

Guidance for Schools on Managing Conflicts of Interest

Introduction

This document provides an overview on the measures to take in order to manage a situation in which a member of staff has a conflict of interest. It should be read alongside the [General Regulations for Approved Centres](#). Schools **must** inform OxfordAQA of:

1. *Any members of staff who are taking qualifications at their own school **which include internally assessed components** (remember that other schools should be approached first- entering staff at the school at which they work should be seen as a last resort)*
2. *Any members of staff who are teaching and preparing members of their own family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) for qualifications **which include internally assessed components**.*

The regulations state that schools must maintain clear records of all instances where:

3. *Exams office staff have members of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) being entered for examinations and assessments either at the school itself or other schools;*
4. *School staff are taking qualifications at their school which do not include internally assessed components;*
5. *School staff are taking qualifications at other schools.*

Note that it is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to ensure that all conflicts of interest are reported and managed effectively, in order to protect the integrity of the examinations/assessments concerned.

Where **internally assessed components** are involved, any conflicts **must** be reported to OxfordAQA via the [online conflict of interest form](#). A list of the qualifications which include internally assessed components can be found in appendix A.

Note that once the form has been completed, we will **only contact schools if any further information is required, or if there are any concerns with the action the school is taking with regard to managing the conflict of interest**.

Remember that you **do not** need to inform us of any conflicts involving subjects which **do not have an internally assessed component**, but the Head of Centre **must** manage these conflicts and have records readily available for inspection, for example should an inspector or an OxfordAQA representative request to see them.

If a conflict comes to light that cannot be managed by the examples below, then advice should be obtained via emailing COLcentredeclarations@aqa.org.uk

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*N. B: also relevant for schools managing conflicts of interest which do not have an internally assessed component

Conflict: Staff member taking a subject with an internally assessed component at their own school	Report to OxfordAQA using online form?	Yes
<p>As set out in the OxfordAQA General Regulations for Approved Centres, this is a 'last resort' scenario- ideally the member of staff should take the qualification elsewhere. The school will be required to demonstrate that attempts have been made to enter the staff member elsewhere when completing the online conflict of interests form.</p> <p>Note that if the school is attached to a British Council, or is part of a multi-academy trust, the staff member could be entered at a different school as long as any required monitoring/supervision is undertaken by the entering school.</p> <p>If it has not been possible to enter the member of staff elsewhere, then strategies to manage this conflict include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements should be made to ensure that the member of staff is not treated any differently to any other student; • Access to Centre Services should be restricted if the internally assessed component has any pre-release material relating to it/ to ensure the staff member cannot access any confidential materials in advance; • If the member of staff is a member of the examinations team, then any access to secure storage should be restricted for the period during which they are taking examinations; • The Head of Department/ member of the Senior Leadership Team should consider monitoring the completion and marking of the internally assessed component, as an additional check to ensure that the member of staff has been assessed fairly- this can be as part of an ongoing process of checks or as part of internal standardisation prior to submission of the marks/outcome to OxfordAQA. 		
<p>Remember that this conflict does not need reporting to OxfordAQA if the subject does not have an internally-assessed component.</p> <p>However, the Head of Centre will need to put in place conflict management arrangements and have records available for inspection.</p> <p>The above strategies would also be suitable for this purpose.</p>		

