Conflict of Interest Policy and Guidance

Introduction
Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply (CIPS) is an Awarding Body regulated by Ofqual, the qualification regulator for England and Northern Ireland. The Awarding Body is committed to high levels of quality assurance and policies that are open, transparent and free from bias.

Overview
The Awarding Body scrupulously avoids any conflict between respective personal, professional or business interests and the interests of the Awarding Body, in any and all actions taken.

For the purposes of this policy ‘Conflict of Interest’ is defined as any situation where;
- Awarding Body activity, or activity undertaken on its behalf, has the potential to lead it to act contrary to the Conditions of Recognition in relation to the development, delivery and award of qualifications
- A person who is connected to the development, delivery or award of qualifications on behalf of the Awarding Body has interests in any other activity which could potentially conflict with the Awarding Body interests in the development, delivery or award of qualifications under the Conditions of Recognition, or
- An informed and reasonable observer would conclude that either of these situations was the case.

Identifying conflict of interest
If a stakeholder of the Awarding Body, including employees, consultants, assessors, study centres or members of CIPS boards or committees, has any direct or indirect conflict of interest or relationship with any individual or organisation this must be declared so that the Awarding Body can take action to remove or manage the conflict where appropriate. If this is not possible, the relationship with the party/parties concerned may have to be terminated.

Where a potential conflict of interest is identified by the Awarding Body, steps will be taken to ensure that the conflict is removed, or managed to the Awarding Body’s satisfaction. If this is not possible, the relationship with the party/parties concerned may have to be terminated.

The situation may arise where a conflict of interest has not been previously identified as described above, and only becomes apparent after the event. In these circumstances the Awarding Body will;
- Act urgently to identify any adverse effect arising from the conflict
- Take all reasonable steps to mitigate the adverse effect as far as possible and correct it.
Procedures to mitigate potential conflicts of interest

Governance
The Awarding Body Steering Group and the Awarding Body Board of Trustees must declare any potential conflicts of interest. If a decision will personally affect any of the board members, they will be asked to leave the meeting and will not have voting rights. This will be detailed in the terms of reference for any groups working within the Awarding Body including the Centre Approval Panel and the Assessment Quality Board. CIPS has organisational structures that ensure that no internal conflict of interest can exist. To this end Membership and Business Solutions are in different Directorates from the Awarding Body, and the Awarding Body has a separate Governing Body with responsibility, inter alia, for ensuring that no conflicts can arise.

External Assessors, level verifiers, moderators, etc.
The Awarding Body ensures that those involved in the assessment process are not responsible for the conduct of assessment or the quality assurance of assessment decisions at a centre in which they have a personal interest.

Assessors are contractually required to keep the Awarding Body informed of potential conflicts of interest, such as an association with a centre or a particular candidate. Information is updated each assessment series and recorded on the electronic marker allocation system, this will not allow material to be despatched to assessors with a conflict.

Work-based assessments
The initial marking of a work-based assessment is completed by a person at the centre who acts as the internal assessor, and who may also be the candidate’s tutor. This could represent a conflict of interest; however the assessments are internally verified by either a different assessor at the same centre who has not taught the candidate, or an assessor from another centre by arrangement. Work-based assessments are also externally verified by a member of the Awarding Body assessment team who does not have a conflict of interest at the centre.
Invigilation

The invigilator must not be a CIPS programme leader, a tutor of the candidates or have a personal interest in the outcome of the assessment. Invigilators must complete a conflict of interest form, declaring any potential conflict of interest prior to gaining approval to invigilate an examination. Invigilators must also submit their CV detailing their responsibilities and associations.

The Head of Awarding Body will consider all applications and inform the examination centre of the following outcomes:

1. The invigilator is accepted to manage the examination
2. Further information is required to demonstrate suitability
3. The invigilator has a conflict of interest and the application has been rejected.

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the decision, they can appeal to the Centre Approval Panel within two weeks of receiving the outcome.

Where an organisation hosts examinations for their own employees, the application must demonstrate the mitigating actions taken to overcome potential conflicts of interest. The invigilator must be independent of the organisation where possible (e.g. as an employee of British Council or a specialist invigilator services), but in all cases must be independent of the teaching or direct management of any candidates.

Kate Tomlinson
Head of Awarding Body
CIPS CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

Actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest could arise from any of the following (the list is not exhaustive – please indicate any possible interest that you may have):

- Previous or current employment at a CIPS study centre as a tutor or programme manager
- Appointment to a board, committee, tribunal panel, etc. of CIPS or a CIPS study centre
- Membership of a professional body with an interest in the development, delivery or award of qualifications
- Contractual relationship with the Awarding Body or CIPS, e.g. consultants
- Personal or professional relationship with a candidate who is undertaking a CIPS qualification.

Please complete either (a) or (b) below:

(a) I confirm that I am not currently involved, nor have I been previously involved, in any activity in relation to the development, delivery or awarding of CIPS qualifications that could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

If circumstances change and I do have a declarable interest I understand it is my responsibility to inform CIPS immediately.

Signed:................................................................. Date:..........................................

(b) I do have an interest to declare as set out below. I agree to notify CIPS of any changes to the interest declared below.

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The above interest is a potential conflict because:

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Signed:................................................................. Date:..........................................

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