



Conflict of Interest (Exams) Policy

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect staff and students and the integrity of RBET Norfolk as an examinations centre. Any member of staff involved in any way with internal assessments or exam processes must declare any conflict(s) of interest in this regard. This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers and other individuals who interact with the work of the exam boards including through teaching and marking.

Our Learner Centre has a duty, as a registered Examination Centre, for one or more of the UK awarding organisations (exam boards), to uphold the integrity of public examinations. As with other instances of examination maladministration, the sharing of confidential material relating to any current or future ("live") public examination series by a member of staff is likely to constitute gross misconduct that is likely to result in dismissal.

Definition

A conflict of interest occurs when an individual has competing interests or loyalties. If not properly managed, the conflict of interest could compromise or appear to compromise their decisions. For the purposes of this policy, situations where a conflict of interest may occur are:

- a staff member being engaged by exam boards in various capacities for the setting, marking, moderating and reviewing of public examinations;
- a student being taught and prepared for any qualification (including internally assessed components or units) by a member of staff with a personal connection to them.

Guidance

Our Centre employs staff who work for Awarding Organisations (exam boards). Such work is professionally fulfilling, provides opportunities for career development, and helps ensure the high-quality operation of the public exams system on which thousands of candidates and schools depend for fair and accurate results. An in-depth understanding of the marking process and nuances of mark schemes are of direct teaching and learning benefit to both our teachers and our students.

Our staff members may be engaged by exam boards in any of the following capacities for the setting, reviewing, marking and moderating of public examinations.

Setting and Reviewing

- Staff involved in the preparation of exam papers (question setting, reviewing, vetting), i.e. teachers who see question papers before an exam is taken;
- staff involved in checking examination material prior to the exam (e.g. exams officers, lab technicians for practicals, etc.).

Marking and Moderating

- Staff who mark public exams but see question papers and scripts only after the exam has been taken (such as assistant examiners);
- staff involved in the marking and moderation of internally assessed coursework.

However, those staff may also be involved in informing our own students about those examination specifications. Not only do they owe it to the Centre to prepare our students for their public examinations, but they also owe it to the relevant examination board to preserve the integrity of public examinations. In fulfilling these potentially conflicting duties, staff must act with utmost integrity and take care to manage the potential conflict of interest by ensuring that examination security is not breached in any way, whether deliberately or otherwise. Such staff must remain neutral at all times both with their colleagues and students. The Centre only permits staff to be engaged by the exam boards on the following basis:

- The staff member must seek permission from the Head of Centre (in her capacity as Head of Examination Centre) prior to undertaking any role for an examination board and must seek renewed permission from the Head of Centre each year.
- That staff member must complete a declaration form for staff involved in public examinations and return it to the Head of Centre who will retain a Register of Staff involved. (Appendix A).
- That staff member must act with the utmost integrity and take care to ensure that examination security is not compromised (deliberately or otherwise); if they are supporting students who are going to sit an examination of whose contents they have, or will have, prior knowledge, the staff member must also sign and adhere to the Centre's internal protocol, as set out below.
- That staff member must declare any training they have received from the examination board concerned and must provide details of the examination board's applicable Conflict of Interests (or other relevant) policy.
- Staff must treat as confidential the identity of fellow staff involved in examining and must not discuss or speculate on such topics with students.

Whilst we actively encourage and support teachers who undertake public exam work, it is important that this additional 'private' work does not compromise teaching, pastoral, administrative and extra-curricular duties. Teachers must endeavour to minimise their time out of the Centre for examiners' meetings and ensure there is minimal disruption to their work for the Centre.

Any staff member who is concerned that examination maladministration may have occurred must notify the Head of Examination Centre immediately.

The integrity of the exam process is crucial and no actions should be taken that either undermine, or appear to undermine, the fairness and integrity of public exam assessment. The Centre and its staff must maintain the highest professional standards at all times.

It is incumbent on any member of staff privy to confidential information about public examinations to ensure that they maintain a position of complete neutrality and do not either advantage or disadvantage our students. Staff must ensure the examination syllabus (specification) is covered in full as far as possible, and must also ensure that specific material appearing in upcoming public examinations is not used in their teaching at the Centre or to guide departmental schemes of work. If a member of staff knows in advance the content (in whole or in part) of any public examination which is to be taken by a student, they must not:

- set any internal mock exam or revision material for that public examination;
- save any confidential public examination material on any computer that they use for teaching or for any other Centre activity without ensuring that that material is stored in a password-protected area;

- bring public examination-related paper-work, products or materials on which the staff member has worked into public areas of the Centre, or use departmental printers or photocopiers for such materials;
- adapt their teaching to fit the questions that they know are coming up in a “live” public examination (e.g. by spending extra time on a topic, or by covering a topic with a particular slant) - they must adhere to agreed departmental schemes of work;
- engage in “question spotting” or make any predictions about the contents of the public examination to any student or colleague;
- invigilate any examination in an examination series in respect of which they have knowledge;
- divulge to students their role with the examination board.

The sharing of confidential material relating to any current or future (“live”) public examination series by a member of staff is likely to constitute gross misconduct which may result in dismissal and is prohibited by this policy. It is also prohibited by the Conflict of Interests policies of the various exam boards.

