



# Code of Practice for Interns and Residents

2018

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## Introduction

**Internship** programmes are for recently qualified veterinary graduates and are either eligible to be, or members of, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) wishing to develop their clinical skills, experience and knowledge of small animals, exotics, equines or farm animals. Interns are enrolled on a Postgraduate Diploma in Veterinary Clinical Practice (PGDip VCP).

**Resident** programmes are for qualified veterinary graduates who are either eligible to be, or members of, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) wishing to pursue further clinical or pathological training to be eligible for veterinary specialisation. Residents would normally have completed a recognised one-year rotating internship within a University or referral hospital, or have equivalent broad veterinary clinical experience of at least two years' duration. These programmes are aligned to residency training programmes of either European and/or American Veterinary Specialist Colleges. Candidates must register with the aligned Veterinary Specialist (or other) College at the start of their programme. It is expected that at the end of the 3-year programme a candidate will have obtained a Masters degree and have either completed or have submitted credentials for their Veterinary Specialist (or other) College.

The Code of Practice is written for Interns and Residents and should be read in conjunction with the College's Regulations and Procedures, <http://www.rvc.ac.uk/about/the-rvc/academic-quality-regulations-procedures> , PGDip VCP and MVetMed1 Programme Specifications and Assessment & Award Regulations. Together, these documents set out the regulations and procedures for Interns and Residents. Further information and forms referred to in the Code of Practice can be found on the Graduate School and/or MVetMed<sup>1</sup> and PGDip VCP sites on RVC Learn.

The Code of Practice is updated annually and an electronic copy sent to all Interns, Residents and their supervisors, the PGDip VCP and MVetMed course directors, programme support coordinators

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1 *Or another Masters course if applicable.*

and the programme directors. The current version is available on the Graduate School site on RVC Learn.

## 1.1. General Information for Interns and Residents

Interns and Residents must be registered with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). Responsibility for ensuring they are registered and for paying the annual registration fee rests with the individual student.

All Interns and Residents are categorised as full-time postgraduate students and as such are required to be registered with the Graduate School at the start of their programme of study. They are expected to abide by the Code of Practice for Interns and Residents in matters relating to their roles and responsibilities whilst undertaking their programme of study at the Royal Veterinary College (here after referred to as the College).

Some Interns and Residents will be based at, and under the day-to-day supervision of, a collaborative partner of the College. These students will always have at least one supervisor from the College and at least one supervisor from the collaborative partner, and the responsibilities of the supervisors as laid out at section 2.6 will be shared between these supervisors as appropriate to the programme of study. Any reference to a supervisor within the Code of Practice for Interns and Residents will normally refer to the primary clinical supervisor; for students based at a collaborative partner the primary clinical supervisor may be a member of staff of the collaborative partner, however the College will retain ultimate responsibility for the content, academic standards and quality assurance of any clinical training undertaken by these students.

Interns and Residents are required to obtain the consent of the Principal of the College before becoming a member of any outside committee or expressing their views in public on matters connected with the work of the College, (this does not preclude an Intern/Resident from addressing scientific or professional gatherings). If they should feel aggrieved at a refusal of consent by the Principal there will be a right of appeal to the College Council.

Communications on matters connected with the work of the College (e.g. images or information related to patients and clients of the hospital, or research) to the press, radio, television or social media networks are not allowed (excluding scientific communications to

the scientific and veterinary press), except by permission of the relevant Head of Department, marketing team or the Principal.

Interns and Residents may be required to participate in College events as directed by their line manager or Head of Department.

Specific departmental allowances are available to cover or contribute to the cost of CPD, travel, conferences, AV production, photocopying and library requests. This information is available upon request, from the Head of Department.

Acknowledging, normally by co-authorship, supervisor(s) and other colleagues who have made a significant practical or intellectual contribution to the work described in any publication or presentation;

### **1.1.1 Internships**

Internships are usually 54 weeks (or one year), subject to a satisfactory progress review. A formal progress review will be held at 6 months, however multi-source feedback will be provided at a minimum of every quarter, or at the end of each rotation. Ad-hoc progress reviews are organised if deemed necessary by the supervisor and/or because of receiving unsatisfactory multi-source feedback. For those wishing to leave before having completed their programme of study, a notice period of *three months* should be agreed with the Programme Director and approved by their Head of Department. Exceptions to these terms may be agreed by the relevant Head of Department in consultation with the Graduate School Interns whose performance is found to be unsatisfactory may be required to withdraw from the programme (see section 3).

