



Staff Student Relationship Policy

Policy Name	Staff Student Relationship Policy
Version	2
Date reviewed	Sept 2025
Next review due	Sept 2026



1. Introduction

The College of Osteopaths seeks to always develop and maintain professional and appropriate relationships between staff and students, in line with the values of the College and of the professional body:

Osteopaths must deliver safe and ethical healthcare by interacting with professional colleagues and patients in a respectful and timely manner and these standards set out the professional behaviour required of osteopaths. <https://standards.osteopathy.org.uk/>

Please note: This guidance should be read in conjunction with the College's staff and student disciplinary policies, and other related policies listed on page 2.

The aim of this policy is to support and promote a safe learning and work environment for all staff and students, and to foster a supportive community where interactions and relationships are based on mutual trust, respect and the acknowledgement of professional boundaries.

The College prohibits close personal or intimate relationships between staff and students, irrespective of the student's age. This is because staff will have supervisory, tutoring, lecturing, teaching, pastoral, assessment, or administrative responsibilities for all students. Such relationships could create a conflict of interest, be open to exploitation, favouritism or bias.

Relationship definitions

An intimate relationship is defined as being consensual and may include marital, life partner, a sexual or romantic relationship regardless of gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.

A close personal relationship is defined as a close relationship with a relative, close friend, close family friend, or a relationship where there is financial dependence.

The only exceptions to this policy are where a pre-existing relationship exists between a member of staff and a prospective student and where this relationship had been declared prior to the student being offered a place at the college. This declaration should be made by the member of staff to their line manager and the College Principal.

This policy extends to inappropriate professional relationships that may include, but are not limited to:

- Members of staff treating students outside of a teaching and learning environment
- Students treating staff members outside of a teaching and learning environment

Any breach of the Staff and Student Personal Relationship policy, or non-disclosure will be treated as gross misconduct and will be investigated under the College's disciplinary processes and procedures.

2. Staff Responsibilities:

Staff responsibilities are as follows:

- Contribute to creating a safe, professional working and learning environment
- Ensure that all interactions with students are professional and courteous

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- Foster and maintain relationships with students that are based on trust, confidence and equal treatment of students

If any member of staff exerts sexual pressure over a student, or behaves in a coercive or predatory manner they will be investigated under the College's Staffs Disciplinary policy

The outcomes of such an investigation may result in expulsion from the College.

The use of social media can blur professional boundaries. When using social media for teaching and learning purposes and for communicating with students ensure that it is appropriate, and that professionalism and integrity is maintained in all interactions.

3. Student responsibilities

Students must:

- Ensure that all interactions with staff are courteous and professional

If any student exerts sexual pressure over a member of staff, or behaves in a coercive or predatory manner they will be investigated under the College's Student Disciplinary policy

The outcomes of such an investigation may result in expulsion from the College

When using social media with members of staff, students should ensure that any communication is appropriate, and that professionalism and integrity is maintained in all interactions

Related Internal Policies - Please click on the links:

College of Osteopath's Staff Disciplinary Policy	See Employee Handbook
College of Osteopath's Student Disciplinary Policy	here
College of osteopath's Safeguarding Policy	here
College of Osteopath's Fitness to Practice Policy	here
College IT policy	here

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Related Professional Body Policies

General Osteopathic Council – Conflicts of Interest - <https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/standards/guidance-for-osteopaths/conflicts-of-interest/>

General Osteopathic Council – Standards: <https://standards.osteopathy.org.uk/themes/professionalism/>

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