures for students and staff (for example, any documents that are commonly known as student handbooks and staff handbooks).

p. **‘relevant staff member’** means a member of staff who has direct academic responsibilities, or other direct professional responsibilities, in relation to that student.

q. **‘restricting provisions’** means any provisions that have the object or effect of preventing or restricting any student from disclosing information about an allegation of harassment and/or sexual misconduct, which in any way involves or affects one or more students, to any other person.

r. **‘staff’** includes but is not limited to employees and contractors.

s. **‘sexual misconduct’** means any unwanted or attempted unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and includes, but is not limited to:
    i. sexual harassment;
    ii. sexual assault; and
    iii. rape.

t. **‘students’** 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.

Appendix B

Notification Form for Declaration of a Personal Relationship

This form should be used to declare a personal relationship in accordance with the relevant section of the Staff and Student Relationships Policy. If you have any questions about completion of the form, please speak to your line manager or your Strategic People Partner.

The notification form will be treated highly confidentially and stored securely on the file(s) of the staff member(s) named below and used only for the purposes described in the Policy and Procedure.

Section One: Your Details	
Name:	
Department/School:	
Job title:	
Name of Line Manager:	
Section Two: Details of the Other Party	
Name:	
Department/School:	
Status: member of staff/student/both a member of staff and student. * *Please delete accordingly.	
Section Three: Nature of Relationship	
Personal relationship* □ Business/commercial/financial □ Close personal/social friendship □ Family relationship □ Romantic/intimate/sexual relationship *Please tick all that apply.	
Start date of personal relationship:	

If this predates your employment at BCU, please include your start date of employment.	
Professional relationship: Please include the nature of your professional relationship with the individual in Section Two, i.e. line manager, supervisor.	
Start date of professional relationship:	

Section Four: Declaration

I confirm that I have read the BCU Policy and Procedure on Staff/Student Relationships and the information I have submitted is in accordance with the criteria set out in the Policy.

I understand that by submitting this declaration steps may be taken in relation to my professional relationship with the individual in Section Two in line with the BCU Policy and Procedure on Staff/Student Relationships, in order to mitigate potential conflicts of interest.

This information will be managed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

Signed:

Date:

Please submit this form to your line manager and copy in your Strategic People Partner.

Your Strategic People Partner will consult with your line manager/Head of Department/Dean of School (as relevant) and may also discuss further with you if necessary.

Appendix C

Assessment of Potential Risk to Determine Proportionate Action

Use the Guidance in Appendix D to aide completion of this form

1. Name of Member Staff (Person A)	
2. Name of Person B (the student) (and necessary contact details)	
3. Name of Responsible Officer (completing this form), usually the line manager in conjunction with the Head of Department/School:	
4. Job Title of Responsible Officer	
5. Has Person A made Person B aware of this disclosure? If 'No' the Responsible Officer should make contact with Person B.	Yes/No* (delete as appropriate)
6. Brief description of professional relationship being declared: * – e.g. Supervisor/ mentor/ PI/ Personal Tutor	

Please consider and indicate all of the following that apply to either the current circumstances or future circumstances that you know are going to change the implications of a professional/ personal relationship. Please record, any action that has been taken or is planned to take place to mitigate any potential conflict of interest and risks for all parties. Please note, where there is a personal and professional relationship of any of the kind below, some action must be taken.

7. SCENARIOS	8. CURRENT PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP and MODIFICATION (including action already taken)	9. FUTURE/ PLANNED PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP and MODIFICATION
10. Direct management and supervision of student and student development.		

Yes/No* (specify as appropriate)		
11. Is the individual in a role that could influence access to support, wellbeing and career progression for this person? Yes/No* (specify as appropriate)		
12. Assignment of work and facilities and personal tutors and supervisors to students. Yes/No* (specify as appropriate)		
13. Contractual matters including employment, career opportunities, placements, complaints and discipline. Yes/No*(specify as appropriate)		
14. Deployment of financial and other resources. Yes/No* (delete as appropriate)		
15. Access to confidential information. Yes/No* (specify as appropriate)		
16. Responsibility for assessment of the individual's work. Yes/No* (specify as appropriate)		
17. Decision maker in respect to decisions which have a potential effect on the individual, such as provision or		

withholding of any of the following: facilities for research, the allocation of places on courses, bursaries/ scholarships/ grants for research/ reimbursement of expenses. Yes/No* (specify as appropriate)		
18. Support students as they access BCU services (for example accommodation, educational support services, health support services). Yes/No* (specify as appropriate)		
19. Please consider and specify the likelihood of the current or future planned professional relationship changing, in relation the likelihood of your interaction with the individual with whom you have a personal relationship. In reference to this, please specify proposed action in those circumstances.		
20. Other information that you wish to share:		
21. Signed Member of Staff (Person A)		Date:
22. Signed Responsible Officer		Date:

Notification that, as detailed above, a previously assessed personal relationship has ended

23. Is the above mitigation still required now that the personal relationship has ended? Yes/No* (if No please justify this decision, if Yes please go to Question 26.)	
24. If the above mitigation is still required now that the personal relationship has ended, are there any additional modifications required? Yes/No* (specify as appropriate)	

Verifications

Signed member of staff: Date:	Signed Responsible Officer (after verification from Person B): Date:	Signed Dean of School/Head of Department Date:

Once completed the form should be returned to the Strategic People Partnering team via the Strategic People Partner for the relevant area

Appendix D

Guidance for Responsible Officers in completing the Assessment of Potential Risk (Appendix C)

Point 1:
This is the member of staff the Responsible Officer is completing the assessment for ("Person A"), after their disclosure to the Responsible Officer.

