

Conflict of Interest Policy

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This policy has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation and Disability. We will continue to monitor this policy and to ensure that it has equal access and does not discriminate against anyone, especially any person/s listed under any protected characteristic.

Introduction

1. Conflicts of interest may arise where an individual's personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of the Bedford College Group and could be financial or emotional.
2. Such conflicts may create problems, as they can:
 - Inhibit free discussion
 - Result in decisions, or actions, that are not in the best interests of the College Group
 - Potentially compromise the integrity of a qualification
 - Risk the impression that The Bedford College Group has acted improperly
3. The aim of this policy is to protect The Bedford College Group and the individuals concerned from any appearance of impropriety.

The Policy

4. The policy aims to draw attention to possible conflicts of interest and provide a framework of how to identify and manage them.
5. This policy does not attempt to identify and cover every possible conflict of interest situation that may arise but does provide some procedures that will allow the application of dealing with them.

What is a Conflict of Interest?

6. A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual has a direct or indirect, professional or personal interest in an outcome and may lead to them acting contrary to the norm.
7. A conflict of interest may arise in a variety of differing situations associated in the development, delivery and/or assessment of qualifications, examples being:
 - Where an individual is internally or externally marking assessments of a candidate who is a friend or relative
 - An assessment and quality assurance activity is undertaken by the same person
 - An assessor or quality assurer works for multiple stakeholders and has difficulty being impartial
 - A person gaining personally from any company that the centre has dealings with
 - An individual is enrolled on a course that is assessed by the department that they work in/are employed
 - A member of staff is enrolled on a college course which is also funded by the college

8. Common situations where a conflict of interest is likely to occur are:

- Assessments of candidates
- Invigilation of candidates
- Certification of candidates
- Internal management functions
- Internal staff training
- Engagement with suppliers
- Management of relations
- Departmental Manager is also part of the QA process

Responsibilities

9. It is the responsibility of all person's involved in the assessment of qualifications, the internal quality assurance and all other associated activities that meet Bedford College Group's assessment strategy, to:

- Conduct their activities so that the aims of the Bedford College Group's assessment strategy are implemented
- Ensure that they make their role clear and separate this from their other functions, as far as is possible
- Monitor their activities, in order to maintain the integrity of the assessment and the Bedford College Group.
- Devote enough time and intellectual ability to their responsibilities
- Recognise and report any potential or existing conflict to their line manager and Campus Quality Nominee

Managing Conflict

10. In order to implement this policy, based on a review of any declaration and supporting information received by your centres, it will be determined if the affected staff member has an actual, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

11. It may therefore be required that appropriate actions are taken to reduce or remove any identified conflict of interest by:

- Disclosure to other interested parties
- Restricting access to particular information
- Rearrangement or transfer of responsibilities e.g., appointing an alternative assessor
- Replacement of the individual

12. Once a report has been reviewed by the Quality Manager the outcomes will be recorded and placed on file. The person making the report will be advised of the outcomes, subject to any areas of specific confidentiality.

13. Where a conflict of interest is noted or reported after the event and has potentially compromised the integrity of any certification, the appropriate Awarding Organisation will be notified.

What to do if you wish to declare a conflict of interest

14. A conflict of interest can be declared by submitting the form on Page 4. to your Campus Quality Manager.
15. The quality department will review your declaration and record it on file.
16. If further action to protect the integrity of the assessment process is required, a member of the quality team will contact the person making the declaration and agree a clear process which needs to be followed, along with recording this on file and submitting the conflict to the awarding body in which the qualification(s) belong to.
17. Conflicts of interest must be declared as soon as they are identified. If a potential conflict could impact the integrity of a student's outcome, it should be declared before the student is registered with the awarding organisation.



Conflict of Interest Declaration Form

This form is to be completed by all teaching or supporting staff to declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest in line with the policies of the awarding organisations used across The Bedford College Group.

Full Name: _____

Role in the organisation: _____

Department: _____

Email Address: _____

Date of Declaration: _____

Please tick all that apply and provide details below:

I have a personal relationship with a student I am teaching or assessing.

I am enrolled on a course within the department I teach or support in.

I work with or for an awarding body (e.g., Pearson, City & Guilds, NCFE, Gateway Qualifications).

I am involved in internal assessment of a qualification I am also enrolled on.

Other (please specify): _____

Details of the Conflict:

Department: _____

Course Title: _____

Learning Aim/Unit(s): _____

Awarding Body: _____

Qualification Level: _____

Outline any steps already taken to mitigate the conflict (e.g., reassignment of assessment duties, alternative assessor appointed, declaration to awarding body).

I declare that the information provided is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that failure to disclose a conflict of interest may result in disciplinary action and could compromise the integrity of the qualification.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Internal Use Only

Reviewed by (Name & Role): _____

Date of Review: _____

Actions Taken / Mitigation Approved:

Conflict logged in central register

Awarding body notified (if applicable)

Further action required (specify): _____