

Employment of Close Relatives

The University Court has decided that it would be worthwhile formulating guidelines on the employment of close relatives in the same School/Discipline/Directorate of the University. In particular, it is considered desirable to issue guidance on special features appropriate to the selection process where it is known that a close relative or prospective close relative is a candidate.

In issuing these guidelines, the Court is aware of the difficulties of drawing up and operating a precise scheme. In particular, there are acknowledged problems of definition. The term "relative" can be defined as including any person related or connected by blood or by marriage, but how close is a "close relative" and is marriage to be interpreted only as the product of a civil or religious ceremony or as including any comparatively stable relationships?

Guidelines

1. Where two or more close relatives are employed in the same School/Discipline/Directorate of the University every effort should be made to avoid their occupying positions involving disciplinary or supervisory relationships either with each other or jointly in respect of other members of the department.
2. There should be impartiality when considering the appointment of close relatives. The following guidelines should assist in achieving this objective:
 - (i) Where there are sound academic or personal reasons for considering the employment of a close relative, the selection process should substantially exclude the participation of the member of staff involved, even if he/she is Dean of School/Director.
 - (ii) The University Court, through the Secretary of the University, should be informed at the earliest possible stage of any application from a close relative or of any research grant application naming a close relative as a prospective employee. At its discretion the Court may nominate an additional member of the Selection Committee and may in addition nominate an external assessor and define the extent of his/her participation in the selection process.
 - (iii) Where a close relative of the Dean of School/Director is an applicant, the Dean of School/Director should be permitted to submit written comments on all candidates though he/she should not act as a referee for the close relative. He/she should not normally take part in the interviews of candidates and must withdraw for the interview of the close relative and the subsequent discussion on the relative merits of all candidates. It should be accepted as reasonable for any other member of staff of the School/Discipline/Directorate to decline to serve as a member of the Selection Committee where a close relative of the Dean of School/Director is a candidate.

3. It is Court's intention that similar guidelines should be applied where a close relative already employed by the University is being considered for promotion, confirmation after probation, etc.

4. In certain staff categories such as cleaners and domestic staff, special arrangements for appointment of close relatives will normally be inappropriate unless one relative is to be in a disciplinary or supervisory position in relation to the other.

9 November 1982

Revised 18 June 2013

Updated March 2016 (Following University Restructure)