Points 3 & 4: The Responsible Officer would ordinarily be the staff member's line manager, with guidance from their Dean of School.

Point 4:
This Assessment of Potential Risk must be completed for every pairing staff/students involving 2 members of the University community (with at least one being a member of staff, and one being a student). If there are personal relationships involving more than two members of the University community (at least one member of staff, and at least one student), this assessment must be completed for each individual the member of staff discloses to the Responsible Officer.

It may not be assumed that Person B has a University email account (or access to such), so necessary relevant contact details must be provided.

Point 5:
Whether Person B is aware of the disclosure or not, the Responsible Officer will make contact with Person B, in order to confirm the basic details of the assessment. Please see Appendix E for an email template for this purpose.

To ensure Person B is offered support, please log a report via Report and Support.

Point 6:
Please state the roles of both individuals, even if, at the time of completing the assessment, they don't have any professional interaction.

Point 19:
For example, although you may have only answered 'Yes' to one of the above fields, what is the likelihood of this changing the future, and possibly having to select 'Yes' to more of the fields?

- What could this change look like?

· How likely is it?
· How could this be avoided/ mitigated if it is required?

Point 20:
This should include any relevant information that has been noted above, on the basis of professional judgement on the part of the member of staff and Responsible Officer.

Appendix E

Outreach to Person B

(With whom Person A, as above, has disclosed to having a personal and professional relationship [of any kind] with.)

This action (outreach) should be taken no later than 7 days after Person A and the Responsible Officer have completed the above assessment of potential risk. If Person A has stated that they have already discussed this disclosure with Person B, this contact can be made as soon as is viable. Otherwise, Person A has 7 days to made Person B aware and contact by the Responsible Officer will be made on the next viable working day after 7 days, or Person A has notified the Responsible Officer of communications having taken place – whichever comes first.

Outreach to Person B could take the form of the email template below.

Dear **,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am emailing in my capacity as Responsible Officer in the completion of an Assessment of Potential Risk for a disclosed personal and professional relationship. According to Birmingham City University's Staff, Student Relationship Policy (*insert link when policy is live before publishing this guidance*), an Assessment of Potential Risk must be completed after the disclosure of any personal and professional potential conflict in relation to at least one member of staff at the University.

I am emailing you as the named individual in one of these recently completed assessments, with "Person A" (as defined in the policy) being (*name*).

According to the Personal Relationships Policy, "personal relationships" could be categorised as being romantic, sexual, or generally in relation to exchanges of goods or services in a personal, non-professional capacity. Regardless of the nature of the personal relationship, conflicts of interest may be introduced to the professional context due to power differentials between staff and students, and between members of staff of different grades and responsibilities. This is the rationale for the completion of the Assessment of Potential Risk, and the associated, recommended modifications.

As the named individual in the personal and professional relationship disclosed by (*name*), we ask that you confirm that there is in fact a personal affiliation between you both. Please confirm this in the form of a reply to this email. If, in your understanding, there is no personal relationship between yourself and (*name*), please also confirm this in reply to this email. **Please note the exact details of the relationship do not have to be, and should not be, disclosed.**

Confirmation is voluntary, but I would be grateful if you could respond as appropriate within the next 5 working days, by (*date*). If we have had no response by this date, we will email again and make Person A aware that their Assessment is still outstanding and will be until we can confirm the personal relationship status.

If you have any questions about the Personal Relationships Policy, the Assessment of Potential Risk, or any other related process, please let me know. If you would like to see the completed Assessment of Risk, please confirm this in your reply.

If you would like to seek support, or discuss this in a supportive context, please let me know so I can arrange for you to be contacted by an appropriate team. If you would like any assistance in accessing this support, please just let me or a member of the People Partnering Team.

Appendix F

Examples of Proportionate Action to be Taken

Action taken will be dependent on the nature, likelihood of professional interaction, not necessarily the nature of the personal relationship.

- Change of line management, and/ or an alternative route for line management – for example, a different appropriate member of staff to take line management responsibility for the one member of a team who has the personal relationship with the line manager. The level of responsibility the 'proxy' line manager has for the member of the team may vary from involvement only in official employment-related decisions, to day-to-day line management and professional guidance.
- Change of personal supervision as above.
- Avoidance of direct and indirect involvement in progression panels or decision-making bodies.
- Supervision and scrutiny of staff members' professional actions when in relation to the University member they have a personal relationship with.
- Rearrangement of academic responsibilities
- Changes to identity of markers
- Information barriers and controlled access arrangements are implemented within services to ensure that personal data is accessible only to authorised individuals

Appendix G

Overview of Process