### **1.1.2 Residencies**

Residencies are normally awarded for 36 months of full-time study, although external funding may be available for training periods of up to 48 months. Continuation on the Residency programme is subject to satisfactory performance and annual progress assessments (see Assessment & Award regulations).

Residents may take up to 5 days a year to attend professional meetings, seminars, tutorials and lectures and for preparing written reports as approved by their supervisor (for example off-site CPD and conference attendance). Additional CPD may be undertaken during the course of the studentship if deemed necessary and approved by the supervisor.

Any extension of the studentship following a period of unpaid leave is at the discretion of the relevant Head of Department.

For Residents wishing to leave *before* having completed their programme of study, the normal notice period of *three months* should be agreed with their supervisor and approved by their Head of Department. Exceptions to these terms may be agreed by the Graduate School and the relevant Head of Department. See Assessment & Award regulations for information about notice periods for Residents who are required to leave the programme because their performance has been found to be unsatisfactory at progress assessment.

## 2. Responsibilities

### 2.1. Head of Department

- Ensuring that their Department provides a supportive infrastructure for Interns and Residents whilst they are carrying out their studies;
- Guaranteeing the funding from departmental or other sources for Internships/Residency positions before they are advertised;
- Working with the Vice Principals for Clinical Services, Learning & the Student Experience and Research & Innovation, as well as the clinical directors in the hospitals, to ensure that appropriate clinical, pathology and research facilities are available to support the Internships and Residency programmes;

- Ensuring that each Intern/Resident has access to adequate workspace, including use of a desk, photocopier and networked computer;
- Ensuring that Interns/Residents are provided with all the appropriate health and safety information;
- Supporting the Internship/Residency programme directors and supervisors in offering training programmes that meet the needs within their department;
- Ensuring that a head of service has put in place suitable alternative supervisory arrangements in the event of a Resident's main and/or research supervisor being absent for a prolonged period or leaving the College.

## 2.2. The Graduate School

- Ensuring that minimum entry requirements are met, making offers of admission and registering Interns and Residents on their respective programmes of study at the College. *Registration with the appropriate American or European specialist board, and paying associated fees, is the responsibility of the Residents.*
- Monitoring the progress and overseeing the progress assessment of Interns and Residents;
- Approving administrative matters and assisting with progress issues where appropriate, through the Student Progress and Development System.

## 2.3. Programme Directors

- Ensuring that the Interns/Residents receive an appropriate induction to their programme of study;
- **Act as supervisor(s) for the Intern/Resident on the programme they direct;**



- Advising the Intern/Resident, or ensuring they receive guidance, on all relevant aspects of their clinical service work;
- Providing the Intern/Resident with encouragement, support and feedback on their progress;
- Monitoring the general welfare of the Intern/Resident, and informing them of sources of assistance where necessary;
- **Listening to the concerns of individual Interns/Residents and, where appropriate, recommending an appropriate course of action which may include referring the student to SPDS;**
- Ensuring the Graduate School is informed if an Intern/Resident is unable to continue with their studies for personal, health or other reasons;
- Ensuring the Graduate School is informed of any circumstances that may require an Intern/Resident to request an interruption to their studies;
- Organising progress assessments at 6 months for all Interns and every 12 months for Residents and sending the completed forms to the Graduate School after the progress assessment.

#### **2.4. Interns and Residents**

- In common with all College students, adhering to the College's Code of Professional Standards, the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and the RVC Code of Practice for Interns and Residents;
- Enrolling with the Graduate School at the start of the programme;
- Ensuring they notify the Graduate School of changes to their contact information, including mobile telephone number, personal email address, contact address and the details of their emergency contact person;
- Notifying the Graduate School of any changes of circumstance agreed using the appropriate forms signed by the supervisor

*(There is a change of registration status form on the Graduate School site on RVC Learn);*

