

Code of Conduct on Private Relationships at Work

TU/e

EINDHOVEN
UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY



Code of Conduct on Private Relationships at Work

Version number 1961459

Introduction

'Open' is one of the [four core values](#) of TU/e. At TU/e, we care for one another and believe in personal attention. Our small community embraces everyone and thrives on collaboration and respect for others. At our university, people matter. We are a small-scale university in which personal contact is the basis for all our interactions.

For TU/e, attention to others, honesty, respect, and integrity are the foundations for a socially safe environment and solid professional relationships. TU/e values and trusts in the integrity of these relationships.

Wherever people come together, private relationships can exist or emerge alongside professional ones. The purpose of this code of conduct is to provide all TU/e employees with information on how to deal with a possible overlap between professional and private relationships.

Relationships at work

The right to privacy and free choice of partner is always respected. Employees who have a professional relationship with each other but also have a friendship or a familial or (a developing) intimate relationship are expected to act professionally and objectively at all times and to be aware of the integrity risks that this private relationship may entail.

Employees must take extra care to avoid mixing private and professional relationships with individual students.

Integrity risks

Employees

Situations in which partners or family members work in a hierarchical relationship, assess, or monitor each other's work and/or certify or authorize each other¹ are vulnerable, as are situations in which a financially dependent relationship exists.

If such a situation does arise, it is important that both parties discuss the possible integrity risks in confidence with the immediate manager (the identity of the other party involved need not be disclosed if this is not necessary). Together with the employee, the manager will consider how to deal with the situation, possibly in coordination with the other party's manager (in consultation with the employees involved). If a discussion with the immediate manager is not possible or desirable (for example, because he or she is one of the parties involved in the relationship), the employee may turn to the next-highest manager or the director/dean of the department or service.

If necessary, working arrangements will be made or tasks will be redistributed, but a transfer to another division, department or service may also be in order. The ultimate goal is to mutually reach a good and workable solution.

¹ It can also be that employees of TU/e have a professional and private relationship with an external relation of the university, such as customers, contractors, or suppliers. In this context, a professional relationship is defined as a relationship in which the employee has an authorizing, evaluating or supervisory role with respect to the external relation. Situations in which employees have a professional and private relationship with an external relation are also vulnerable.

Employees and students

For the duration of the professional relationship, employees are not allowed to have a private relationship with an adult student² that could compromise the impartiality or objectivity of the professional relationship. If a familial or intimate relationship exists or comes to exist between an employee and a student with an assessment-based relationship, the employee concerned must report the existence of this relationship to their immediate manager (or the director/dean of the department). Subsequently, the manager shall ensure that the employee concerned does not assess the student on his or her educational and research performance or make decisions about the student in any other way. The manager will treat this report as confidential.

Advice on the code of conduct

If employees have doubts about the existence of integrity risks or would like advice on this, they can call on the HR advisor of their department or service or one of the confidential advisors for confidential advice.

Evaluation

The TU/e code of conduct on private relationships at work will be evaluated after two years (or as much earlier as necessary). This evaluation will involve HR advisors, managers, ombudsman, confidential advisors, and the employee participation bodies.

Adopted by the Executive Board dated October 13, 2022

² A relationship between an employee and an underaged student is never allowed.