

## Conflict of Interest Guidelines and Policy

No member of College staff, marker/examiner or internal verifier shall be involved in any assessment or examination, and administration in which she or he has a potential conflict of interest. Staff who believe there may be a conflict of interest must declare this by submitting a 'Conflict of Interest Declaration Form' (Appendix 1) to the SQA Coordinator.

All staff are responsible for reporting any conflict of interest, and the College will take measures to address this. This includes assessors, internal verifiers, invigilators and administration staff involved in application and administration processes.

Staff should make a declaration to their line managers if they are related to or have a personal relationship or a close professional or business relationship with a candidate, and are currently deployed to:

1. Administer the application of this candidate to start a qualification at the College
2. Set assessments which this candidate will undertake
3. Make assessment judgements on this candidate's evidence
4. Internally verify assessment decisions on this candidate's work
5. Invigilate an assessment which this candidate is sitting
6. Administer the recording of the assessment marks

The line managers should pass the *Conflict of Interest Declaration Form* to the SQA Coordinator for the addressing the case and the action to be taken.

A personal interest in an outcome of an assessment amounts to conflict of interest, which poses a risk to the integrity of the assessment.

Staff are required to make a declaration if they are related to or have a private relationship with another member of centre staff involved in the internal verification of assessments. For example, where the assessment decisions of an assessor are to be internally verified by a relative.

Conflict of interest also applies where an individual stands to make a personal financial gain from the outcome of the assessment, as opposed to payment to the centre through normal business practice.

Conflict of interest also applies where an individual stands to make a personal financial gain from the outcome of an assessment, as opposed to payment to the College through normal business practices. It also applies if an employee uses their position to influence employment and promotion or compromising research activity in return of personal and financial benefits.

A new section with the title of "Avoiding Potential Conflicts of Interest" has been added to the Summative Assessment Policy as well as the Internal Verification Policy.



### **Addressing conflicts of interest**

The manager to whom the conflict of interest is reported should forward the *Conflict of Interest Declaration Form* to the SQA Coordinator. The SQA Coordinator should decide on a suitable action to address the conflict of interest. The decision may require:

- no action is required,
- to move the candidate into another group,
- change assessor/IV/invigilator, include the candidate in samples for verification,
- have the assessment marking supervised or re-marked, or
- a different administration staff to deal with the application and administration process at any stage.

The decision and agreed action must be recorded.

### **Record retention**

Copies of documentation should be retained for a year after completion of the assessments in question, including details of the action taken to address the conflict of interest. Copies of documentation will be retained longer in the case of malpractice or complaints/appeals.

### **Appendix 1:**

- Conflict of Interest Declaration Form