UCQ
UNIVERSITY
CENTRE QUAYSIDE

Appendix B: Staff Code of Conduct

Version: 10
Revision date: 30 January 2026
Document reviewer: Vice Principal
Due for review: 30/01/2027

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1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this appendix of the UCQ Safeguarding Policy is to provide a clear set of principles to guide staff on how they are expected to conduct themselves in day-to-day work.

1.2 It is not possible to write an exhaustive list of rules governing staff conduct. Staff should be trusted in the discharge of their responsibilities, which implies allowing room for initiative and judgement. This document, however, provides a consistent framework and guidelines.

1.3 Staff should seek advice from their direct line manager in the first instance or another member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) if they have any queries about the content of this document, or if they require advice on how any aspect of conduct may be regarded.

2. Single comprehensive source of information

2.1 This Policy has been developed as part of UCQ's single comprehensive source of information, available at: https://ucq.ac.uk/safeguarding-and-prevent/

3. Scope

3.1 This Code of Conduct applies to all staff at UCQ (including agency, visiting, associate and hourly paid staff) irrespective of anyone's position or role in UCQ, together with any workers at UCQ who are on a voluntary/placement or associate basis.

4. Safeguarding students

4.1 In their dealings with students, UCQ expects that all staff will:

- Always act in the best interests of students
- Promote British values (BV)
- Promote high standards of student behaviour and conduct
- Undertake their responsibilities in respect to the safeguarding of students and act appropriately if they have concerns of a safeguarding nature
- Assist with the security of UCQ by directing to reception anyone who they think might be a stranger on site

5. Intimate personal relationships between staff and students

5.1 This section outlines UCQ's approach to managing and addressing intimate personal relationships between staff and students to ensure that professional boundaries are maintained, students are protected from abuse of power, and conflicts of interest are avoided.

5.2 For the purposes of this guidance:

- An *intimate personal relationship* includes physical intimacy, romantic involvement, or emotional intimacy that goes beyond professional or academic interactions;

- A *relevant staff member* includes any individual with direct academic, professional, or pastoral responsibilities for students.

5.3 UCQ is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and equitable academic environment. To uphold these values:

1. **Prohibition or Management of Relationships:**
    - UCQ **prohibits** intimate personal relationships between staff and students where a direct academic or professional responsibility exists.
    - Where relationships exist (e.g., pre-existing relationships or where direct responsibilities change), staff must **disclose** the relationship promptly to the Strategic Safeguarding Lead to ensure appropriate management measures are implemented.
    - Personal contact details should not be given to students
    - Staff personal phone numbers and emails should not be used to contact students
    - Students and staff should not be 'friends' on Facebook or other personal social media platforms

2. **Addressing Abuse of Power and Conflicts of Interest:**
    - UCQ recognises the potential for abuse of power, bias, coercion, or favouritism in intimate personal relationships and implements mechanisms to protect students, including but not limited to:
        - Reassigning academic or professional responsibilities of staff involved in such relationships.
        - Ensuring students are not disadvantaged or unfairly advantaged in academic assessments, funding opportunities, references, or access to resources.

3. **Professional Boundaries and Training:**
    - Staff are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Training will be provided to ensure staff understand these boundaries and recognise behaviours that may constitute grooming, coercion, or other abuses of power.

5.4 To mitigate risks, UCQ acknowledges that detrimental or favourable treatment in the context of an intimate personal relationship can include, but is not limited to:

- **Detrimental treatment:** Lower grades, reduced access to resources, negative references, or restricted participation in academic activities.

- **Favourable treatment:** Higher grades, positive references, increased opportunities for funding or advancement, or additional academic support.

5.5 Disclosure Requirements and Confidentiality

5.5.1 Staff must disclose any intimate personal relationship with a student to the Strategic Safeguarding Lead immediately. All disclosures will be treated confidentially and handled sensitively, ensuring that no party is disadvantaged or stigmatised.