Candidates being taught and prepared for any qualification (including components or units internally assessed) by a member of staff with a personal connection to the candidate

In these circumstances, RBET Norfolk must comply with the JCQ and other awarding bodies conflict of interest regulations by:

- ensuring the relevant awarding bodies are informed of any conflict of interest;
- requiring staff to sign a Declaration of Interest form for any student who is a friend or relative as soon as they start their course of study and then before the published deadline for entries for each examination series (Appendix A);
- recording a list of staff who have a conflict of interest and sharing that with Heads of Department/Quality Nominee so that they are aware and can take necessary mitigating action;
- maintaining records that confirm the measures taken to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the relevant qualifications;
- ensuring other relevant Centre staff, where they may be involved in the receipt and dispatch of confidential exam materials, are briefed on the requirements for maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the exam materials.

Whistleblowing

Anyone concerned about the integrity of any aspect of the public exams process should raise these concerns with the relevant authority in the exam board, JCQ or regulator. Concerns about the conduct of exams at the Centre should be raised with the Head of Centre and the Exams Officer. If a concern relates to the Head of Centre, then the Chair of Governors should be contacted. Concerns should be addressed in a reasonable and timely fashion; if they are not, the concern should be escalated in accordance with our Whistleblowing Policy.

Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with the Conflict of Interest policy and guidelines. Staff are required to make a declaration as soon as they become aware of a potential conflict.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Policies and guidance to be read in conjunction with this one

- RBET Norfolk Equality and Diversity Policy
- RBET Norfolk Examinations Policy
- RBET Norfolk Exams Contingency Policy
- RBET Norfolk Whistleblowing Policy
- RBET Norfolk Non-Examination Assessment Policy
- RBET Norfolk Examinations Complaints, Appeals and Internal Appeals Policy
- JCQ Guidance for centres on teaching staff involved in examinations - [Advice-for-centres-on-teaching-staff-involved-in-examinations.pdf \(jcq.org.uk\)](#)
- AQA Conflict of Interest Guidance - [AQA | Exams admin | Exams | Conflict of interest declarations](#)
- Pearson Conflict of Interest Guidance - [Conflict of Interest \(pearson.com\)](#)
- OCR Conflict of Interest Guidance - [Key changes to the JCQ regulations on conflicts of interest \(ocr.org.uk\)](#)
- WJEC Conflict of Interest Guidance - [Centre Information \(wjec.co.uk\)](#)
- Appendix A

Appendix A

DECLARATION OF INTEREST FORM 2024/25

To comply with the regulations, RBET Norfolk is required to manage conflicts of interest and inform the relevant awarding body or bodies (before the published deadline for entries for each examination series) of:

- any staff members who are teaching and preparing members of their family or close friends and their immediate family for qualifications which include internally assessed components/units;
- any staff members who are engaged by exam boards in various capacities for the setting, marking, moderating and reviewing of public examinations.

The Centre must also maintain clear and accurate records of all instances.

To ensure compliance, you must declare (by ticking) any of the statements that apply to you and complete the required information in the white boxes.

Your name		Your job title(s)/role(s)	
Subject(s) you teach (if applicable to your role)			

Please tick any statements that apply to you or will apply to you during the **2024/2025** academic year and complete the required information.

I am engaged by the following exam board(s) in the capacity of setting, reviewing, marking or moderating public examinations:

Qualification(s) I am setting or reviewing	Awarding body	Qualification type	Specification (Subject)
Qualification(s) I am marking or moderating	Awarding body	Qualification type	Specification (Subject)

- £ I am teaching and preparing a member of my family or close friends and their immediate family for a qualification or qualifications which includes an internally assessed component or unit. (If more than one related person, please complete a separate form.)

Name of related person (the candidate)			
Candidate number			Relationship to me
Qualification(s) being taught and prepared for	Awarding body	Qualification type	Specification (Subject)

- £ I am a member of the exams office staff and a member of my family or one of my close friends and their immediate family are being entered for examinations and assessments at this centre or another centre.

(Where more than one related person, please complete a separate form)

Name of related person (the candidate)			
Where the candidate is being entered		<input type="checkbox"/> This centre <input type="checkbox"/> Another entering centre	
Candidate number (if this centre)			Relationship to me
Entering centre name (if not this centre)			Entering centre number (if known)

- £ I have none of the above statements to declare. Please provide further information below.

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Date declaration(s) made:

Signature to confirm declaration(s):

This completed form (including date and signature) must be returned to Rose Woodbridge (Examinations Officer) or Louise Fisher (Head of Examinations Centre)

The declaration(s) you have provided will be used to inform the relevant awarding body/bodies (where required) and to record details of the measures taken to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected. You will be informed if any mitigating measures or protocols that are put in place directly affect you.

FOR HEAD OF CENTRE/EXAMS OFFICER USE ONLY

Date	Action
	Completed Declaration form received
	Declaration(s) recorded on Conflicts of Interest (COI) log
	Awarding body/bodies informed of specific COI (where applicable)
	Staff member informed of measures or protocols in place to manage the risk represented by the COI