

# Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedure

## Scope

This policy is designed to protect and support those involved in the development, delivery and awarding of regulated qualifications and connected to Summit Qualifications UK operations, by providing clear guidance on handling real or possible conflicts of interest.

This policy applies to all Summit Qualifications UK staff, governing body and committee members, third parties including External Quality Assurers, Independent End Point Assessors, and recognised delivery centres.

This policy also applies to the wider Summit Qualifications UK professional body and the EPAO function.

All individuals and organisations that work with Summit Qualifications UK must understand they have an on-going responsibility to comply with this policy and be mindful of it.

## Definition

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual, or organisation, has competing interests or loyalties and this may lead them to act contrary to their interest in the development, delivery and award of qualifications, or other activity, on behalf of Summit Qualifications UK, or in Summit Qualifications UK generally.

Conflicts of interest can arise in a variety of circumstances, for example:

- An individual whose personal interests conflict with his/her professional association with Summit Qualifications UK.
- A member of the Summit Qualifications UK Governing Body who may have a professional interest in a Summit Qualifications UK recognised Centre.
- A person who writes assessments for Summit Qualifications UK may work at a Centre that delivers Summit Qualifications UK qualifications.
- A person who marks assessments for Summit Qualifications UK is also working at a Centre that delivers Summit Qualifications UK qualifications.
- A person who is marking assessments for a Learner who is a friend or relative.
- Personal conflicts – for example connections to family or friends that could influence

decisions.

- Where work colleagues, former colleagues and acquaintances make requests that could compromise a Centre or Summit Qualifications UK policy.
- When benefits such as gifts, employment or hospitality could be gained if a decision was made in favour of a person or organisation.
- Mutual arrangements that benefit both parties but might compromise making reliable and professional judgements.
- Where fees or non-monetary benefits are offered that do not improve a service being negotiated but it influences the decision on a supplier.
- Personal relationships - where friends or family conflicts are declared and registered but later not considered when choosing a service or supplier for Summit Qualifications UK.
- Business or commercial interests - that might compromise judgement.

**Summit Qualifications UK will apply Ofqual's definition of conflicts of interest.**

### Ofqual's definition of conflicts of interest:

A Conflict of Interest exists in relation to an awarding organisation where –

- (a) its interests in any activity undertaken by it, on its behalf, or by a member of its Group have the potential to lead it to act contrary to its interests in the development, delivery and award of qualifications in a way that complies with its Conditions of Recognition,
- (b) a person who is connected to the development, delivery or award of qualifications by the awarding organisation has interests in any other activity which have the potential to lead that person to act contrary to his or her interests in that development, delivery or award in a way that complies with the awarding organisation's Conditions of Recognition, or
- (c) an informed and reasonable observer would conclude that either of these situations was the case.

### Identifying Conflicts of Interest

The EPAO Manager is responsible for the IEPA team, moderators, admin and IQAs and oversees the process that ensures the correct administration of registration and certifications claims and for quality assurance management.

- For new staff this is part of their induction and their employment contract.
- For governing body and committee members it is part of their on-boarding and requirements when participating in Summit Qualifications UK activities.
- For External Quality Assurers and Independent End Point Assessors it is part of their on-

boarding and contractual requirements.

- For other third parties, including consultants and other contractors this is part of their on-boarding and contractual agreement with Summit Qualifications UK.

Any staff who has a concern about a real or potential conflict of interest affecting Summit Qualifications UK should discuss this immediately with their line manager, who should refer them to the AO Manager if further advice is needed.

Staff and third parties will be reminded regularly to update any conflicts of interest.

Committee and Governing Body members should discuss real or potential conflicts with the Responsible Officer or the Chair of the Governing Body. A declaration of conflicts will also be asked for at the commencement of all Governing Body and Committee meetings.

Any third party should discuss a potential or real conflict without delay with the manager, or individual to whom they report into or work with at Summit Qualifications UK.

When a real or potential conflict is established, or a conflict changes, the next step is to report the conflict. Please see the Disclosure Form at the back of this document.

