

POLICY · POL / COI

# Conflicts of Interest *Policy.*

The process by which any potential conflict of interest should be identified and managed — applying to every person involved with the work of The AI Board, in line with Condition A4 of the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition.

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## SECTION 01

# Purpose

The The AI Board Conflicts of Interest policy sets out the process by which any potential conflict of interest should be identified and managed. It applies to any person involved with the work of The AI Board.

This includes (but is not limited to):

Directors and investors of the company

Employees

Associates

Contractors

External partners

Service providers

Staff in centres

Others who may occasionally interact with The AI Board in a professional context

All parties mentioned must comply with the terms outlined in this policy document in order that The AI Board can manage its duty in relation to conflicts of interest.

As part of **Condition A4** in the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition:

*An awarding organisation must establish, maintain, and at all times comply with an up to date written conflict of interest policy, which must include procedures on how the awarding organisation intends to comply with the requirements of this condition.*

The AI Board believes that it is paramount that a robust and rigorous Conflicts of Interest policy is followed by The AI Board itself, and all of its stakeholders (as listed above) in order to maintain its integrity as an awarding organisation and the integrity of the stakeholders themselves; this is significant in ensuring public confidence in the qualifications which The AI Board provides.

Therefore, it is a condition of approval for all centres and all associated staff working with the The AI Board that they adhere to this policy.

### The policy is designed to:

- provide guidance on the types of conflicts that need to be declared
- outline the actions to be taken to avoid conflict of interests
- illustrate situations where conflicts of interest may arise
- identify the principles we follow in to order to manage conflicts of interest
- outline the actions to be taken by an individual that encounters a conflict of interest
- outline how we will manage conflicts of interest that have been identified.

This policy is designed to comply with not only Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition but also other relevant regulations such as the Charities Act 2011, Charity Commission Guidance, and any applicable governance standards. It will also adhere to future regulatory frameworks as required in order to maintain the highest standard of compliance.

Where there is any conflict between this policy and procedures and relevant legislation or regulations, the legislation or regulations shall have precedence.

A consequence of a non-declared conflict of interest can be an adverse effect, as defined by the qualifications' regulators, and as such must be taken very seriously.

Should a conflict of interest arise, The AI Board will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it does not have an Adverse Effect. Ofqual defines an Adverse Effect as:

*An act, omission, event, incident, or circumstance has an Adverse Effect if it –*

*(a) gives rise to prejudice to Learners or potential Learners, or (b) adversely affects –*

- a. the ability of the awarding organisation to undertake the development, delivery or award of qualifications in a way that complies with its Conditions of Recognition,
- b. the standards of qualifications which the awarding organisation makes available or proposes to make available, or
- c. public confidence in qualifications.

Where a conflict has a regulatory Adverse Effect, The AI Board will take all reasonable steps to mitigate as far as possible and correct it, as outlined in the The AI Board Adverse Effects Policy.

## SECTION 02

## Definition of a Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest can arise in a variety of contexts and may generally be defined as a conflict between the official responsibilities of any of the stakeholders (listed in the above purpose statement) and any other interests the particular individual may have and as such could compromise or appear to compromise their decisions.

Further clarification, based upon Condition A4, states that 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.

Under this policy, associates (including, QDAs, EQAs and other relevant staff – see purpose statement above) undertaking any activities for The AI Board must have any potential or actual conflicts of interest – which could adversely affect their judgement or objectivity in conducting those activities – declared, and where relevant, effectively managed (see, also Appendix B).

## SECTION 03

## The AI Board Approved Centres

With respect to our centres, we will systematically check that centres have the systems in place to manage them effectively as part of our monitoring systems.

In particular, centres must have robust conflicts of interest arrangements in place around centre development of assessments and clear boundaries between staff who devise those assessments and course tutors who deliver the programme and those who assess the individual learner's work. It is not appropriate for staff to "teach to the assessment" and therefore delineating the roles amongst delivery staff at the centre is essential, as well as

dealing with any potential conflicts of interest. Any uncertainty in this regard can be raised with the centre's allocated EQA or the Head of Quality and Assessment at The AI Board.

