Conflict of Interest Guidance

A YouTube video presentation of this guidance is available on the following link.

https://youtu.be/yW-TYe78IM0

If you, or your centre have any queries, concerns or would like further information on conflicts of interest please call: 02476 856230 alternatively you can email: Declaration.Disclosure@ocr.org.uk

What is a conflict of Interest?

A conflict of interest arises when an Assessment Specialist (AS) (or someone with whom they have a family, personal, or professional relationship) is in a position to make an inappropriate personal gain, whether financial or non-financial, from undertaking an assessment task for OCR.

This does not mean that such a gain will necessarily be sought by the Assessment Specialist, but to protect the integrity of our assessments, and the reputation of OCR, we need to be able to identify whether or not a conflict of interest exists.

When invited to undertake an assessment task, Assessment Specialists are required to declare if they have, or do not have, a conflict of interest. Our responsibility is to identify, manage, and take reasonable steps to mitigate the risk of a conflict leading to an adverse effect on the assessment or our reputation.

We would only prohibit an Assessment Specialist from undertaking a task when necessary. Our preferred approach is to risk-assess conflicts and put in place appropriate mitigations to allow the task to be completed.

We do, however, prohibit Assessment Specialists who are involved in producing confidential assessment materials, or have access to confidential assessment materials, for an OCR specification from delivering advice, training or guidance on that specification.

It is important that we take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a Learner (including by way of Moderation) being undertaken by any Assessment Specialist who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment.

When invited to assess for OCR you are required to declare any centre relationship(s) that could be considered a conflict of interest. The following are examples (but not an exhaustive list) of conflicts of interest that should be declared:

• If you are preparing any individual learner(s) for any qualification(s).
• If you teach, have worked at or supported a centre within the last 5 years.
• If you have a close relative, or a person where your interest could be seen to compromise your integrity, who attends a centre (e.g. son, daughter or other close family member).
• If the school you teach at has close links to another school (e.g. where learners are taught across schools etc).
• If a reasonable observer would conclude that the ‘relationship’ could compromise your integrity.

There may be other examples not provided that could be considered a conflict, if you are unsure please contact the number or email address provided above.
Conflicts of interests that may arise for Assessment Specialist

There are a variety of conflicts that may arise due to the tasks you carry out for OCR and the external tasks you carry out. For senior Assessment Specialists, who may undertake multiple roles, this can create both financial and non-financial conflicts of interest. In this section we show some examples of where conflicts of interest may arise.

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<th>Context</th>
<th>Conflict</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Specialist (AS) marks during the June series attends a centre as a consultant to help the centre improve learner achievement.</td>
<td>The AS fails to declare the conflict on their invitation. As a result the conflict isn’t listed as a barred centre and the AS later marks the centre’s work for OCR. Due to the relationship with the centre, an informed and reasonable observer may conclude that the relationship could compromise the AS integrity. As OCR are not aware of the conflict it is not listed as a barred centre and the decisions will not be reviewed by another AS. Therefore breaching the General Conditions of Recognition (GCoR) A4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AS moderates for OCR and their son is currently studying an OCR qualification.</td>
<td>The AS fails to declare the conflict on their invitation. As a result the conflict isn’t listed as a barred centre and the AS later moderates the centre’s (and their son’s) work for OCR. Due to the paternal relationship the AS is seen to have a relationship with the centre. As OCR are not aware of the conflict it is not listed as a barred centre and the decisions will not be reviewed by another AS. Therefore breaching the General Conditions of Recognition (GCoR) A4.</td>
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<td>AS involved in assessment material production also develops and/or produces resource/learning material e.g. text book, revision guide etc.</td>
<td>The AS inadvertently copies material out of, or in to the OCR assessment material. Due to the nature of support material, there can be many similarities between the resource and OCR assessment material particularly if model answers and questions are provided. All OCR assessment material must be original material and produced exclusively for OCR or appropriately sourced.</td>
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<td>AS involved in assessment material production and teaches.</td>
<td>The AS is asked by a friend who teaches at a nearby school to talk to learners about the specification. Although this is not 'official training' this would still be prohibited due to the GCoR G4. Any training on the specification where an AS has sight of confidential assessment material is prohibited.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AS produces resource material for OCR and has their own company that provides training to centres.</td>
<td>The AS includes information on their role as an AS for OCR on their website and also includes some of the resource material. All the tasks AS do for OCR are strictly confidential. If a third party wishes to include information on an AS role, they must seek permission from OCR. The material that AS produces for OCR is copyrighted and cannot be shared. If you want to draw attention to the resources available, you should suggest teachers contact OCR or look on the OCR website.</td>
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Assessment Specialist Declaration FAQ’s

