



## **Brasenose College Employment of Relatives or Close Friends Policy**

**January 2011**

### **1. Definitions**

'Closely related' for the purpose of this policy refers to people who are close friends or relatives.

'Close friends' refers to friends who an employee knows personally and meets with socially.

'Relatives' for the purposes of this policy refer to people who are related by blood or marriage or civil partnership, or who co-habit, or dependants of such people.

### **2. Intent**

It is acknowledged that on occasions people may work for the College who are 'closely related' to other employees. The intention of this policy is to minimise the likelihood of any awkwardness, accusations of favouritism, or any other potential difficulties by effective management of situations where 'closely related' employees work together in the same team or department, or have a working relationship as colleagues across departments.

It is not being suggested that individual members of staff would allow themselves to be influenced by personal relationships, however, it is sound operational policy to avoid circumstances in which such practice might be alleged or inferred.

### **3. Policy**

#### *General*

Any employees who consider that they are 'closely related' within the meaning of this policy must ensure that their manager(s) is aware of their personal situation.

Should a relationship change or develop between two existing employees or should a relationship be brought to the attention of a manager, consultation must take place with the individuals concerned and arrangements put in place so as to comply with this policy.

The following conditions will apply to all College employees:

*Employment of 'Closely Related' Employees within the same location, team or department*

Those who are 'closely related' should be advised of the potential problems of them working together and encouraged not to do so. The potential problems could include:

- Embarrassment or awkwardness for co-workers
- Difficulties in arranging shifts/annual leave to accommodate both
- Concerns about lack of objectivity in the event of disagreements within the workplace or in relation to any incidents or investigations

However, where staff are unable or unwilling to move, then management should consider any potential interpersonal or operating problems and minimise these by whatever action they may consider to be reasonable and appropriate. This could include measures such as:

- Ensuring that the people concerned do not work on the same shift
- Ensuring that other Staff in the workplace are confident that they can raise issues where they have concerns that the relationship in question is having a detrimental effect on the working environment, or on operational issues.

Where there are serious concerns about the effect a relationship is having, either on one or both of the staff members' performance, or on others within the team, consultation will take place with the staff involved which may result in one or both of the staff members being redeployed within the organisation.

#### *'Closely Related' Employees and line management issues*

Steps should be taken to ensure that those who are 'closely related' do not work in positions where one has either direct or indirect management authority for the other.

This would also include ensuring that situations do not arise whereby a manager is involved in the decision making process related to incremental increases, appraisals, internal promotions, secondment or transfer of any staff member that they are 'closely related' to.

Rarely, circumstances may arise which result in a 'closely related' person having line management responsibility for another through for example:

- A relationship developing between two existing employees
- Organisational Change

In such cases, the staff should be consulted with and steps should be taken to move one or other of the staff members to a suitable alternative position as soon as one becomes available.

In the interim appropriate measures should be taken to protect both parties and the College, for example ensuring that signing timesheets and expenses claims, incremental increases, appraisals etc. would be completed by another appropriate manager.

#### *Recruitment*

If an employee of the College is aware that a 'closely related' person of theirs is applying to work for the College it is their responsibility to inform them of the principles of this policy and to ensure that their manager is made aware of the likely application.

Anyone who is involved in a selection process (shortlisting or interviewing) and is aware that a 'closely related' person, or indeed any other person that they know personally, has applied, they should declare this to the other members of the shortlisting/interview panel at the earliest opportunity.

Ideally they should then be withdrawn from the selection process and replaced by a colleague. If this is not possible, then the HR Manager should be involved in the selection procedure so that they can monitor the process and the decisions that are made and ensure that matters are conducted fairly and equitably; thus protecting the manager concerned, the candidate and the College from any allegations that personal relationships influenced the end result.

If any member of staff has further concerns regarding the employment of relatives or close friends, they should initially raise this with their line manager.