



Conflict Of Interest Policy – Examinations

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Samuel Whitbread Academy is required to have in place a Conflict of Interest policy that enables us to identify, manage and mitigate any potential conflict of interest. All staff and other individuals related to the Academy have a responsibility to be aware of the potential for a conflict of interest.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 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 teachers, invigilators, and assessment/exam-related administrators. The policy is designed to protect the integrity of our qualifications and the assessment process. It applies to all staff or other individuals whenever they interact or potentially interact with any of the Academy's assessment/exam related functions. The policy is also designed to protect our staff by providing guidance on handling possible conflicts of interest that may arise as a result of the Academy's role in delivering courses.

This policy:

- Defines what is meant by 'conflict of interest' in this context.
- Describes the issues of conflict of interest in the context of working for the Academy in an assessment/exam related function or with, or for, an awarding organisation.
- 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.

3. Scope of Policy

- 3.1 This policy applies to staff and other individuals who interact or potentially interact with the assessment related work/examinations of the Academy. This includes individuals involved with all aspects of devising, setting, marking, administering, invigilating, internally quality assuring or any other activity connected with the assessment of candidates and associated supporting resources and services.

- 3.2 The individuals falling within the scope of this policy include all staff employed by the Academy on a full-time, part-time, or casual basis.

4. Definition of 'conflict of interest'

- 4.1 A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual has competing interests or loyalties, which could compromise or appear to compromise their decisions if it is not properly managed. In this context there is a potential conflict of interest when a member of staff has friends or relatives taking assessments or examinations, at this Academy or elsewhere. A conflict of interest occurs where any member of staff who has access to privileged information, or is responsible for making decisions about assessment outcomes, could, potentially, use that information, or their position, to give an unfair advantage to a close friend or relative entered for an examination/assessment at the Academy or another centre.
- 4.2 The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) use the term 'Related People' to cover close friends and relatives. 'Related People' are those with whom the member of staff has a close relationship. It would certainly include spouses, children and siblings, but would also include close friends, relatives and members of the household where there is regular contact, such that privileged information might be shared inappropriately. A step-relative, cousin, niece etc. would count if the contact with that person was close and frequent.
- 4.3 A conflict of interest also occurs if any member of staff is entered for an examination or assessment at the Academy or elsewhere.

5. Principles

5.1 The Academy will:

- Review its processes annually to ensure that all conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest are managed and resolved.
- Ensure that anyone who has access to confidential assessment material for a qualification understands the confidential nature of the content.
- Ensure that all members of staff declare any interest for (friends, family or other 'Related People' sitting examinations before the Spring term.
- Ensure that no member of staff is asked to assess, invigilate or internally verify the work of a student who is a family member, other relative or close friend.
- Ensure that no member of staff uses their role within the Academy to compromise the security and confidentiality of all assessment documents including examination papers.
- Ensure that no member of staff makes live assessment materials available to individuals, whether or not students of the Academy, when not specifically tasked with assessing them as part of a timetabled activity.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1 Line managers are responsible for ensuring that all new staff are aware of, and understand, the Conflict of Information policy. Any day-to-day concerns identified by an individual should be raised with their line manager.
- 6.2 The Exams Officer will ensure that all JCQ requirements are adhered to and will maintain appropriate records accordingly.
- 6.3 All individuals will be required annually to read and understand the Conflict of Interest Policy.
- 6.4 The most important feature of the policy is the requirement that individuals should always disclose an activity if there is any doubt about whether it represents a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest occurs where any member of staff who has access to privileged information, or is responsible for making decisions about assessment outcomes, could, potentially, use that information, or their position, to give an unfair advantage to a close friend or relative entered for an examination/assessment at the Academy or another centre. Prior to each examination series, all staff and other relevant individuals must inform the exams office via the Google Form sent out during the Autumn term of any 'Related People' being entered for examinations at the Academy and also at any other examination centre, during that exam series, if there is a potential conflict of interest.
- 6.5 Any concerns that the individual feels are urgent should be communicated immediately to the Vice Principal (Curriculum) and may be done so in confidence. It is an individual's right to raise concerns relating to the conflict of interest directly with the senior leadership team and to receive a response to their concerns.

7. Author and Date

Vice Principal (I Butler) - April 2024

Date ratified by Governors – May 2024

Next review date – April 2026