



Conflict of Interest Policy

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A conflict of interest exists when the decision making or conduct of an individual or organisation could be seen to be affected by practices/interests external to their responsibilities to Qualsafe Awards (QA) and the delivery/assessment of its qualifications.

This policy contains guidance about how to identify and manage real or potential conflict of interest.

This policy applies to:

- Centres
- QA staff and Governing Body
- Third parties, including companies that provide services or goods to QA.

Note: throughout this document “Trainer” refers to all individuals responsible for training and/or assessing Learners.

QA responsibilities

As an Ofqual regulated awarding organisation, QA is required to comply with the *General Conditions of Recognition* which contain the following definition of conflict of interest and details of what is required to effectively manage conflicts of interest:

Definition of Conflict of Interest

A4.1 A conflict of interest exists in relation to an awarding organisation where –

- (a) its interests in any activity undertaken by it, on its behalf, or by a member of its Group have the potential to lead it to act contrary to its interests in the development, delivery and award of qualifications in accordance with its Conditions of Recognition,
- (b) a person who is connected to the development, delivery or award of qualifications by the awarding organisation has interests in any other activity which have the potential to lead that person to act contrary to his or her interests in that development, delivery or award in accordance with the awarding organisation’s Conditions of Recognition, or
- (c) an informed and reasonable observer would conclude that either of these situations was the case

Identifying Conflicts of Interest

A4.2 An awarding organisation must identify and monitor –

- (a) all conflicts of interest which relate to it, and
- (b) any scenario in which it is reasonably foreseeable that any such conflict of interest will arise in the future

Managing Conflicts of Interest

A4.3 An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that no conflict of interest which relates to it has an Adverse Effect.

A4.4 Where such a conflict of interest has had an Adverse Effect, the awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to mitigate the Adverse Effect as far as possible and correct it.

Interests in Assessment

A4.5 An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a Learner (including by way of Moderation) being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment.

A4.6 Where, having taken all such reasonable steps, an assessment by such a person cannot be avoided, the awarding organisation must make arrangements for the relevant part of the assessment to be subject to scrutiny by another person.

Therefore, **QA must:**

- Ensure QA staff record conflict(s) of interest at Centre and awarding organisation level, including details of the mitigating actions taken
- Keep an up to date register of conflict of interest, updating details and removing items as appropriate
- Provide advice and support to Centres with regards to conflict of interest
- Ensure assessment decisions remain objective if conflict of interest cannot be avoided.

Identifying conflict of interest

Examples of conflict of interest that could compromise the integrity of QA qualifications and assessments:

- Business or commercial interests that may affect professional judgment
- Personal relationships with family or friends that could influence decision making
- Gaining benefits such as gifts, employment or hospitality if a decision is made in favour of a particular individual or organisation
- Mutually beneficial arrangements, which compromise an individuals ability to make reliable and professional judgments
- Where favourable arrangements have been negotiated, e.g. supplying information to certain individuals or groups are preparing for or carrying out an assessment.

Responsibility to register a conflict of interest

All the individuals this policy applies to have a responsibility to register real and potential conflict of interest and should use the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form to do so.

If you are unsure whether a conflict of interest exists please contact QA.

Centre responsibilities

With respect to conflicts of interest, QA approved centres must do the following to ensure ongoing compliance:

- **Take steps to avoid or mitigate any existing or potential conflicts of interest**

Centres must consider how they can manage working arrangements to avoid potential conflicts of interest as much as possible. For example, if a centre staff member is undergoing an examination at your centre and two out of three Trainers are related to the staff member, then the examination should be assessed by the unrelated Trainer.

- **Complete and send a copy of the *Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form* to QA, retaining a copy for you records**

All sections of the Form must be completed, including the section requesting details of the actions being taken to minimise the risk of any Adverse Effects.

- **Maintain an up to date record of conflict of interest**

Centres must maintain accurate records of all existing and potential conflicts of interest, including details of all mitigating actions being taken.

- **Update records if there is a change in circumstances and notify QA**

Centres must inform QA if there are any changes to circumstances regarding any previously declared conflicts of interest and register any changes which have led to new (or potential) conflicts of interest.

- **Inspect activities and assessments where there is a conflict of interest that cannot be avoided**

Centres must carry out supplementary quality assurance checks in cases where conflicts of interest are unavoidable.

Note: A declaration must be signed confirming that this policy has been read, understood and will be adhered to by the Centres Responsible Person as part of the Centre approval application process.

Examples:

- Personal or professional relationship between Trainers and Learners
- Personal relationship between Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) and Trainers
- Centre staff undertaking mandatory regulated qualifications within their own Centre
- Instances of reciprocal quality assurance activity between IQAs.

Qualsafe Awards

Policy review arrangements

QA will review this policy on an ongoing basis as part of our continuous improvement activities and revise as required in response to changes in legislation, our practices, actions from any allegations and in response to customer and Learner feedback.

Detail of this document may be updated to make are our arrangements for managing suspected cases of malpractice/maladministration remain effective.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, contact our customer service team:

Tel: 0845 644 3305

Email: info@qualsafeawards.org



Anita Goodfellow

Chief Executive

4th July 2017

Owner: CEO

Regulatory references: Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition A1,A4, A8, C1

QA documents referenced: Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form