Q: Why do I need to submit a conflict of interest form?
A: OCR has a responsibility to ensure that the integrity of our assessments is maintained. If you think an assessment-related activity you are about to undertake, or are already undertaking creates a conflict, or you think it might create a conflict, you must declare it.

Q: In what circumstances do I need to submit a declaration/disclosure of interest form?
A: There are a number of instances where you need to make a declaration:
You must submit a declaration:
1. If you have or had a ‘relationship’ with any centres (e.g. schools or colleges) within the last five years.
2. If you assess for OCR and have a ‘relationship’ with a centre.
3. If you have sight of confidential assessment material (this includes controlled assessment and coursework until it is freely available) and you teach/deliver the qualification or if the qualification is taught/delivered at the centre where you are employed. Or if you are related to or have a relationship with anyone who is/or due to take the qualification. Or if you have a partner or other close family member who is/due to teach/deliver qualification? If you teach any other qualification.

4. If you are, or will be, involved in delivering training on an OCR specification when you have knowledge of confidential assessment material for that specification. This is prohibited as per the Ofqual GCoR.

5. If you have been, or are currently, involved in the preparation of a resource designed to support learners for the qualification you have been invited to undertake a task for (except where the material is only for use when preparing your own learners). For example, this may include assessment material, text books, revision guides and schemes of work, etc. (you are only required to declare this activity if you carry out certain tasks for OCR).

6. If you are involved in delivering generic subject training for a third party (you are only required to declare this activity if you carry out certain tasks for OCR).

7. If you hold a senior post for any other Awarding Organisation or carry out any other activity that may be seen to create a conflict of interest (you are only required to declare this activity if you carry out certain tasks for OCR).

Q: Do I have to list the names of all the learners in the group I’m teaching on the form?
A: If you teach an entire class you should provide the centre number and year group. If you tutor, teach or are related to a learner(s) you should provide the name, candidate number and relationship with them.

Q: I’ve been invited to deliver training to colleagues in my own, and in other schools/colleges on the OCR specification I’m creating assessment material for. Can I do this?
A: No, if you are involved in producing assessment materials for an OCR specification you cannot deliver advice, training or guidance on that specification unless this is offered and organised by OCR.

Q: I’ve been invited to deliver training on the OCR specification I’m creating assessment material for by a publisher/training provider. Can I do this?
A: No, if you are involved in producing assessment materials for an OCR specification you cannot deliver advice, training or guidance on that specification.

Q: I’m involved in producing assessment material for OCR. I’m also preparing learning resources on the OCR specification, Can I do this?
A: Yes, if the material is only for use when preparing the learners you teach, you must declare the relationship but you do not need to declare the production of the material. If the material is to be published you must declare the conflict, and ensure that no copied content appears in either the OCR or the third party material.

Q: Can I post or share comments on, or information relating to, the OCR specification and tasks I’m involved with?
A: No, all Assessment Specialist tasks are strictly confidential therefore information cannot be shared. Divulging any information even if it is not believed to be confidential would breach the ‘Standard Terms for Assessment Services’.

Q: I have my own website. Can I share information on my association with OCR?
A: No, this is only permitted if you have contacted OCR and have been given written consent to do so.

Q: I’m involved in producing assessment material for OCR. I’ve also been invited by a publisher to produce learning resources for the same OCR specification. Can I do this?
A: Yes, but you must not duplicate content contained in the assessment material in the learning resources/textbooks, or vice versa. You must declare that you have been invited to produce these learning resources/textbooks and provide OCR with access to the material you produce.