Therefore, The AI Board requires all centres to have systems in place to identify and manage any potential conflicts of interest in assessment and internal quality assurance; this is an integral part of the approval process and is contained in the The AI Board Centre Handbook. These policies and systems will be reviewed by The AI Board to ensure they are fit for purpose and judgements will be recorded in relevant reports. The AI Board EQAs, in particular, will look at this aspect of their work as part of their routine visits and any special investigation visits.

## SECTION 04

## Examples of Conflict of Interest

It is not possible to provide a definitive list of examples of conflicts of interests, but the following are examples of situations that could lead to actual or perceived conflicts of interest:

EQAs are prohibited from working in any assessment function at a The AI Board centre (ie where they are employed/contracted by that centre directly) where they also work for The AI Board in the quality assurance of that centre

Employees working in centres who are working with a business outside of the approved centre that is in direct competition with them

Employees working in centres who are participating in the appointment, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom the person, has close or familial ties

Employees working in centres who have a close or familial relationship with an The AI Board registered learner, or learners' family whilst being involved in decisions about the outcome of their qualification

Employees working in centres who are using non-public The AI Board information or The AI Board learner data for personal gain or advantage

Where an individual has a position in another organisation and may seek to influence decisions at The AI Board for financial and/or personal reward – for example, employees working in centres who are also external quality assurers involved in the centre's approval processes,

When an individual is contracted by The AI Board to work on its behalf but has competing and/or other interests in a separate organisation(s) which are directly pertinent to the work of The AI Board.

Staff at The AI Board or centres undertaking malpractice investigations/appeals procedures where they have a personal interest in the outcome of the investigation/appeal.

Where someone carries out qualification development, writes assessment guidance and/or undertakes quality assurance work on The AI Board's behalf, but has friends or relatives studying for The AI Board qualifications.

Where a director and/or shareholder of the centre (and/or The AI Board itself) is involved in assessment or internal verification.

Where a director or shareholder or committee members may have a personal interest in an item on the agenda of a meeting

Where an individual has confidential information – for example on assessment material – and is also involved in teaching, delivering training events or providing guidance on that qualification.

The existence of such interests as those outlined above, does not necessarily imply conflict, but is likely to give an appearance of conflict and as such should be declared.

The AI Board will undertake a risk assessment for any declared potential, or actual, conflict of interest to decide upon what, if any, further action may be required. It is not the individual's responsibility to ascertain this level of risk but the company's (i.e. The AI Board).

## SECTION 05

## Process

It is the duty of any stakeholder to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest, and the process for doing this is documented below:

All stakeholders are subject to the conditions stated within this policy

Staff and associates will be issued with a standard conflict of interest form (see Appendix A) to complete on commencement with The AI Board and it is a requirement of their contract of employment that this is completed and updated on an annual basis, or earlier, as necessary.

They should always disclose an activity if they are in doubt about whether it represents a conflict

The information held on the conflicts of interest form (see Appendices A and B) is then transferred to a register of interests' document which is maintained by a designated person at The AI Board. Centres will maintain their own register.

Any individual who identifies or suspects a conflict of interest should report it immediately through one of the following channels:

Immediate Line Manager

Human Resources

For sensitive cases, anonymous reporting can be made through our Whistleblowing Policy.

All conflicts will be reviewed, assessed, and recorded in the Conflict of Interest Register.

Any conflicts presenting a significant risk will be escalated to the Board for further action.

The COI form is to be completed even when the individual has no conflict of interest to declare.

Centres should inform The AI Board where they believe a member of staff has a potential conflict of interest

The information submitted is then risk assessed to identify if any further action is required and a written record of the outcome of the evaluation is kept.

For the avoidance of doubt – if anyone is identified as having a potential conflict of interest, they must not be involved in the development, delivery or award of the relevant The AI Board qualifications or unit(s) thereof, unless it has been agreed with the CEO (as the Responsible Officer) of The AI Board that the conflict is effectively managed.

The The AI Board register of interests will contain the personal data of the individual, the information regarding the disclosed potential or actual conflict of interests and the subsequent actions, if any, following the risk assessment of that conflict.

## SECTION 06

## Investigations — The AI Board

Upon the receipt of a COI form, which is compulsory for all employees and associates of The AI Board, an initial review will be undertaken by their line manager, who will be trained in initial assessment of potential conflicts of interest.