- Familiarising themselves with, and abiding by, health and safety regulations, the College policy on good research practice, research with integrity, ethical research and the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (if applicable), progress monitoring procedures and other guidelines and regulations relevant to their programme of study;
- Consulting the College's guidance on academic misconduct and avoidance of plagiarism, signing a document indicating they understand what plagiarism is and undertaking not to plagiarise;
- Accepting professional responsibility for clinical case supervision and undertaking such investigations, therapeutic measures and surgical procedures as necessary under appropriate supervision/direction;
- Participating in undergraduate and, where appropriate, postgraduate teaching, under observation, as requested by their supervisor or the Programme Director. Attending meetings, seminars, tutorials and lectures and preparing written reports as deemed necessary by their supervisor or the Programme Directors;
- Giving at least one presentation each year within the College, which can be either be a review, a case report (or series) or research that they are involved with;
- Presenting in a journal club to their peers;
- Formally assigning all IP that they may generate in the course of their studies to RVC. In return, students will be able to benefit from the same incentives and rewards as if they were members of staff. This will be a condition of undertaking commercially sensitive projects as a postgraduate student at RVC;
- Being prepared, throughout the programme, to receive, give due consideration to and act upon feedback about their performance

in all aspects of their studies, including academic ability, clinical skills, teaching and research;

- Discussing any outside professional activity(ies), paid or otherwise, with their supervisor and/or the Programme Directors/Collaborating Partner and gaining their approval before undertaking the activity(ies), which must not interfere with the duties and requirements of their studentship<sup>2</sup>;
- Securing the Head of Department's permission before accepting any offer of paid work during the period of study; ensuring any paid work is processed through payroll, is subject to employment law and follows HR requirements, policies and guidelines;
- Participating in College activities, as and when asked to do so by their Head of Department.
- Inform the College of any international travel planned either affiliated with or representing the College (e.g. presenting at international conference, visiting another institution) and abide by the College policy on international travel [needs link please]
- Discuss with student support services, Graduate school and/or senior clinical tutors at the earliest opportunity if there are any concerns related to your physical or mental health (already OH documented or not) whether or not they have any bearing on your clinical duties or studies.

**Additional responsibilities of Residents include:**

- Reading the research integrity guidelines and undertaking the on-line research integrity training within 3 months of registration;
- Maintaining regular contact with their supervisors throughout their studentship in order to discuss their programme of study and progress. Residents are expected to take the initiative in arranging meetings with their supervisors;

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<sup>2</sup> Residents who are employees will need the approval of their employer.

- Fulfil and MVetMed requirements and successfully complete this (or other RVC Masters) programme within the 3 year residency period.

### ***Registration and Progression***

- Registering annually with the Graduate School;

### ***Good research practice and compliance***

- Consulting their supervisor(s) before submitting any work for publication;
- Agreeing with their supervisor the dates of holidays which will be taken with regard to clinical rotas.

## 2.5. Postgraduate Medicine Course Management Committee

**Management of the MVetMed and PGDip VCP courses is the remit of the Postgraduate Medicine Course Management Committee. For terms of reference and Committee business, please see the Academic Committee handbook at:**  
**<http://www.rvc.ac.uk/about/the-rvc/governance-policy-legal/academic-committees>**

## 2.6. Supervisors

Interns will have one or two clinical supervisors, usually module leaders of the programme in which they are enrolled. The supervisors will accept the responsibilities and fulfil the criteria laid out below. S/he is ultimately responsible for the supervision and administration (with Department and the Graduate Schools assistance) of the Intern's progression. They should:

- be current members of permanent academic staff and normally have completed any period of probation;
- Have a good track record of supervising interns as evidenced by previous interns having successfully completed the PGDip VCP. Inexperienced supervisors may be part of a supervisory team but should not normally be the primary supervisor. A supervisor may be prevented from further supervision if s/he ceases to satisfy one or more of the above criteria or fails to comply with the responsibilities outlined below.

Residents will have one primary clinical supervisor and one (different) research supervisor although where appropriate a clinical supervisor may fulfil both roles. The primary supervisor will accept the responsibilities and fulfil the criteria laid out below. S/he is ultimately responsible for the supervision and administration (with Department and the Graduate Schools assistance) of the Resident's progression. They should:

- be current members of permanent academic staff and normally have completed any period of probation;

- hold the target professional qualification;
- Have a good track record of supervising Residents as evidenced by previous Residents having successfully completed an RVC Masters' degree and gaining their specialist qualification. Inexperienced supervisors may be part of a supervisory team but should not normally be the primary supervisor. A supervisor may be prevented from further supervision if s/he ceases to satisfy one or more of the above criteria or fails to comply with the responsibilities outlined below.

