

Quality Procedures and Policies	COM-016	Issue Number	7
		Issue Date	April 2025
Conflicts of Interest		Originator	Peter Hurlstone
		Amended by	Peter Hurlstone
		Approved by	Peter Hurlstone

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to relevant individuals on handling possible conflicts of interest that may arise as a result of SETA's role as a Training Provider. This policy applies to all staff and other individuals whenever they interact or potentially interact with any of SETA's organisation functions.

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, a Training Provider*
- *Describes the process that will be followed in all cases of suspected conflicts of interest*
- *Sets out the roles and responsibilities for managing conflict of interest at each level in the organisation*

2. Scope

This policy covers all activities carried out by SETA, including Apprenticeships, Commercial Training and all regulated and self-regulated qualifications it delivers.

The individuals falling within scope of this policy include Officers, Managers, Employees, Contractors, agency workers and any associate staff, including assessment associates, Internal Quality Assurance staff (IQA), Examiners, Invigilators and freelance staff.

This policy particularly applies to all staff and other individuals who interact or potentially interact with the work of the Training Provider. This includes individuals involved with all aspects of the creation, marketing, sales, distribution, marking or any other activity connected with SETA's qualifications, exams, tests, assessments and supporting resources and services.

3. Definition of conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual, or organisation, has competing interests or loyalties. Conflicts of interest can arise in a variety of circumstances in relation to Training Providers activities. For example:

- *When an individual has a position of authority in one organisation which conflicts with his or her interests in another organisation*
- *When an individual has personal interests that conflict with his or her professional position*
- *Where someone works for or carries out work on SETA's behalf, but who may have personal interests – paid or unpaid – in another business which either uses SETA Training products or services, or produces similar products*
- *Where someone works for or carries out work on SETA's behalf, who has friends or relatives taking assessments, tests or examinations with SETA*

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Introduction

All relevant staff and other individuals have a responsibility to be aware of the potential for a conflict of interest. It is likely that individuals working closely with SETA will encounter potential conflicts of interest from time to time. Such situations must be carefully managed to ensure that any conflict of interest does not detrimentally

impact on the standards of, or public confidence in qualifications and training delivered by SETA, along with any other activity connected with SETA.

Officers are responsible for:

- *Ensuring that SETA has a conflict of interest policy and procedure available*
- *Maintaining overarching control of the policy and procedure*
- *Advising and assisting the Centre Compliance Manager in their duties*

The Centre Compliance Manager is responsible for:

- *Communicating the Conflict of Interest Policy to all relevant individuals within their areas of responsibility*
- *Investigating all Conflicts of Interest as and when they are reported*
- *Deciding when and how matters relating to potential or actual conflicts of interest will be escalated within the business, and when the matter is reported*
- *Reporting all actual or potential conflict of interest cases to the Officers*
- *Ensuring that conflict of interest training of all staff takes place as part of induction*
- *Ensuring that audits are carried out to test understanding and implementation of the Conflict of Interest Policy. Audits will include all areas and in particular where there are interactions between SETA's functions*
- *Ensuring all awarding bodies, awarding organisations, and all relevant regulations are adhered to regarding the handling or conflicts of interest*
- *Ensuring SETA's compliance to Legislation covering conflicts of interest*

The Apprenticeship Services Standardisation Coordinator is responsible for:

- *Assisting the Centre Compliance Manager in their investigation*
- *Liaising between the individuals involved in the conflict*
- *Consulting all awarding bodies, awarding organisations, and all relevant regulations regarding the handling or conflicts of interest*
- *Investigating all conflict of interests that involve the Centre Compliance Manager or in their absence as and when they are reported*

