Acceptable Behaviour towards Students Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The University acknowledges that a power imbalance will always exist between Leadership, Staff or Contractors and a Student and consequently, as outlined in this Procedure some relationships between Leadership, Staff or Contractors and Students are unacceptable to the University. University Leadership, Staff and Contractors should always maintain Professional Boundaries and not seek to initiate or cultivate relationships with Students.

(2) This Procedure outlines the standards expected of Leadership, Staff and Contractors with respect to Professional Boundaries and Intimate Relationships with Students.

(3) UQ is committed to ensuring that all Students can pursue their education without risks to their health or safety and are treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.

Section 2 - Process and Key Controls

(4) This Procedure operates to define and contextualise the terms of the Sexual Misconduct and Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy, the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct Policy regarding Intimate Relationships between Leadership, Staff and Contractor and a Student.

(5) Disclosures made by Leadership, Staff and/or Contractors in accordance with this Procedure are managed through the Disclosure and Management of Interests Form or the Disclosure and Management of Interest Conflict of Interest Form (Casual and Unpaid Staff) as required.

(6) A failure to comply with this Procedure may amount to Sexual Misconduct or Gender-based Violence and/or be in breach of the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

Section 3 - Key Requirements

(7) Where University Leadership, Staff or Contractors hold Direct Power or Influence in relation to a Student, they must not initiate, cultivate or engage in an Intimate Relationship with the Student. If an Intimate Relationship of this nature exists, whether existing or previous, this must be Disclosed to the University.

(8) All Leadership, Staff and Contractors hold Indirect Power or Influence in relation to a Student. Any Intimate Relationship with a Student, including those established prior to the Leadership, Staff or Contractor-student dynamic, must be Disclosed and an appropriate management plan established.

(9) Leadership, Staff and Contractors must act with awareness of the power and influence dynamic with Students and ensure that Professional Boundaries are maintained and enforced. Crossing a Professional Boundary with a Student commonly results from a blurring of professional and personal roles. These boundaries are essential to fostering a safe, respectful, and equitable learning environment grounded in mutual respect, trust, and academic integrity. Refer to the Acceptable Behaviour towards Students Guideline for more information.

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to refer to The University of Queensland's Policy and Procedure Library for the latest version.

Section 4 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Leadership, Staff and Contractors

(10) Leadership, Staff and Contractor responsibilities include:

a. ensuring the timely and accurate completion of the mandatory Disclosure;
b. acting with awareness of the power imbalance between UQ Leadership, Staff or Contractors and Students;
c. upholding UQ's commitment to Student health and wellbeing;
d. ensuring that standards of behaviour and Professional Boundaries are maintained and enforced;
e. seeking advice as required to ensure that this Procedure is adhered to; and
f. reporting observed conduct which is in breach of this Procedure.

Supervisors

(11) Supervisor responsibilities include:

a. ensuring that Leadership, Staff and Contractors are completing the mandatory Disclosure as required;
b. providing advice and guidance to Leadership, Staff and Contractors to ensure compliance of this Procedure;
c. undertaking appropriate management action to reinforce Leadership, Staff and Contractor responsibilities and standards of behaviour; and
d. seeking advice from Human Resources where required to ensure appropriate management of observed and reported behaviours, and Disclosures.

Human Resources

(12) Human Resources responsibilities include:

a. providing compliance advice and guidance to Leadership, Staff, Contractors and supervisors; and
b. undertaking assessments of Disclosures for compliance and where required to support the establishment of suitable management plans or actions in response to a Disclosure.

Section 5 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(13) Human Resources will monitor, review and provide assurance on the effectiveness of this Procedure.

Section 6 - Recording and Reporting

(14) Recording and reporting are completed in accordance with legislative and UQ requirements.

(15) Human Resources and the Integrity Unit are responsible for retaining records in relation to Leadership, Staff or Contractor compliance in accordance with the Information Management Policy and the Privacy Policy.

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to refer to The University of Queensland's Policy and Procedure Library for the latest version.

Section 7 - Appendix

Definitions

Term	Definition
Direct Power or Influence	Where a Leadership, Staff or Contractor has, or is likely to have, any academic or other decision-making responsibilities in relation to the Student. This may include (but is not limited to): 1. Supervision, mentoring, teaching and marking; and/or 2. Assessment of applications, scholarship or grant applications and other expressions of interest; and/or 3. Rostering and registration of student activities and enrolments; and/or 4. Access to student personal and/or academic information stored on UQ systems; and/or 5. Strategic oversight and influence of Faculty or School operations.
Disclose or Disclosure	Providing details of the Intimate Relationship through the submission of a Disclosure and Management of Interests Form or submitted to the relevant supervisor for assessment.
Indirect Power and Influence	An inherent Indirect Power and Influence exists between a Student and any Leadership, Staff or Contractor engaged with the University.
Intimate Relationship	Includes an encounter of a sexual, intimate and/or romantic nature, regardless of duration. This applies to both in person and virtual behaviours.
Professional Boundaries	The ethical and behavioural limits that define appropriate interactions and relationships between Leadership, Staff or Contractors and Students. Professional Boundaries extend (but are not limited) to: 1. Communication – including respectful language, tone, frequency, and platform used for interactions; 2. Physical Interaction and Contact – ensuring all physical interactions are appropriate, culturally sensitive, and professionally justified; 3. Time and Access – managing the amount of time spent with students and the contexts in which access is granted; 4. Gifts, Favours and Preferential Treatment – avoiding actions that may create real or perceived bias or obligation; and 5. Disclosure of Personal or Sensitive Information – maintaining a clear separation between personal life and professional responsibilities.
Student	A person who is currently undertaking study, has enrolled in study or is in the process of enrolling in study at The University of Queensland. For completeness, it includes students undertaking higher degrees by research, non-award study, enabling or bridging courses, foundation programs and vocational education and training courses at the University.

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to refer to The University of Queensland's Policy and Procedure Library for the latest version.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	1st January 2026
Review Date	31st December 2028
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Approval Date	24th December 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Policy Owner	Phil Vaughan Chief Human Resources Officer
Enquiries Contact	Human Resources Division

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to refer to The University of Queensland's Policy and Procedure Library for the latest version.