## Responsibilities of Supervisors

### *Guidance*

- Providing Interns/Residents with encouragement, support and feedback on their progress;
- Advising Interns/Residents, or ensuring they have received guidance, on all relevant aspects of their clinical or pathology service work and on research<sup>3</sup>;
- Providing advice on scheduling of work (and, where appropriate, choice of modules) so that the Diploma or Masters' degree and target professional qualifications can be achieved;
- Encouraging the Intern/Resident to develop transferable skills and helping them to identify relevant courses and meetings at which they can communicate their work to others;
- Introducing the Intern/Resident to other clinicians and researchers and to appropriate academic and professional bodies;

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<sup>6</sup>Including: research techniques, standard of work required, planning of research programme, attendance at training courses, conferences, seminars etc., publication of findings, plagiarism, intellectual property rights, health and safety regulations, ethical research and the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and research integrity.

- Monitoring the Intern/Resident's general welfare and informing them of sources of assistance where necessary;
- Informing the head of service if alternative supervisory arrangements are needed for reasons of absence;
- Informing the Graduate School if the Intern/Resident is unable to continue with their studies for personal, health or other reasons;
- Informing the Graduate School of circumstances that may require the Intern/Resident to request an interruption to study which will alter their registration status;
- If it is anticipated that the Intern/Resident will require a prolonged period of absence from their studies, advising them about the impact on their ability to meet the requirements of their target professional qualification;
- Informing the Graduate School and the Chair of SPDS on what adjustments to the planned programme of study will be required to take account of a prolonged interruption.

### *Meetings*

- Meeting the Intern/Resident formally at least once every 3 months, allowing adequate time for such formal meetings and ensuring that brief written meeting notes are kept (asking the Intern/Resident to send an e-mail summarising the main points of the discussion is a good way of ensuring that both student and supervisor are in agreement about the meeting content). Informal meetings between Intern/Residents and supervisors are expected to take place with much greater frequency. Meetings with a research supervisor can be less frequent in year 1;
- Where there is joint supervision, agreeing with the Intern/Resident and the other supervisor(s) the division of responsibility between the supervisors;
- Advising the Intern/Resident, where appropriate, on future career development.

### *Feedback and Progress*

- Providing constructive feedback (in writing or verbally) on written work such as clinical records and reports or other reports and letters to referring vets;
- Monitoring the Intern/Resident's progress, advising them on the adequacy of progress and the standard of their work, and arranging supportive measures or actions where appropriate;
- Arranging progress assessment meetings in accordance with the Assessment & Award regulations.



### 3. Progress assessment

At progress assessment, an Intern or Resident will be evaluated against the standards and achievements appropriate for the stage reached in their clinical training (and Masters degree for which a Resident is registered). Students experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their studies should discuss these in the first instance with their supervisor(s), a programme (Intern) or Masters (Resident) course director. Alternatively, or in addition, they are also welcome to contact the Graduate School or Chair of SPDS (see section 5).

#### **Interns**

The progress of Interns will be reviewed after 6 months. In addition to completing their 6-month progress assessment with the recommendation to continue in the programme, at least one module will need to have been passed. Interns may be required to attend an ad hoc progress assessment if deemed necessary by the Programme Director(s).

*The outcome of a progress assessment can be any of the following:*

1. Satisfactory progress: the Intern should proceed
2. Satisfactory progress with advice: the Intern should proceed
3. Progress of concern: Intern to be placed on probation for a period of not less than one month and not greater than three months after which there will be a further progress assessment
4. Intern programme terminated with immediate effect. This can occur with or without referral to the Professional Requirements procedure.

#### **Residents**

Residents will be progress assessed annually but there may be a requirement for additional progress assessment; see the requirements to progress section of the MVetMed Assessment & Award Regulations. These and copies of the necessary forms can be found on the Graduate School and/or MVetMed /Masters sites of RVC Learn.

*The outcome of a progress assessment can be any of the following:*

1. Satisfactory progress: the Resident should proceed
2. Satisfactory progress with advice: the Resident should proceed
3. Progress of concern: Resident to be placed on probation for a period of not less than one month and not greater than three months after which there will be a further progress assessment.
4. Resident programme terminated with immediate effect. including removal from clinical/pathology duties. This can occur with or without referral to the Professional Requirements procedure.

#### 4. Absences

##### 4.1 Annual Leave

The total annual leave entitlement for **Interns** funded by the RVC is 20 days *inclusive* of bank holidays. There is no entitlement to the College concessionary days unless they are taken from the 20-day allowance.

The annual leave entitlement for **Residents** funded by the RVC is 25 days *inclusive* of bank holidays. There is no entitlement to the College concessionary days unless they are taken from the 25-day allowance.