Individual Responsibilities

- *Every individual within SETA has responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the Conflict of Interest Policy and any guidelines.*
- *The most important feature of the policy is the requirement that an individual disclose any activity if there is any doubt whether or not it represents a conflict of interest; if in doubt, it should be reported*
- *Any individual considering taking on additional paid work (on either an employed or self-employed basis) or voluntary work outside SETA must seek a written agreement from the Chief Executive Officer beforehand. An individual must not take on any such activities that could be deemed to compete or conflict with SETA's activities.*
- *Prior to any examinations being taken, all staff and other individuals, including the Board of Trustees are required to inform SETA of any candidates being entered for its examinations and other assessments, who are family members, other relatives or friends. They will be asked to sign a declaration **(Please see Annex B)**, which will be securely held electronically by the Centre Compliance Manager for as long as required.*

5. Procedure

Where there is a potential or actual conflict of interest:

1. *The individual/s involved in the suspected conflict of interest will report the issue to the Centre Compliance Manager (or the Apprenticeship Services Standardisation Coordinator in their absence), by completing the 'Conflict of Interest Recording Form' (Please see Annex A). This may be done in confidence if required by the individual/s*
2. *The Investigator will review the information detailed in the form and begin the investigation by interviewing all individuals involved, consulting the relevant awarding bodies, awarding organisations or other applicable regulations content, requirements and recommendations. All evidence will be checked for currency and authenticity*
3. *Place an action plan in place to resolve the conflict (Please See Annex C)*
4. *Review the action plan on a daily basis until the case is closed*
5. *Store electronic copies of all documents in the secured 'Quality Management' area on the SETA's server*

The investigator will consult the Officers for further discussion and advice if the conflict cannot be resolved

If the conflict involves the Centre Compliance Manager, the Apprenticeship Services Standardisation Coordinator will conduct the investigation.

It should be noted that individuals are protected under the company's Whistle blowing Policy (**Please See CEN-003 – Whistle Blowing**).

6. Legislation

SETA follows conflict of interest guidance from Section A4 of the 'Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition' to ensure compliance across all qualifications delivered.

7. Further Advice and Guidance

Any required guidance or interpretation on potential conflicts of interest should be sought from the Centre Compliance Manager.

8. References

HM Government

Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-a-governance>

9. Review

This document will be reviewed annually by the Centre Compliance Manager and the Lead IQA's, or as and when new/amendments to regulated qualifications are released by awarding body and awarding organisations.

Conflict of Interest Recording Form

Details of Person Raising Concern									
Name						Date			
Role	Commercial Learner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Apprentice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trustee	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	SETA Staff Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contractor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sub-Contractor	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Concern Details		
<p><i>Please use the space below to record details of the Concern</i></p>		
Investigator Name: Investigator Signature: Date: Ref:	Concern Raisers Signature: Date:	<p>Please note <i>By signing, you are agreeing that the information contained within this form is a true and accurate account of the conflict of interest.</i></p>

Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form

Details of Person making a Conflict of Interest Declaration								
Name							Date	
Position	SETA Staff Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contractor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trustee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sub-Contractor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Declaration								
I hereby declare that: <i>I have pecuniary or other personal interest, direct or indirect, in certain matter that raises or may raise a conflict with my duties working with SETA. The particulars of such matter are stated below:</i>								
<i>I also acknowledge that I shall make another declaration to state any change in any matter contained in this Declaration within one month after the change occurs and shall provide further information on the particulars contained in this declaration if so required by SETA.</i>								
Centre Compliance Manager Signature:			Declarer Signature:			Please note By signing, you are agreeing that the information contained within this form is a true and accurate account of the conflict of interest.		
Date:			Date:					

Conflict of Interest Investigation Report

Investigator Details				
Name		Role		Date

Details of Person/s Involved in Concern			
Name		Role	
Name		Role	
Name		Role	
Name		Role	
Name		Role	

Investigation Outcome, Recommendations and Action Plan		
<i>Please use the space below to record the details</i>		
Investigator Signature:	Outcome	
	Open <i>(Further investigation required)</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	Closed <i>(No further investigation required)</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
Date:	Ref:	