

# **RECAO Policy Document Conflict of Interest**

# Document Reference Table

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<b>Address</b>	RECAO, 20 Queen Elizabeth Street, London, SE1 2LS
<b>Associated Conditions:</b>	A4
<b>Policy is for the use of:</b>	Current RECAO centres, Centre Staff, Leainers, Apprentices, Third Parties and AO Staff.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Amendment</b>
09/24	SC	All	New Document – Replaces previous versions

# RECAO Conflict of Interest Policy

## 1. Introduction

RECAO is a Regulated Awarding and End Point Assessment Organisation offering qualifications and End Point Assessments linked to the recruitment sector.

At the RECAO we work with a range of organisations and individuals in the design, delivery and award of our qualifications and assessments, and recognise that on occasion there may be an actual, or perceived, conflict of interest.

This document sets out our approach to identifying, managing, and mitigating conflicts of interest.

If you have any questions or feedback about this document, please email [centres@rec.uk.com](mailto:centres@rec.uk.com) in the first instance.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity our business, and our qualifications and assessments.

This policy is designed to protect our staff and stakeholders by providing guidance on handling any potential conflicts of interest that may arise as a result of RECAO, our centres stakeholders in the development, delivery, assessment and awarding of our qualifications.

This policy:

- defines what is meant by conflict of interest
- describes the role of conflict of interest in the context of working with, or for, an awarding organisation
- sets out the responsibilities for managing conflict of interest at each level in the organisation.

## 3. Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all RECAO staff and other individuals who interact or potentially interact with the work of the awarding organisation. This includes individuals involved with any aspects of the creation, marketing, sales, distribution, marking or other activity connected with RECAO's qualifications, assessment, examining, quality assurance and/or awarding, and/or any other activity related to our qualifications and assessments, supporting resources and services.

Individuals falling within the scope of this policy include, but are not limited to, directors, senior managers, employees, contractors, home workers, agency workers and any associate staff, including assessment associates, verifiers/examiners and freelance staff.

## 4. Definition of conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual, or organisation, has competing interests or loyalties.

In the case of an individual, the conflict of interest could compromise or appear to compromise their decisions if it is not properly managed.

Conflicts of interest can arise in a variety of circumstances relating to RECAO's activity, for example:

- Where the training delivery function and the assessing and awarding function rest within one umbrella organisation.
- When an individual has a position of authority in one organisation that conflicts with his or her interests in another organisation.
- When an individual has interests that conflict with his or her professional position.

- Where someone works for, or carries out work on RECAO's behalf, but may have personal interests – paid or unpaid – in another business which either uses RECAO's products or services, or produces similar products.
- Where someone works for, or carries out work on RECAO's behalf, who has friends or relatives taking RECAO's assessments or examinations.
- Where endpoint assessors/examiners/internal verifiers work with a business that is in direct competition with RECAO.
- Where endpoint assessors hold positions of marking/delivering/assessing at other organisations or within RECAO.

(This list is not exhaustive).

## 5. Principles

As an Awarding Organisation RECAO will:

- Ensure that when one part of RECAO creates and follows a procedure, it does not conflict with RECAO's regulatory responsibility as an awarding organisation.
- Review our processes annually to ensure that all conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest are managed and resolved.
- Ensure that the contractual arrangements with our assessment associates clearly set out any obligations on them to manage conflicts of interest arising from other activities that they undertake.
- Ensure that anyone who has access to confidential assessment material for a qualification is not permitted to deliver or be present at training events on that qualification.
- Ensure that all members of staff declare any interest for friends or family sitting upcoming RECAO examinations.

## 6. Responsibilities

### 6.1. The Head of Awarding Organisation & Responsible Officer

The ultimate responsibility for the Conflict-of-Interest Policy, dissemination of the policy and management of potential and actual conflicts of interest rests with the Head of Awarding Organisation & Responsible Officer.

### 6.2. Management

Managers in each department are responsible for communicating the Conflict-of-Interest Policy to all relevant individuals within their areas of responsibility annually.

All departments are required to review their procedures annually to ensure that they anticipate and manage potential or actual conflicts of interest.

Divisional and departmental management meetings are required to give appropriate attention to potential or actual conflicts of interest.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that all new staff receive conflict of interest training.

Any potential or actual conflict of interest must be documented, and the issues must be resolved or, for issues that cannot be resolved at this level, report the issue to the Responsible Officer. All records are required to be available for audit purposes.

### 6.3. All staff

Individuals within RECAO have responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the conflict of interest Policy, any guidelines and complete any required conflict of interest training.

All individuals will be required annually to read and understand the Conflict-of-Interest Policy.

The most important feature of the policy is the requirement that an individual disclose any activity that might give rise to a potential conflict of interest. If there is any doubt as to whether or not it represents a conflict of interest, the activity or situation must be reported.

The individual and line manager are equally responsible for ensuring that the issue is documented carefully.

An individual may wish to raise concerns relating to conflict of interest directly with the Head of Awarding Organisation and Responsible Officer. This may be done in confidence, and they are entitled to receive a response to their concerns.