The leave year for Interns and Residents will run from the start date of the scholarship. Interns/Residents that wish to take annual leave should agree this leave with their supervisor and then send an email to [IntResAnnualLeave@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:IntResAnnualLeave@rvc.ac.uk) where their leave will be recorded

Annual leave cannot be carried forward from one leave year to the next except in exceptional circumstances and with approval of the relevant Head of Department. In the event of the scholarship ending early, leave entitlement will be on a pro-rata basis.

## **4.2 Maternity Leave**

Interns funded by the College are not entitled to paid maternity, paternity or adoption leave. Any extension of the scholarship following a period of unpaid leave is at the discretion of the relevant Head of Department. Interns funded by other sources are governed by the terms and conditions/MoA of their sponsor and/or collaborative partner contract in these circumstances. All requests to interrupt their studies must be discussed with their supervisor and/or Head of Department and be submitted in writing to the Graduate School for consideration by the Student Progress and Development System (SPDS), which will make the final decision.

The maternity/adoption policy for Residents can be found on the MVetMed site on RVC Learn. All requests to interrupt their studies must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School and will be considered by the SPDS, which will make the final decision.

## **4.3 Sick Leave**

Interns and residents that are absent due to illness should contact their supervisor to inform them of their illness. Supervisors will email at the start of the absence and upon return to work, to a dedicated mailbox ([IntResSickness@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:IntResSickness@rvc.ac.uk)) where the information is recorded and the Bradford factor is calculated. The Bradford Factor system is used to score absences and is designed to trigger points for referral to Occupational Health, and/or the Graduate School, from a calculation over a 12-month period. For interns and residents the trigger point for referral is set at a Bradford Factor of 100. Students who accumulate frequent short-term periods of absence and trigger the Bradford Factor will be referred to Occupational Health and/or the Advice Centre and the Graduate School. During sickness absence covered by medical certificates, payment of the award will continue at the full rate for four weeks. Any payment beyond this period will be at the discretion of the College.

## **Interns and Residents supported by external funding**

Interns and Residents supported by an external funder, whether based at their premises or at the RVC, must abide by the funders' terms and conditions/MoA and/or collaborative partner contract

including those relating to annual leave, sickness and maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

## **5. Grievances and change of supervisor**

A Resident or Intern who has concerns about the quality of (any aspect of) their supervision or any other aspect of their programme should initially try to discuss the matter with their supervisor. Should they not feel able to do so directly, they can contact the senior clinical tutors and/or the Head of the Graduate School who will work with the student, their supervisor(s), Head of Department and/or other member(s) of academic staff in trying to resolve the situation. If it is demonstrated that a supervisory relationship has broken down irrevocably, the supervisor may be changed through this procedure although the student must recognise that this may not always be possible.

The criteria that will be used in deciding whether a change of supervisor would be appropriate are as follows:

- Objective evidence (e.g. from progress assessment meeting or SPDS meetings) that (a) the supervisor is not fulfilling their responsibilities as set out in the Code of Practice or (b) the relationship between the supervisor and the scholar has irretrievably broken down;
- Availability of an appropriately skilled/qualified alternative supervisor;
- The source of funding for the studentship if the student is supported by an external award made to a named supervisor;
- Objective evidence (e.g. from a SPDS meeting, (multi-source) feedback from co-workers on clinical/pathology skills at progress reviews, PGDip VCP/MVetMed (or other Masters) modules attended and marks awarded) that the scholar is performing sufficiently well to continue with their programme of study.

Grievances other than of a supervisory nature that cannot be resolved through discussion with the supervisor and/or other relevant members of academic staff and/or the Graduate School will be considered through the College's normal Complaints

procedures. Complaints about bullying or harassment should be addressed by following the procedure outlined in the College's Dignity at Work policy.

Any Intern or Resident whose progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory at a progress review meeting and who is required to leave the programme has the right to appeal through the College's Appeals procedure.

The relevant policies/procedures can be found at:  
<http://www.rvc.ac.uk/about/the-rvc/academic-quality-regulations-procedures>

## 6. Representation of Interns and Residents

Residents and Interns are represented at the College level on the Postgraduate Medicine/Masters Course Management Committee. They are also represented at Academic Board and other relevant College Committees through the Postgraduate Presidents or their nominees. Residents and Interns are also invited to Departmental meetings which provide an additional channel for the consideration of their views.