In the case of Directors, the Chair will take this role and in the case of the Chair, the Board (with the absence of the Chair) will undertake this function.

Any "nil returns" — i.e. no potential conflicts of interest — will be confirmed in the The AI Board register of interests. Any doubts on the accuracy of the form will be reported by the line manager to the Responsible Officer.

Where a COI form does state a potential conflict of interest then this will be passed to the Responsible Officer for investigation. Where the COI form is itself from the Responsible Officer this policy will be followed by the Board of Directors themselves, or a designated individual appointed by the Board for this purpose.

As part of any investigation, The AI Board reserves the right to contact other organisations (where stated or possible employment or others forms of engagement) might impact upon the company to act in accordance with the regulatory and compliance guidelines of relevant bodies.

Most situations will require no further action than the completion and review of the conflict of interest form. In some instances, however, the information declared on the form will require some follow up action, in order for the conflict of interest to be managed appropriately.

Initially, all COI forms will be reviewed by the line manager/Responsible Officer to risk assess any declared interests provided. The initial risk assessment will be categorised into the following five categories:

KEY	DESCRIPTION
0	No risk identified
1	Potential risk identified but not currently active nor likely in the immediate future
2	Potential risk identified but not currently active and limited likelihood in the immediate future
3	Actual risk identified and mitigating actions will manage risk appropriately
4	Actual risk identified and action is to terminate relationship

The approach agreed between the Responsible Officer and the individual or the centre or the company itself, will be documented and held with the conflict of interest forms.

A brief explanation of any decision taken, whether to take or not to take any action, will also be provided in the register.

## SECTION 07

# Action

All actions in response to a declared, or identified, interest will be decided upon by the Responsible Officer and ratified (or otherwise) by the Board of Directors.

### Examples of actions that could be taken:

For all Directors, senior staff, the Responsible Officer, and other staff as designated by the Management Team, any disclosed interest should – as a minimum, as a regular matter of course, disclose that interest with the partner organisation, in line with their own COI policy

In any Board or governing body meeting, including Board sub-committees, any member of staff with a disclosed interest which could potentially or actually be seen to be related to a vote-making matter or decision-making matter shall withdraw from that/those matters and not be involved with the discussion, vote or decision on that/those matters

Individuals will not be permitted to take part in discussions or decisions of certain matters

Referring certain matters for decision to others with no vested interest

Agreeing not to be involved in a particular project or with a particular centre

Referring the matter to the The AI Board for advice and guidance

In extremis, an action could be to withdraw an offer of employment or contract or terminate employment or contract of an individual

In most cases, it is envisaged that simple measures will be enough to manage conflicts of interest. It may be that the activity can be managed differently so that conflicts of interest are avoided. In circumstances where the conflict of interest risks the validity of a The AI Board qualification, and systems cannot be put in place to avoid the conflict, an individual will be prevented from undertaking specific activities.

## SECTION 08

# Investigations — Centres

The AI Board EQAs will check centres conflict of interest policy and its implementation during their visits/checks. Where a centre is found not to be following The AI Board requirements relating to conflicts of interest either through the results of an EQA visit or through other means i.e. a whistleblower, they will be subject to the one of the following actions depending on the nature of the situation.

- 1 identifying specific training interventions to address issues
- 2 Malpractice investigation – where the process in the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy will be followed.
- 3 Increasing sampling at quality assurance of assessment decisions
- 4 Increasing monitoring checks on centres
- 5 Requiring the centre to prevent specific individuals from making assessment or internal quality assurance decisions
- 6 Developing an Action Plan which will be monitored by The AI Board (which could include any, or all, of the above)

## SECTION 09

# Corporate Conflict of Interest

Corporate conflict of interest requires the The AI Board Board (Board of Directors) and the Management Team to balance the need to maintain financial stability and meet the company's mission, alongside a responsibility to ensure we are compliant with our regulators. The The AI Board Board and the Management Team balance these conflicts by recognising and recording where and when they occur and making transparent decisions about the resolution of such conflicts.

In cases where a member of the The AI Board Board, Directors, or Management Team has a personal interest in a matter being discussed, that individual must:

- Recuse themselves from the discussion and any voting process related to the matter.