Any staff member considering paid or unpaid work outside RECAO should inform their manager if they think there is any potential for a conflict of interest. If the staff member is unsure whether a conflict of interest might arise, they should discuss this with their line manager first. A staff member must not take on any such activities that could be deemed to compete or conflict with RECAO's activities.

Prior to each examination series all staff and other individuals must inform RECAO of any candidates being entered for its examinations and other assessments, who are family members, other relatives or friends.

#### **6.4. Head of Awarding Organisation & Responsible Officer: Monitoring and Escalation**

The Head of Awarding Organisation & Responsible Officer is responsible for escalating reports of actual or potential conflicts of interest to an appropriate level within the business and, when necessary, to the regulatory authorities.

#### **6.5. Advice and guidance**

Any required guidance or interpretation on potential conflicts of interest should be sought from the Head of Awarding Organisation & Responsible Officer.

#### **6.6. Investigation and Enforcement**

In the event a conflict of interest is identified, but not reported, the breach will be considered as suspected malpractice and fully investigated, through the malpractice policy.

If the conflict is upheld, the individual, centre and/or learner(s) involved may be subject to sanction, which could include, but is not limited to:

##### **Learners**

- A formal warning.
- Withdrawal of results.
- Rescinding/cancelling of issued certificate(s).
- Disqualification from all RECAO qualifications.

##### **Centre Staff**

- A formal warning.
- Withdrawal of all results associated with the infringement.
- Rescinding/cancelling of issued certificate(s) associated with the infringement.
- Suspension of approval to teach RECAO qualifications in one or more subjects or levels until the issue is resolved.
- Removal of approval to teach/working with RECAO qualifications in one or more subjects or levels.
- Barring of the individual(s) involved from teaching/working with any RECAO qualification.

##### **RECAO Approved Centre**

- A formal warning.
- Withdrawal of all results associated with the infringement.
- Rescinding/cancelling of issued certificate(s) associated with the infringement.
- Suspension of approval to deliver RECAO qualifications in one or more subjects or levels until the issue is resolved.
- Removal of approval to deliver RECAO qualifications in one or more subjects or levels.
- Barring of the Head of Centre/Senior from teaching/working with any RECAO qualification.
- Withdrawal of Centre Approval

### **RECAO Assessors/Examiners/Markers etc.**

- A formal warning.
- Withdrawal of all results associated with the infringement.
- Rescinding/cancelling of issued certificate(s) associated with the infringement.
- Suspension of approval to teach RECAO qualifications in one or more subjects or levels until the issue is resolved.
- Removal of approval to teach/working with RECAO qualifications in one or more subjects or levels.
- Barring of the individual(s) involved from teaching/working with any RECAO qualification

### **Any third parties, including internal REC staff members**

- A formal warning.
- Withdrawal of all results associated with the infringement.
- Rescinding/cancelling of issued certificate(s) associated with the infringement.
- Suspension of associated contracts related to RECAO qualifications in one or more subjects or levels until the issue is resolved.
- Removal of contracts related to RECAO qualifications in one or more subjects or levels.
- Barring of individual(s) working with the RECAO in any capacity.
- For internal REC Staff, referral to HR and the internal disciplinary policy.

## **7. Appeals**

If you are unhappy with our decision regarding the application of Reasonable Adjustments or Special Consideration, you may submit an appeal.

For information about appeals, please refer to the Results Enquiries and Appeals Policy available on our website: <https://www.rec.uk.com/about-the-rec/awarding-organisation>.

Please be aware that the appeals process is subject to additional charging, refunded should the appeal be successful.

## **8. Next Steps**

If, after fully exhausting the appeals process, any candidate or centre remains unhappy with the outcome and decision relating to Conflicts of Interest, they may contact our Qualifications Regulator, Ofqual.

For more information about Ofqual please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual>

Contact Details:

Ofqual

Earlsdon Park

53-55 Butts Road

Coventry

CV1 3BH

Email: [public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0300 303 3344

## 9. Conflict of Interest Declaration

### 9.1.Important

This declaration must be completed, signed and returned to the RECAO by anyone engaged by the RECAO in the design delivery or award of its qualifications, even where there is nothing to disclose.

### 9.2.Individuals contracted by RECAO to undertake activities.

<b>Full Name:</b>		
<b>Company Name (where applicable):</b>		
<b>Role with the RECAO:</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Please Tick as appropriate</b>
	IQA	
	Examiner	
	Chief Examiner	
	EQA	
	Question Writer	
	AO Staff Member	
	Consultant	
Other (please state)		

### 9.3. Identified Conflicts-of-Interest

#### 9.3.1. Please list any delivery/training organisations in which:

- you have/have had a relationship.
- you may have a vested interest.

Where the identified conflict/involvement is with an RECAO approved/accredited provider, please provide full details of the centre (name, number, qualification offer) along with the role(s) you undertake, your level of interaction and full details of the identified/perceived conflict.

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#### 9.3.2. Please list any Awarding Organisations in which:

- you have/have had a relationship.
- you may have a vested interest.

Please provide full details of the Awarding Organisation along with the role(s) you undertake, your level of interaction and full details of the identified/perceived conflict.

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## 10. Declaration

I confirm the information provided is accurate and agree to inform RECAO of any conflicts of interest that may arise in the future.

<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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