## 7. Contact details:

### Graduate School

Prof Kristien Verheyen  
Head of the Graduate School

Email: kverheyen@rvc.ac.uk  
Tel: 01707 666625

Dr Shivanthi Manickasingham  
Head of Postgraduate  
Administration

Email: smanick@rvc.ac.uk  
Tel: 020 7468 5224

Mrs Carole Tilsley (Job-share)  
Postgraduate Clinical  
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Mrs Lisa Matamala-Shaw (Job-share)  
Postgraduate Clinical and Research Degrees Officer  
Email: lshaw@rvc.ac.uk  
Tel: 020 7468 5541

Mrs Jackie Kane  
Postgraduate Admissions Officer  
Email: jakane@rvc.ac.uk  
Tel: 020 7468 5154

### Chair of SPDS

Prof Sue Gregory  
Email: sgregory@rvc.ac.uk  
Tel: (0)1707 666333

### Internship Programme Directors

#### *Small Animal*

Mr Dominic Barfield  
Email: dbarfield@rvc.ac.uk  
Tel: 01707 666458

Ms Zoë Halfacree  
Email: zhalfacree@rvc.ac.uk  
Tel: 01707 667029

*Exotic Animal*

Miss Joanna Hedley

Email: [jhedley@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:jhedley@rvc.ac.uk)

*Production Animal*

Dr Richard Booth

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Tel: 01707 666211

Mr John Fishwick

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*Large Animal*

Dr Bettina Dunkel

Email: [bdunkel@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:bdunkel@rvc.ac.uk)

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**PGDip VCP Course Director**

**Mr Dominic Barfield**

Email: [dbarfield@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:dbarfield@rvc.ac.uk)

Tel: 01707 666458

**Residency Programme Directors**

*Small Animal*

Professor Dan Chan

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*Equine*

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**MVetMed Course Director**

**Dr Vicky Lipscomb**

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**PGDip VCP/MVetMed Programme Lisa Harber**

**Support Coordinator/Postgraduate**

**Course Support Manager**

Email: [lharber@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:lharber@rvc.ac.uk)

Tel: 01707 666323

**Postgraduate Medicine Course**

**Management Committee Chair**

**Committee Chair**

**Dr Rob Fowkes**

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## **GUIDELINES ON PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK**

This guide is intended to provide information to employees regarding personal relationships within the College, in order to avoid any perceived, actual or potential conflicts of interest or misuse of authority.

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** The College values and relies upon the professional integrity of its employees, particularly where an employee has supervisory responsibilities or a professional relationship with a student.
- 1.2** So that employees conduct themselves and are perceived to conduct themselves in a professional manner, it is necessary to recognise and take account of personal relationships which might affect working relationships.
- 1.3** The College is committed to promoting equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination. Accordingly, these guidelines will be applied fairly and consistently and with due regard to equality of treatment.
- 1.4** The guidelines do not form part of employees' contracts of employment. They will be kept under review and may be revised from time to time.

### **2 SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

- 2.1** The guidelines apply to all individuals working at all levels and grades, including full time and part-time employees.
- 2.2** In the context of these guidelines:
  - (a)** a 'personal relationship' is a personal relationship which is:
    - (i)** a family relationship;

- (ii) a business/commercial/financial relationship; or
- (iii) a sexual/romantic relationship; and

- (b) a 'working relationship' is any situation in which individuals will interact in the course of their day-to-day work. This includes situations where one of the individuals in the personal relationship is not an employee of the College. For example, they might be an agency worker, or work for a contractor.

### 2.3 The guidelines apply to personal relationships between:

- (a) employees of the College;
- (b) an employee of the College and an agency worker, casual worker, consultant, contractor or supplier, and/or
- (c) an employee of the College and a current student of the College,

### 2.4 Although most social and personal relationships need not present a difficulty, it is recognised that there will be certain circumstances where employees may need to avoid taking certain decisions or undertaking certain roles in order to protect themselves and the College from any potential allegations of impropriety, unfair bias, abuse of power or conflict of interest.

### 2.5 These guidelines are therefore intended to:

- (a) provide guidance in areas where a personal relationship overlaps with any working relationship and particularly where it might cause:
  - (i) a conflict of interest (for example where an employee's personal interests clash with their professional obligations);
  - (ii) breach of confidentiality;
  - (iii) unfair advantage; or
  - (iv) allegations of abuse of power;

- (b) ensure that an employee in a personal relationship is not open to allegations that it has affected a working relationship; and
- (c) enable the situation to be managed, if considered necessary, with a view to avoiding difficulties within any working relationship.