- Ensure that the conflict is disclosed in advance to the Board or relevant authority. All such conflicts will be documented in the Register of Interests and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure transparency in the decision-making process.

The The AI Board Board also has the final responsibility for ensuring that the Conflict of Interest Policy is fit for purpose, is appropriately disseminated, and is managed effectively.

## SECTION 10

# Senior Staff

Senior staff within The AI Board (that is, Investors, Directors of the Company, members of the Management Team, the Responsible Officer and any other member of staff so designated by The AI Board) are also required to complete a Self Declaration form, prior to taking up employment with the company. This is necessary in order that the company complies with regulatory compliance matters. These conditions may change as regulatory requirements require the company to do so.

The Self Declaration form also requires that any conflicts of interest are declared at that time.

## SECTION 11

# Responsible Officer

The Responsible Officer will report any actual or potential conflicts of interest to the The AI Board Board. Where the actual or perceived conflict is likely to cause an adverse effect, the regulatory authorities will be informed.

All cases of actual or likely conflicts of interest will be checked and/or investigated and a judgement and/or report will be produced as appropriate and logged within the Register of Interests.

**SECTION 12**

## Data Protection

The information provided will be processed in accordance with the The AI Board Data Protection Policy. All personal data relating to this policy will be kept confidential. The AI Board will only disclose such information if required to do so by law, government, regulators or relevant professional bodies.

**SECTION 13**

## Training

The AI Board will provide mandatory training on conflict of interest during the onboarding process for all employees and associates. Additionally, annual refresher training will be required for all individuals working within or on behalf of The AI Board.

This training will cover:

- The identification and management of conflicts of interest.

- The specific roles and responsibilities of individuals in assessment-related functions.

Training records will be maintained and audited to ensure compliance.

**SECTION 14**

## Monitoring the Policy

The AI Board will conduct an annual review of this Conflicts of Interest policy and the associated Conflict of Interest Register. Additionally, the CEO will lead a working group which will meet quarterly to review conflict disclosures, ensure compliance with regulatory standards, and recommend necessary updates to the policy. This group will also ensure that each department is complying with appropriate conflict management procedures.

**SECTION 15**

## Review

DOC ID	TITLE	WORK AREA	VERSION	ISSUE DATE	REVIEW DATE	AUTHOR	OFQUAL RELATED
POL	COI	ADM	v0.6	March 2025	March 2026	J Jones / R Palmer	Y

## Version Control

VERSION NUMBER	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	DATE CHANGED	NEW REVIEW DATE

## APPENDIX A

# Directors and Non-Associates Conflicts of Interests

## The AI Board Conflicts of Interest – Declaration Form

In accordance with the The AI Board Conflicts of Interest Policy, all Directors, staff and associates within the Company (including Executive and Non-Executive Directors) are asked to complete and sign the following and return it to the CEO upon appointment and thereafter on an annual basis (unless there is a substantive change to interests in which case then a revised form should be sent as soon as practically possible). Please note you should declare any relationship which involves yourself or any member of your family.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

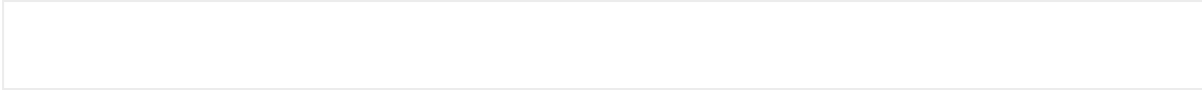
*I confirm that my entry in the Register of Interests shown below is correct as at the date of my signature. (If this is not the case please indicate the corrections below.)*

1. Directorships of other companies, and equivalent offices in unincorporated organisations or other bodies. This includes board membership, or equivalent, of voluntary or charitable organisations, public or government bodies, educational and/or training organisations and awarding organisations (note, in particular, any organisations which are/may become a centre for The AI Board).

DETAILS

2. Are you involved in any activity which might have the potential to lead The AI Board to act contrary to its interests in the development, delivery and award of qualifications in accordance with its Conditions of Recognition with Ofqual (note, in particular, any organisations which are/may become a centre for The AI Board)?

DETAILS



3. 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 accordance with the The AI Board's Conditions of Recognition with Ofqual (note, in particular, any organisations which are/may become a centre for The AI Board)?