## **Recognised Centres - Responsibilities for Conflicts of Interest**

Centres must adopt Summit Qualifications UK's Conflicts of Interest Policy and procedures. Centres must aim to eliminate conflicts.

- Centres and centre staff must be made aware that they are obligated as a Summit Qualifications UK Centre to share this policy and make sure everyone has read, understood and follows the Policy.
- Centre staff and contractors should discuss and report on conflicts to their centre manager and agree any mitigating actions.
- Centres must use Summit Qualifications UK's Conflicts of Interest Disclosure Form and send a copy of completed forms to Summit Qualifications UK.
- The Centre manager must keep a Register of Centre Conflicts of Interest, keep them constantly under review and share this register with Summit Qualifications UK on request.
- Where a conflict is present but cannot be avoided in an assessment situation an independent person must scrutinize the assessment taking place.

## **Interests in assessment**

Centres must take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a Learner (including by way of Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny) being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment.

Where, the Centre has taken all such reasonable steps, but an assessment by such a person cannot be avoided, the Centre must inform Summit Qualifications UK who will ensure arrangements are in place for the relevant part of the assessment to be subject to scrutiny by another person.

## **Mitigating Conflicts of Interest**

When a real or potential conflict arises the first action should be to discuss it with the appropriate person. The discussion should include how the conflict could be best managed, to mitigate any negative impact on Summit Qualifications UK development, delivery or awarding of its qualifications, or other operational arrangements.

Advice may be sought from Summit Qualifications UK's AO Manager, EPAO Manager Quality Assurance Adviser, or Managing Director, whichever is the appropriate contact.

Mitigations that can be explored can include:

- The individual not participating activities e.g. managing or delivering assessments, sourcing contractors, approving or overseeing certain centres
- The individual withdrawing from meetings or discussions where they stand to gain, directly or indirectly through a connected person
- Not having an involvement in decision making or making agreements.

## **Procedure for Reporting Conflicts of Interest**

For any real or potential conflicts of interest please complete the attached disclosure form.

## **The Register of Conflicts of Interest**

Conflicts of Interest declarations will be received, reviewed and mitigations decided upon by the AO Manager or EPAO Manager for IEPAs (Independent End Point Assessors) and added to a conflicts log.



The conflicts log for IEPAs is held within the Summit EPA system and is managed by the EPAO Manager. The log will also include any agreed mitigating strategies to manage the conflict.

The AO Manager will be responsible for maintaining all other conflicts on the central conflicts log.

Both logs will be reviewed by the AO Manager and the Managing Director (and Responsible Officer) on a regular basis. Some conflicts may need to be brought to the attention of the Senior Management Team, Committee Chair, or Chair of the Governing Body to support decisions or mitigations.

The opportunity to review and remove conflicts will be at part of the AO Manager, EPAO Manager and Managing Director and Responsible Officer roles. Therefore, those reporting a conflict may be contacted by them.

All information is treated as confidential. Any person reporting a conflict is also protected under Summit Qualifications UK's Whistleblowing Policy.



## **Conflicts of Interest Disclosure Form**

This form is to be used by anyone connected with Summit Qualifications UK to declare any real or potential conflicts of interest.

Complete all sections of the form. If your situation changes, for example if the conflict is no longer present, or some additional conflict arises provide an updated record.

**Title (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr):**

**First Name:**

**Surname:**

**Your Relationship with Summit Qualifications UK (e.g. employee, Centre employee):**

**Centre name and number (where relevant):**

**Address:**

**Your Email:**

**Your Phone Number:**

**Who have you discussed this conflict with – please give their name and role:**



**Is the conflict(s) you are declaring (please tick):**

The current situation (real):

Likely or possible to become a real conflict:

Both real and potential conflicts are being reported:

**Please describe the conflict. Identify any other individuals or organisations involved, any relationships to you and if relevant the value of any item/contract concerned:**

**What steps did you take to avoid the conflict occurring?**

**Describe anything you have done since to reduce the conflict:**

**Will this conflict be ongoing or temporary?**

Ongoing:

Temporary:

**Declaration:** I confirm that the above information is correct and accurate. If there is any change in the situation I will provide an update.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Please send this form to Summit Qualifications UK's AO Manager**