### **3 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND/OR AGENCY WORKERS, CASUAL WORKERS, CONSULTANTS, CONTRACTORS OR SUPPLIERS**

- 3.1 To maintain professionalism and avoid embarrassment to others, an employee in a personal relationship should avoid public displays of affection in the workplace. This includes, for example, kissing, touching and holding hands.
- 3.2 Where an employee is in a line management or supervisory position, that employee must not be involved in any recruitment, progress assessment, promotion, disciplinary or grievance process or in any other process involving the other. Where authorisation is required for any financial matters e.g. expenses claims/salary changes or allocation of external funding for an employee with whom a personal relationship has been declared, additional independent authorisation must be sought.
- 3.3 When an employee has been in a personal relationship, but it has come to an end, they must throughout remain professional and ensure that the ending of the relationship does not affect their work or their working relationships.
- 3.4 Employees should at all times conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role and duties and the College's policies and procedures (including those relating to equality and diversity and dignity at work).

#### **4. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND CURRENT STUDENTS**

- 4.1** It is vital that trust and confidence exist between employees and students to ensure that students maximise their learning experience. The professional relationship between a student and an employee of the College is a central part of the student's educational development. A personal relationship could compromise this professional relationship and damage the teaching and learning environment for other students and employees.
- 4.2** Employees are strongly discouraged from entering into a personal relationship with a student they are responsible for teaching, tutoring, supervising or assessing. It would be considered unprofessional for an employee to seek actively to initiate a personal relationship without regard to the problems that may ensue.
- 4.3** If a consensual personal relationship does develop between an employee of the College and a student they are responsible for teaching, tutoring, supervising or assessing, the employee must declare the relationship to their line manager without delay. Any such disclosure will be treated sensitively.
- 4.4** The College reserves the right to discontinue the responsibility of the member of staff for teaching, tutoring or supervising a student with whom they have a personal relationship.
- 4.5** In no circumstances will an employee be permitted to take part in the assessment of a student with whom they have a personal relationship.
- 4.6** In the event that the supervision of a Post-Graduate student involves two employees who are in a personal relationship, a third supervisor should always be assigned.

- 5. CONFIDENTIAL DECLARATION OF A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IN A LINE MANAGEMENT OR SUPERVISORY WORKING RELATIONSHIP**
- 5.1 Where a personal relationship exists or develops within a line management or supervisory working relationship, the line manager's manager must be informed. Upon receiving this information, the line manager should seek further guidance from Human Resources.
- 5.2 Employees may be reluctant to disclose their personal relationship, but it is important that the College is able to assess any risk of conflict of interest, unfair advantage or breach of confidentiality and discuss with employees concerned, ways in which such issues can be avoided.
- 5.3 Information relating to a disclosure of a relationship will be handled with confidence. Employees will be treated with sensitivity during this process.
- 5.4 Upon learning of the personal relationship, the College will consider what, if any, steps need to be taken. Due regard will be given to the potential effect of the relationship on others in the College, any potential negative effect on the workings of a department or team and the professional conduct of the College's business.
- 5.5 The employee concerned will be consulted with a view to reaching agreement regarding the appropriate action. No action will be taken without first discussing it fully with the employee concerned.
- 5.6 The College may, at its discretion, make alternative management arrangements. This may include transferring some of an employee's duties or transferring an employee to another department. Any actions to be taken will be confirmed in writing to any employee concerned.

- 5.7 In no circumstances will an employee be permitted to progress assess another employee with whom they have a personal relationship, nor will they be permitted to sign off expenses or other administrative documentation.
- 5.8 If it is considered necessary to inform other employees about the personal relationship (for example, in order to explain a change in management arrangements) this will be discussed first with the employee concerned.
- 5.9 If the circumstances of the personal relationship change, the employee must also advise their line manager, who may seek advice from Human Resources. The previously agreed actions will be reviewed in consultation with the employee and any further appropriate action taken.