DETAILS

4. Partnerships in any business or other venture?

DETAILS

5. Shareholdings or other financial or ownership interests in, or membership of, or employment by organisations, which are, or are likely to be, The AI Board competitors, customers or suppliers?

DETAILS

6. Any financial or ownership interest in any assets purchased, used, or occupied by The AI Board or subsidiary companies?

DETAILS

7. Any loans of money or property made to The AI Board or subsidiary companies?

DETAILS

8. Any other dealings with The AI Board or subsidiary companies by which the member of staff stands to gain financially or in some other manner?

DETAILS

9. Any benefit which is received or available from The AI Board or subsidiary companies, whether as a director, trustee or otherwise (apart from reasonable out-of-pocket expenses)?

DETAILS



10. Any gifts and hospitality received from external bodies wholly or partly as a consequence of the member of staff's/associate's position at The AI Board or subsidiary company provided that any such gifts under the value of £10 do not need to be disclosed and any such hospitality under the value of £50 and provided in the normal course of business does not need to be disclosed?

DETAILS

11. Any other interest, activity or relationship which does or might give rise to a conflict of interest with The AI Board or subsidiary companies, or which is or might be prejudicial to The AI Board or subsidiary companies, their reputation or good standing, or which does or might compromise the member of staff's ability to perform their duties?

DETAILS

### Additional Information

*Please use this space for any additional information you may wish to provide.*

## APPENDIX B

# Associates Conflict of Interests

## The AI Board Conflicts of Interest – Associates Declaration Form

In accordance with the The AI Board Conflicts of Interest Policy, all associates within the Company (including assessors, qualifications developers, writers, reviewers, scrutineers, EQAs and any other position directly involved in the creation, development, review and assessment of qualifications) are asked to complete and sign the following and return it to the CEO upon appointment and thereafter on an annual basis (unless there is a substantive change to interests in which case then a revised form should be sent as soon as practically possible).

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

*I confirm that my entry in the Register of Interests shown below is correct as at the date of my signature. (If this is not the case please indicate the corrections below.)*

**1. Your current role with The AI Board?**

DETAILS

Developing The AI Board qualifications

The AI Board EQA

Other role? Please specify: .....

**2. Have you recently worked or are still working for an educational centre? (e.g. school, college, private training provider, university, awarding organisation). If this organisation is also a centre for The AI Board qualifications, please state this, also.**

DETAILS

**3. Do you have any family members or close relatives working at a centre? If this organisation is also a centre for The AI Board qualifications, please state this, also.**

DETAILS



- 
- 4.** Do you have any family (including partner, spouse, children or close relatives) who are preparing for assessment at a The AI Board centre? If so, is this for a The AI Board qualification? (Please answer both questions, separately in the details box below)

DETAILS

- 5.** Have you received any paid or unpaid employment, or directorship (or equivalent) with any organisation that is connected to, or has the likely potential to be connected to, The AI Board?

DETAILS

- 6.** Shareholdings or other financial or ownership interests in, or membership of, or employment by organisations, which are, or are likely to be, The AI Board competitors, customers or suppliers?

DETAILS

- 7.** Any financial or ownership interest in any assets purchased, used, or occupied by The AI Board or subsidiary companies?

DETAILS

- 8.** Any loans of money or property made to The AI Board or subsidiary companies?

DETAILS

- 9.** Any other dealings with The AI Board or subsidiary companies by which the member of staff stands to gain financially or in some other manner?

DETAILS

10. Any benefit which is received or available from The AI Board or subsidiary companies, whether as a director, trustee or otherwise (apart from reasonable out-of-pocket expenses)?

DETAILS

11. Any gifts and hospitality received from external bodies wholly or partly as a consequence of the member of staff's/associate's position at The AI Board or subsidiary company provided that any such gifts under the value of £10 do not need to be disclosed and any such hospitality under the value of £50 and provided in the normal course of business does not need to be disclosed?

DETAILS

12. Any other interest, activity or relationship which does or might give rise to a conflict of interest with The AI Board or subsidiary companies, or which is or might be prejudicial to The AI Board or subsidiary companies, their reputation or good standing, or which does or might compromise the member of staff's ability to perform their duties?

DETAILS

### Additional Information

*Please use this space for any additional information you may wish to provide.*