Qualification Delivery, Assessment and Quality Assurance Conflicts of Interest

Policy Reviewed By: Lynne Duffy
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Purpose

Gloverspiece School is committed to ensuring that all qualifications, assessments, internal quality assurance activities, and certification processes are conducted fairly, objectively, and in accordance with awarding organisation requirements.

The School recognises that conflicts of interest may compromise, or appear to compromise, the integrity of assessment decisions and therefore has procedures in place to identify, manage, monitor, and record any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest associated with qualification delivery.

Scope

This section applies to all individuals involved in qualification delivery, including:

- Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team;
- Centre Administrator;
- Exams Officer;
- Programme Leaders;
- Tutors and Teachers;
- Assessors;
- Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs);
- Invigilators;
- Contractors and Consultants;
- Volunteers;
- Any individual involved in assessment, quality assurance, certification, or learner support.

Definition of a Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists where an individual's personal, professional, financial, or family interests could compromise, influence, or be perceived to influence the integrity of qualification delivery or assessment decisions.

Conflicts may be:

- Actual;
- Potential; or
- Perceived.

The perception of bias may be as damaging to qualification integrity as actual bias.

Examples of Qualification Delivery Conflicts

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Assessing a family member, partner, friend, or close associate.
- Internally quality assuring the work of a family member or close associate.
- IQA activity involving an assessor with whom there is a close personal relationship.
- Teaching, assessing, or quality assuring a learner who is a relative.
- Making decisions regarding reasonable adjustments or special consideration applications for a relative or close associate.
- Accessing confidential assessment materials for personal benefit.
- Having financial interests in organisations delivering competing qualifications.
- Participating in malpractice investigations involving oneself or a close associate.
- Making certification recommendations relating to a family member or close associate.
- Any situation where an individual could gain personally from an assessment outcome.

Duty to Declare

All staff involved in qualification delivery must disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest immediately upon becoming aware of it.

Declarations must be made:

- Upon appointment;
- At the start of each academic year;
- Prior to learner enrolment where relevant;
- Whenever circumstances change.

Declarations must be submitted in writing to the Headteacher, Centre Quality Nominee, or designated Responsible Officer.

Register of Qualification Delivery Conflicts

The School shall maintain a Conflict of Interest Register specifically relating to qualification delivery.

The register shall record:

- The nature of the conflict;
- Individuals involved;
- Qualifications affected;
- Risk assessment undertaken;
- Control measures implemented;
- Review dates;
- Final outcomes.

The register shall be reviewed regularly and made available to awarding organisations upon request.

Assessment and Internal Quality Assurance

Under normal circumstances:

- Assessors must not assess the work of family members, partners, or close associates.
- IQAs must not quality assure assessment decisions made by family members, partners, or close associates.
- IQAs must not internally verify their own assessment decisions.
- Staff must not make certification recommendations relating to individuals with whom they have a close personal relationship.

Alternative arrangements must be implemented wherever reasonably possible.

Unavoidable Conflicts

The School recognises that in small centres complete separation may not always be possible.

Where a conflict cannot reasonably be avoided:

1. The conflict must be formally declared.
2. A written risk assessment must be completed.
3. Additional quality assurance arrangements must be implemented.
4. Independent sampling or verification must be undertaken where possible.
5. The awarding organisation shall be notified where required by its regulations.

The rationale and controls must be fully documented.

Recruitment and Employment of Family Members

Family members may be employed by the School provided that:

- Recruitment is conducted fairly and transparently;
- Appropriate declarations are made;
- Individuals do not supervise, assess, verify, or make certification decisions relating to family members where qualification delivery is involved.

Any exception must be authorised and documented.

Examination and Controlled Assessment Arrangements

Individuals must not:

- Invigilate examinations involving close family members where alternatives are available;
- Access confidential assessment materials without legitimate business need;
- Influence examination arrangements for personal benefit;
- Participate in decisions relating to malpractice investigations involving themselves or close associates.

Any conflict identified in examination administration must be reported immediately to the Exams Officer and Senior Leadership Team.

Malpractice and Maladministration

Failure to declare a conflict of interest may constitute maladministration or malpractice.

Examples include:

- Concealing a family relationship with a learner;
- Failing to disclose an assessor-IQA conflict;
- Influencing assessment outcomes;
- Improper access to assessment materials;
- Participating in assessment decisions where a conflict exists.

Such matters will be investigated under the School's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and may be reported to the relevant awarding organisation.

Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy.

Conflict of interest declarations shall be reviewed:

- Annually;
- Following staff changes;
- Following learner enrolment;
- Following notification of any new conflict.

The effectiveness of conflict management arrangements shall be reviewed as part of the School's annual quality assurance cycle.

Declaration

All staff involved in qualification delivery must sign an annual declaration confirming that:

- They have read and understood this policy;
- They have disclosed all relevant interests;
- They will immediately report any new or emerging conflicts of interest.

Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disciplinary action and, where appropriate, notification to the relevant awarding organisation.