



POLICY:  <b>Relationships and Boundaries With Students</b>		POLICY NUMBER:  <b>CC-3</b>
		PREVIOUS/REPLACES: <b>Relationships and Boundaries With Students</b>
APPROVED BY:  <b>Executive Council</b>	EFFECTIVE DATE AS OF:  <b>July 13, 2023</b>	PRIOR VERSIONS:  <b>April 11, 2023 August 30, 2017 August 30, 2016</b>

**1. Policy Statement:**

Interactions and personal relationships between all employees and students of the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (to be referred to as MITT) should be based upon mutual respect, trust and an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between staff and students in an educational setting.

Good, professional relationships between the student and the instructor, teacher, student advisor, counsellor and support staff is fundamental to the teaching/learning process. Relationships of a personal nature between employees and students may create the potential for actual and/or perceived conflicts of interest and abuses of power that could result in harm to both the student and the entire Institute. In rare circumstances the development of close personal contact can lead to the misuse of the power differential between a MITT employee and a student. There are risks of exploitation, compromise of academic standards, harm to student development, and damage to reputations.

Employees in teaching positions, or any employee of MITT that has influence, input or decision-making power over a student’s marks, academic interests or other matters shall not become involved in a business or personal relationship (which includes a romantic or sexual relationship) with a student for the duration of the professional relationship or evaluative role.

All staff members of MITT are required to conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner in all interactions with students.

Examples of unacceptable conduct between all MITT staff and students that is expressly prohibited include, but are not limited to the following:

- Any type of sexual or inappropriate physical contact with students or any other conduct that violates the Respectful Workplace, Harassment Prevention and Non-Discrimination Policy;
- Using profane or obscene language;
- Developing a friendship with a student that moves beyond the acceptable boundaries of professional, academic and/or career support;



- Involving students in their own personal problems;
- Counselling or advising students beyond the normal day-to-day expectations;
- Inappropriate communication on social media that may be viewed as moving beyond the acceptable boundaries of professional, academic and/or career support;
- Inviting or allowing an individual student to visit a staff member's home is not permitted. All outings must be held in a public setting such as a restaurant.
- Receiving a non-trivial gift from a student (examples of acceptable gifts may include chocolates, flowers, coffee mug, etc.);
- Involving a student in any interpersonal difficulties the MITT member might have with any other member of the Institute;
- Consumption of alcohol with students is strictly prohibited except in limited circumstances in accordance with MITT's Drug & Alcohol Policy (employees and students).

## **2. Scope:**

This policy applies to all staff at MITT.

## **3. Procedure:**

### **3.1 Managing Relationships: Instructor's Role**

An instructor/teacher should respect students, treat them with dignity, and recognize the power differential between students and instructors. Relationships with students may be friendly, but instructors must remember that students are not their friends.

Instructors/teachers must not exploit students, discriminate unfairly between students, or allow conflicts of interest with students to arise.

The instructor/teacher is responsible for keeping relationships with students focused on academic matters, and for creating an appropriate social environment that fosters the educational objectives of the program or course.

### **3.2 Conflict of Interest**

If a pre-existing relationship might cause a conflict of interest between the instructor/teacher and the student (for example, if the academic employee is a relative, spouse, close friend, or sexual partner of the student), arrangements would be made to assign the student to a different section of the same class.

In the event that no other session of the class exists, the Dean, Director, Principal or Equivalent should be approached to resolve the issue and to protect the interests of the instructor/teacher, the student, and other students.



### **3.3 Reporting Violations**

Students and/or their parents/guardians (in the case of a minor) are strongly encouraged to notify the Dean, Director, Principal, or Equivalent or Director of People Services and Organizational Development if they believe any staff member of MITT has crossed a professional boundary or engaged in any conduct that violates this policy.

Any MITT employee who has reason to believe that another employee is inappropriately involved with a student as prescribed under this policy should immediately report their concerns to the Director of People Services and Organizational Development.

All reports of unprofessional or inappropriate behavior will be reported to the President of MITT and investigated by People Services or an external investigator, if appropriate.

MITT may take action in relation to the investigation, which can include (but is not limited to), the following:

- Informal counselling of the staff member;
- Advice to and training of the staff member to assist the staff member to cease the unprofessional relationship;
- Altering the supervision, assessment or examination arrangements in which the student and staff member are involved;
- Formal declaration of conflict of interest (See conflict of interest policy);
- Disciplinary action in accordance with the application of applicable policies and procedures up to and including termination of employment.

### **3.4 Confidentiality**

All reports of inappropriate relationships between employees and students will be investigated. MITT is aware of the sensitive nature of these types of issues. Accordingly, each investigation of any complaint will be conducted in a confidential manner with the findings communicated only to the appropriate parties.

## **4. Administration:**

The Director of People Services and Organizational Development is responsible for ensuring this policy is adhered to.

## **5. Review:**

This policy will be reviewed by Executive Council every five years.



## 6. References:

Acceptance of Gifts by Employees Policy  
Conflict of Interest Policy  
Drug & Alcohol Policy – Employees  
Drug & Alcohol Policy - Students  
Off-Duty Conduct by Employees Policy  
Progressive Discipline Policy  
Respectful Workplace, Harassment Prevention and Non-Discrimination Policy  
Student and MITT Expectations Policy  
*Human Rights Code*  
Manitoba Teachers' Society Code of Professional Practice

## 7. Definitions:

Conflict of interest - Arises in a situation in which an actual, potential or perceived conflict exists that could impair personal judgment and objectivity when undertaking institutional responsibilities. An actual conflict of interest involves a direct conflict between current duties and responsibilities and existing private interests. A potential conflict arises where private interests could conflict with official duties. A perceived conflicts exist where it could be perceived, or appears, that private interests could improperly influence the performance of duties - whether or not this is in fact the case.

Teacher- Means a person who holds a valid and subsisting teacher's certificate or a limited teaching permit issued under *The Education Administration Act*, or who is authorized by the minister to teach in a school.

Instructor - Includes all individuals providing instruction that is not a teacher as defined above and the individual is not a member of the Manitoba Teachers' Society bargaining unit.

Minor – Defined to be a person under the age of 18.

Personal Relationship – Goes beyond the normal level of relationship between a student and employee that are ordinarily present in an academic setting and includes, but is not limited to, close friendships, counselling and advising students beyond the normal day-to-day expectations, and/or sexual relationships.