## **6 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS NOT IN A LINE MANAGEMENT OR SUPERVISORY WORKING RELATIONSHIP**

- 6.1 Even where there is no managerial/supervisory relationship with an employee in a personal relationship, there may still be a risk of a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage being perceived to be gained from the overlap of a personal and working relationship.
- 6.2 Where there is any possibility of conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage, the relationship should also be declared as above.
- 6.3 An employee should seek the guidance of Human Resources if in any doubt as to whether or not there is or might be a risk of a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage.
- 6.4 Upon learning of the personal relationship, the College will consider what, if any, steps need to be taken, as above.
- 6.5 The line manager/head of department, in consultation with HR, may consider transferring one party or both parties, making alternative line management or supervisory arrangements or

implementing other appropriate arrangements to eliminate the conflict of interest, depending on the circumstances. In very rare circumstances, such alternative arrangements may not be feasible and the College may then have to consider dismissing one or both parties.

## **8. FAILURE TO DISCLOSE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IN ACCORDANCE WITH THESE GUIDELINES**

- 8.1** In the event that an employee fails to declare a personal relationship where required to do so in accordance with these guidelines, or where it would have been prudent to do so, disciplinary action will be taken. Serious cases will be dealt with as gross misconduct.

## **9. HARASSMENT & BULLYING**

- 9.1** Employees are reminded that unwanted attention given by either party, whether at work or outside work (for example, when a personal relationship has ended) could constitute bullying and/or harassment. In such cases disciplinary action may be taken. Serious cases will be dealt with as gross misconduct.

## **10 DATA PROTECTION**

- 10.1** Any personal data provided to the College as a result of this policy will be treated in accordance with the principles set out in the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **11 FURTHER GUIDANCE**

- 11.1** Employees may seek further guidance, on a confidential basis, from the HR department.



Last Reviewed November 2015

## APPENDIX 8.2

### TRAVEL POLICY

**Prior to any overseas travel on College business, you must complete a risk assessment.**

#### Process Summary for Staff and Students Travelling Overseas

- Before the staff member/student travels overseas, they must obtain preliminary approval of their proposed journey from their line manager/supervisor;
- The staff member/student then fully completes Risk Assessment Form A;
- In the course of completing form A, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) website is checked for possible risks at the time of travel. If no risks are stated, or the staff member/student has agreed with their HoD/Supervisor that the low risks stated are acceptable, only Risk Assessment Form A is completed.
- If higher risks are stated on the website, the staff member/student must consider alternatives to visiting the country. However, exceptions may be considered providing:
  - that the risk has been controlled to be as low as reasonably practicable;
  - the benefit from the work outweighs the risk;
  - the associated risks are fully understood and accepted by the HoD/Supervisor and traveller.

If exceptions are made, the staff member/student must complete Risk Assessment Form B in addition to Form A.

If the FCO advises against all travel to the required destination, the Principal's approval must be sought for any travel to this destination if still required, in addition to the HoD.

- Once the form(s) have been completed and passed to their HoD/Supervisor, the HoD/Supervisor reviews the content of the completed form to ensure the traveller has taken all necessary reasonable precautions prior to travel. Where necessary, the HoD/Supervisor will liaise with their

Departmental Safety Supervisor and/or Health and Safety in Estates for guidance. Having done this, they have the option to either approve, reject or return the form(s) for re-submission;

- If approved, the form is sent to their PA/Departmental Administrator for uploading to a central database on O:\ Drive\* to enable Health and Safety to quickly assess where all RVC staff and students are overseas in the event of an emergency and provide necessary support;
- If the Foreign Travel Fund is being applied for (included in Form A), a copy of the form(s), with the Foreign Travel Fund Application section fully completed, must be sent to the PA to the Vice Principal - Research and Innovation for separate approval. When applying, individuals must make note of the terms and conditions at the end of Form A. The PA to the Vice Principal - Research and Innovation will inform the applicant of the decision;
- Before travelling, the staff member/student must register with the FCO website for emergency email alerts at [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice);
- Any relevant issues/problems during the time overseas are then reported by the traveller to the HoD/Supervisor for resolution and future reference.

\* Any PAs or Departmental Administrators requiring access to this drive should contact HR.

Find out **more...**

[Travel Health](#)  
[Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#)

Standard immunisations for travel abroad on business or for research should be obtained from your GP and/or practice nurse and travel clinics or from specialist travel clinics.

If you are planning a trip abroad, you should see your GP and/or practice nurse or travel clinic at least eight weeks before you go. This will give you adequate time to discuss any vaccinations that you might need. The vaccinations you need will depend on:

- where you are travelling to,
- any existing medical conditions that you have, and

- any medication that you are already taking

If you are pregnant, you should not be given any unnecessary vaccination. Talk to your GP who will be able to advise you about the best course of treatment.