

Conflict of Interest Policy (Exams)



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Contents

Purpose of the policy.....	3
Scope.....	3
What is a Conflict of Interest?.....	4
Roles, Responsibilities and Associated Procedures to be followed in the event of an Actual or Perceived Conflict of Interest.....	4
Handling Potential Conflicts of Interest in Specific Areas and Functions	5

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to staff and any other relevant individuals on handling possible conflicts of interest that may arise as a result of their roles as tutors, invigilators, and assessment/exam-related administrators. This policy applies to all staff or other individuals whenever they interact or potentially interact with any of the assessment/exam related functions.

This policy:

- Defines what is meant by conflict of interest in these circumstances.
- Describes the role of conflict of interest in the context of working for Tuition Extra (Kent) Ltd in an assessment/exam related function.
- Sets out which conflicts can be managed and how they should be managed, and those which are considered unmanageable and therefore cannot be allowed.
- Illustrates potential conflict of interest situations, some of which are not obvious.

The most important feature of the policy is the instruction that individuals should always disclose an activity if there is any doubt about whether it represents a conflict of interest.

The policy describes how and when such disclosures should be made, that is, as soon as potential or actual conflict is discovered. This should be done by completion of a report at the time (i.e. before activity is carried out). The policy describes the procedures that should be followed and how to handle potential conflicts of interest.

Scope

This policy applies to staff and other individuals who interact or potentially interact with the assessment- related work/examinations of Tuition Extra (Kent) Ltd. This includes individuals involved with all aspects of devising, setting, marking, administering, invigilating, internally verifying or any other activity connected with the assessment of candidates and associated supporting resources and services.

The individuals falling within the scope of this policy include full-time, part-time, pro-rata and support staff of Tuition Extra (Kent) Ltd and any associate staff including external examiners.

The content of the policy cannot cover every potential conflict and must be interpreted in the light of the particular circumstances of each conflict.

What is a Conflict of Interest?

A simple definition of conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual or organisation has competing interests or loyalties. Conflicts of interest can arise in a variety of circumstances, for example:

- An individual whose personal interests conflict with his/her professional position
- An individual scheduled to assess, invigilate or internally verify the work of friends and/or relatives

Roles, Responsibilities and Associated Procedures to be followed in the event of an Actual or Perceived Conflict of Interest

All relevant staff have a responsibility to be aware of the potential for a conflict of interest. It is possible that staff working in any assessment/exam related role might encounter potential conflicts of interest from time to time.

Such situations must be carefully managed to ensure that any conflict of interest does not detrimentally impact on standards of, or public confidence in, Tuition Extra (Kent) Ltd's educational provision or that of the integrity of the qualifications.

Staff can find themselves in potential conflict of interest situations because they are not clear what the correct, auditable processes and procedures are:

- The Conflict of Interest policy is a requirement of the induction of all new tutors, invigilators and assessment/examination related support staff. As and when the situation arises, tutors, invigilators and support staff must notify Tuition Extra (Kent) Ltd of any students that are family members, other relatives or close friends (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships and their immediate family, e.g. son/daughter).
- Any day-to-day concerns identified by an individual should be raised with the Management Team.
- Where there is a notified potential conflict of interest for an individual, the individual and a member of the Management Team must document this carefully, together with details of the measures taken to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected and/or those activities that must be avoided to prevent Tuition Extra (Kent) Ltd being brought into disrepute.
- A Disclosure of Conflict of Interest Form should be signed by both the individual and the member

of the Management Team and brought to the attention of the Head of Service. The records will be retained until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice, JCQ Centre Inspector review or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later.

- Any concerns that the individual feels are urgent should be communicated immediately to the Head of Service and may be done so in confidence. It is an individual's right to raise concerns relating the conflict of interest directly with the Head of Service and to receive a response to their concerns.

Handling Potential Conflicts of Interest in Specific Areas and Functions

The following are examples of conflicts or potential conflicts of interest from different areas of Tuition Extra (Kent) Ltd. These notes are intended to be helpful to staff in making decisions that relate to potential conflict of interest situations in their day-to-day work.

- If a teaching member of staff is involved in any way with the development of a secure assessment for either internal or national use, he/she cannot make use of the knowledge of that assessment in any teaching or learning activity.
- If tutors, invigilators and assessment/exam-related administrators do not take responsibility to ensure the security and confidentiality of all assessment documents including examination papers.
- Learning and teaching materials are based on live examination of other assessment materials (although they can make use of past examination papers of other assessment materials).
- If a member of staff is asked to teach, prepare, assess, invigilate or internally verify the work of a student who is a family member (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships), other relative (e.g. son/daughter) or close friend.
- any members of centre staff who are taking qualifications at their own centre which include internally assessed components/units;
- A member of staff makes assessment materials available to individuals, whether or not students of Tuition Extra (Kent) Ltd, when not specifically tasked with assessing them as part of a timetabled activity.