

1. Conflicts of Interest

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) stipulates a requirement of paramount importance for the security and integrity of qualifications to be maintained.

Several factors can threaten or pose a risk to this requirement and in all circumstances effective action needs to be taken to guard against them.

Conflicts of interest, if not properly identified and managed, are recognised as a potential risk that can threaten the integrity of a qualification, especially qualifications that include an internally-assessed component. Similarly, a lack of vigilance when handling confidence pre-release materials can threaten the security of qualifications.

JCQ stipulates in the General Regulations for Approved Centres (GR) at Paragraph 5 that:

[GR 5.3] *It is the responsibility of the head of centre to ensure that their centre:*

j) manages conflicts of interest by informing the awarding bodies, before the published deadline for entries for each examination series, of:

- any members of centre staff who are taking qualifications at their own centre **which include internally-assessed components/units**;*
- any members of centre staff who are teaching and preparing members of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) for qualifications **which include internally-assessed components/units**; and*

maintains internal records of all instances where:

- exams office staff have members of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) being entered for examinations and assessments, either at the centre itself or other centres;*
- centre staff are taking qualifications at their own centre which do not include internally-assessed components/units;*
- centre staff are taking qualifications at other centres.*

The head of centre must retain records of all conflicts of interest, including details of the measures taken to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected. The records may be inspected by a JCQ Centre Inspector and/or awarding body staff. They might be requested in the event of concerns being reported to an awarding body. The records must be retained until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later.

Heads of centre should note that entering members of centre staff for qualifications at their own centre must be as a last resort in cases where the member of centre staff is unable to find another centre.

The head of centre is responsible for ensuring that proper protocols are in place to prevent the member of centre staff having access to examination materials prior to the examination and that other centre staff are briefed on maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the examination materials.

The head of centre must ensure that during the examination series the member of centre staff is treated in the same way as any other candidate entered for that examination, does not have access to examination materials and does not receive any preferential treatment.

2. Actions

Examinations Officer

Annually, by the end of January:

The Examinations Officer is to send a questionnaire (using Microsoft Forms) to all members of staff requiring them to make their **Annual Security and Conflicts of Interest Declaration**.

The sole purpose of the questionnaire is to identify unknown and to confirm known potential conflicts of interest, and to obtain a record of those members of staff who will have access to and a responsibility for handling confidential pre-release material.

(Links to all questionnaires currently in use are available at the foot of this policy document).

Using the declarations received, the Examinations Officer is to:

- a) produce a list of names of the members of staff who have been identified as having a conflict of interest, and/or will be handling pre-release confidential material. The list is to be made available for inspection to the JCQ Inspector.
- b) Send out a second form entitled **Security and Conflicts of Interest Protocols and Practices Declaration** (see the link at the foot of this policy document) to all staff members appearing on the list requiring them to make further declaration that they will adhere to the protocols and practices listed which are designed to safeguard and preserve the security and integrity of qualifications.
- c) Inform awarding bodies of known conflicts of interest where the following conditions apply:
 1. Members of staff who are teaching and preparing members of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) for qualifications which include internally assessed components/units.
 2. Members of staff who are taking qualifications at the School which include internally assessed components/units.

- d) Take all reasonable steps to ensure that those members of staff who appear on the list adhere to the protocols and practices listed in the declaration to further safeguard the security and integrity of qualifications.
- e) Report any transgressions to the Head of Centre/Awarding Body.

Links to the questionnaires on Microsoft Forms:

[Annual Security and Conflicts of Interest Declaration](#)

[Security and Conflicts of Interest Protocols and Practices Declaration](#)

Queries

Queries on this policy appendix should be referred to the Deputy Head (Academic).

Review and Verification

This policy appendix is reviewed annually by the Deputy Head (Academic).