Conflict: Member of staff who is teaching/ preparing members of their own family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) for qualifications which include an internally assessed component	Report to OxfordAQA using online form?	Yes
<p>It is important that this conflict is managed effectively to ensure that the member of staff and the school can be protected from allegations of malpractice. Ideally, the relative should be allocated to a different teacher in the department, as this will effectively negate the conflict.</p> <p>However, if this is not possible, strategies to manage this conflict include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Centre Services should be restricted if the internally assessed component has any pre-release material relating to it/ to ensure the staff member cannot access any confidential materials in advance of the release date- access can be supervised by another member of staff; • If the member of staff is also a member of the examinations team, then any access to secure storage should be restricted for the period during which they are taking examinations; • The Head of Department/ member of the Senior Leadership Team should consider monitoring the completion and marking of the internally assessed component, as an additional check to ensure that the member of staff's relative has been assessed fairly- this can be as part of an ongoing process of checks or as part of internal standardisation prior to submission of the marks/outcome to OxfordAQA. 		
<p>Remember that this conflict does not need reporting to OxfordAQA if the subject does not have an internally-assessed component.</p> <p>However, the Head of Centre will need to put in place conflict management arrangements and have records available for inspection.</p> <p>The above strategies would also be suitable for this purpose.</p>		

<p>Conflict: Exams office staff member has a member of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) being entered for an examination or assessment either at the school itself or at another school (i.e. subject without internally-assessed component)</p>	<p>Report to OxfordAQA using online form?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>In such cases, in accordance with the published regulations, it is important that the school maintains a record detailing the measures in place to mitigate the risks. It is strongly recommended that the record should be signed by the member of staff and the Head of Centre. If one of the requirements is for the conflict to be monitored, then the person instructed to do the monitoring should also sign the record. Remember that the record may be inspected by a visiting inspector as part of a routine visit, and may be requested in the event of concerns being reported to OxfordAQA. The records must be retained until the deadlines for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed (whichever is later). Maintaining such records and implementing the agreed mitigation measures will protect the member of staff should any allegations be made against them.</p> <p>In the event of a conflict of this nature, OxfordAQA would recommend that the following measures would be appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exams officer/member of the exam's office staff should not enter the exam store room without direct supervision; • The exams officer/administrator should not handle/ have any access to papers that their relative/close family friend is taking. This includes before, during and after the exam. Another member of the exams team should assist with/ complete the packaging of the completed papers to return to OxfordAQA; • The exams officer/administrator should have their access to Centre Services monitored and removed on the morning of the affected examinations to ensure that the paper cannot be accessed electronically; • The exams officer/ administrator should not have access to the student's results on EDI day or on results day, so that they do not see the results before the student; • The member of staff should not have any access to the live papers before, during or after the exam(s) in question; • The member of staff should avoid contact with the student before the exams. 		

Appendix A: List of subjects with internally-assessed components

OxfordAQA International GCSE

Spec Code	Subject	Component(s)
9270	GCSE English Language	9270/P, 9270/S
9275	GCSE English Literature	9275/C
9201E	GCSE Biology with GCSE Plus Endorsement	n/a
9202E	GCSE Chemistry with GCSE Plus Endorsement	n/a
9203E	GCSE Physics with GCSE Plus Endorsement	n/a
9204CE	GCSE Combined Science (Core Tier) with GCSE Plus Endorsement Double Award	n/a
9204EE	GCSE Combined Science (Extension Tier) with GCSE Plus Endorsement Double Award	n/a
9210E	GCSE Computer Science with GCSE Plus Endorsement	n/a
9225E	GCSE Business with GCSE Plus Endorsement	n/a
9230E	GCSE Geography with GCSE Plus Endorsement	n/a
9260CE	GCSE Mathematics (Core Tier) with GCSE Plus Endorsement	n/a
9260EE	GCSE Mathematics (Extension Tier) with GCSE Plus Endorsement	n/a
9270CE	GCSE English Language (Coursework option with endorsement)	n/a
9270WE	GCSE English Language (Written option with endorsement)	n/a
9275AE	GCSE English Literature (Route A) with GCSE Plus Endorsement	n/a
9275BE	GCSE English Literature (Route B) with GCSE Plus Endorsement	n/a
9280E	GCSE English as a Second Language with GCSE Plus Endorsement	n/a

OxfordAQA International A Level

Spec Code	Subject	Component(s)
9670	International A-level English Language	EN04B
9675	International A-level English Literature	LT04B
9693	Independent Project Qualification	9693