



Conflict of Interest Policy

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1. Introduction

LICQual UK is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and professionalism in all of its activities. This includes ensuring that all Accredited Training Centres (ATCs) maintain impartiality and fairness in their operations, free from any conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest occurs when an ATC's personal, professional, or financial interests could compromise or appear to compromise its ability to act in the best interest of LICQual UK, its learners, or other ATCs.

This policy aims to provide a framework for identifying, managing, and resolving conflicts of interest across all LICQual UK's ATCs, ensuring that the delivery of qualifications remains fair, transparent, and in compliance with all regulatory requirements.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Safeguard the integrity of the qualification process.
- Promote impartiality and fairness in decision-making.
- Ensure that any potential conflicts of interest are identified and appropriately managed.
- Protect the reputation and credibility of LICQual UK and its qualifications.

3. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all staff, assessors, verifiers, and management at all LICQual UK Accredited Training Centres (ATCs), as well as any individuals involved in the delivery, assessment, or administration of LICQual UK qualifications. It applies to employees, contractors, and anyone with a vested interest in the Centre's operations, including family members, partners, or associates.

4. Definition of Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest may arise in various scenarios, including but not limited to:

- **Personal Interests:** When personal relationships, such as those with a family member or friend, could influence professional decisions or actions.
- **Financial Interests:** When an ATC has a financial stake or interest that could influence decisions regarding assessments, qualifications, or learner progression.
- **Business Relationships:** When an ATC has a relationship with another organisation that could affect its impartiality in assessing or verifying learners' work.

- **Dual Roles:** When an individual holds multiple positions (e.g., assessor and learner) within the same Centre, which could create bias in decision-making.
- **Influence of External Organisations:** When external organisations, employers, or funding bodies exert influence over decisions made by the ATC, leading to potential conflicts.

5. Identification and Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

All ATCs must be proactive in identifying and disclosing any potential or actual conflicts of interest. This includes:

- **Staff and Assessors:** All staff, assessors, and verifiers must complete a conflict-of-interest declaration form before engaging in any assessment or verification activities.
- **Management:** The ATC's management team is responsible for ensuring that all employees and associates are aware of this policy and are encouraged to disclose conflicts of interest.
- **Learners:** Learners should be informed that they are encouraged to report any perceived conflicts of interest involving their assessment, training, or qualification process.

6. Managing Conflicts of Interest

Once a conflict of interest is identified, it must be managed appropriately to prevent any compromise to the integrity of the assessment process. Measures may include:

- **Reassignment of Roles:** If an assessor or trainer is found to have a conflict of interest, their role in assessing or verifying the affected learner's work may be reassigned to another qualified individual.
- **Independent Review:** In some cases, an independent third party may be engaged to review any decisions or actions that could be influenced by a conflict of interest.
- **Transparency:** Clear documentation of any conflict and the measures taken to mitigate it must be recorded and shared with relevant ATCs and LICQual UK, where necessary.

7. Monitoring and Auditing

LICQual UK, in partnership with each ATC, will regularly monitor and audit activities to ensure that conflicts of interest are being appropriately managed. This includes:

- **Internal Audits:** ATCs must conduct regular internal audits to check for any conflicts of interest in the assessment and qualification delivery processes.
- **EQA Visits:** During External Quality Assurance (EQA) visits, the EQA team will assess whether any conflicts of interest exist and how they have been managed.

- **Reporting Requirements:** ATCs must report any conflicts of interest that arise during the qualification delivery process to LICQual UK in a timely manner.

8. Consequences of Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy, including failure to disclose or manage conflicts of interest, may result in disciplinary action, which could include:

- **Suspension of Centre Approval:** If the ATC is found to have repeatedly failed to disclose or manage conflicts of interest, LICQual UK may suspend or revoke the Centre's approval to deliver qualifications.
- **Termination of Contract:** For individuals or staff members found to have committed serious breaches of the policy, LICQual UK may terminate their involvement in the qualification process.
- **Reputational Damage:** Persistent issues with conflicts of interest can lead to reputational damage for both the ATC and LICQual UK, affecting future relationships and business opportunities.

9. Training and Awareness

LICQual UK ensures that all ATC staff, assessors, and managers receive training on how to identify, disclose, and manage conflicts of interest. Training will be provided at the time of Centre approval and periodically thereafter to ensure compliance with this policy.

10. Record-Keeping

All disclosures of conflicts of interest and actions taken to resolve them must be documented. This documentation will be retained for a minimum of 3 years and made available to LICQual UK upon request.

11. Review of the Policy

LICQual UK will review this policy annually, or more frequently if required, to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. Any updates or changes to the policy will be communicated to all ATCs and relevant parties.

By ensuring that conflicts of interest are identified and properly managed, LICQual UK and its ATCs can maintain the integrity, fairness, and credibility of the qualifications it offers. All ATCs must take personal responsibility for upholding the standards set forth in this policy, ensuring that learners, employers, and the public continue to trust the qualifications provided.