5.6 Support for Students

5.6.1 UCQ is committed to empowering students to report inappropriate behaviour, including harassment or misconduct within an intimate relationship. Students will have access to:

- Confidential reporting mechanisms independent of the staff member involved;
- Support services, including counselling and academic accommodations if needed.

5.7 Disciplinary Measures

5.7.1 Any staff member found to be in breach of this policy may face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Such measures aim to safeguard the academic environment and prevent future conflicts of interest or abuses of power.

6. Working with colleagues

6.1 Staff must adhere to UCQ's policies and procedures and be aware their actions may have consequences for others.

7. Representing UCQ

7.1 In order to preserve the reputation of UCQ, staff must:

- Obtain approval from the Principal & CEO, or in their absence a member of the SLT, before contacting the press
- Check with the relevant person before committing UCQ resources other than those for which they have responsibility
- Take care over the use of UCQ headed notepaper and UCQ logo, whether for use themselves or the use of students they are supervising; in particular ensure that written communication they are sending outside UCQ is prepared appropriately and approved by their line manager if required
- Maintain professional standards of conduct towards others when acting in a UCQ capacity
- Dress appropriately when acting in a professional capacity and with due regard for the conclusions others may draw from their attire
- Not engage in activity that would draw UCQ into disrepute

8. Additional professional responsibilities

8.1 Staff are reminded that they are expected, at all times, to:

- Preserve the confidentiality of information relating to UCQ's staff, students, finances, marketing and strategic planning, together with any further information rightly to be judged the property of UCQ (except as outlined in Whistleblowing guidance)
- Exercise proper professional discretion in the event of being offered hospitality or gifts of any kind and ensure that their line manager is informed of their acceptance of any such gifts or hospitality with a value in excess of £25 per instance
- Wear their UCQ ID with the appropriate coloured lanyard at all times when on UCQ premises and when engaging with students/stakeholders
- Identify themselves via webcam and show their UCQ ID for all introductory meetings that are held online with students/stakeholders

- Support the monitoring of fundraising to ensure that monies raised are not used to fund extremism and so prevent a damaging effect on the safeguarding of students and UCQ's reputation

9. UCQ property

9.1 In order to preserve the quality of UCQ's environment and physical resources staff must ensure that:

- They, and students for whom they are responsible, look after UCQ premises and property which they use
- Procedures for borrowing UCQ equipment are observed
- Energy is conserved wherever possible
- When purchasing goods for UCQ the Green Procurement Policy is followed
- The security of UCQ property is maintained as well as possible and not put at risk
- They pay UCQ for any costs incurred by the personal use of UCQ equipment (for example phone, photocopier). However, in calculating this, staff should bear in mind any costs they may have incurred by the use of their own equipment on UCQ business (for example phone call on UCQ business made from home)

10. Compliance and enforcement

10.1 Non-compliance with this Code will be managed by the Safeguarding Team. The UCQ Disciplinary Policy (GP-013 Appendix A Section A) will be followed where required.

11. Training and communication

11.1 All staff will receive annual safeguarding training. Staff and students are invited to review the wealth of resources available on UCQ's safeguarding, Prevent and wellbeing page, available at https://ucq.ac.uk/safeguarding-and-prevent/

11.2 Ongoing support will be provided by the Safeguarding Team. This Code will be made available on the UCQ website for all stakeholders to access.

12. Review and revision

12.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and appropriateness. Reviews will consider feedback from students and staff, as well as any changes in the prevalence or nature of concerns raised. This appendix to the Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier as required to ensure best practice.

13. Document history

ISSUE NO.	DATE	PAGE	REVIEWER	DETAIL OF AMENDMENT
07	02/02/2024	5	Tara Henderson	Periodic review conducted. Paragraphs re-numbered and sections 8 9. 10 & 11 added.
08	13/12/2024	All	Tara Henderson	Sections 2 and 5 added to cover regulatory compliance with OfS Condition E.6. Section 12 expanded.
09	31/01/2024	All	Michelle Elliott	Periodic review conducted. No changes required due to recent review.
10	30/01/2026	All	Michelle Elliott	Periodic review. No changes required.