

Academic Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures

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QO	15.05.17	New Policy implemented to meet the SQA Systems Verification for Centres 2015-18 requirements (criteria 1.6)
QO	28/07/17	Updates to References and Declaration form to include BCS required information.
QO	24/08/17	Updates to Conflict of Interest Form – Appendix A
QO	02/11/17	Update to Scope of policy and Reference links
QO	22/03/23	Update to branding
QO	01/07/23	Review and revision

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy Document is to provide guidance on addressing Conflicts of Interest that may arise. The policy applies to all staff and all areas of College provision for all Awarding Bodies associated with qualifications delivered by UHI Argyll

2. Scope

This policy covers the following:

- All qualifications and informal awards offered by any awarding body, delivered by UHI Argyll
- All staff who set assessments which candidates undertake whilst studying at UHI Argyll
- Any staff who make assessment judgements on student work/evidence.
- Any staff who internally verify assessment decisions on student work/evidence.
- Any staff who invigilate assessments (for all awarding bodies), both internal and external.
- This policy also applies where an individual stands to make a personal financial gain from the outcome of an assessment, as opposed to payment through normal business practices.

3. Definitions

3.1 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is defined as, and can exist where:

- A member of staff has personal interest in the outcome of an assessment, which poses a risk to the integrity of an assessment. This could include, but is not limited to:
 - A friend or relative of a member of staff who is directly involved in the delivery/invigilation/development of an assessment.
 - Someone involved in a personal relationship with a member of staff who is directly involved in the delivery/invigilation/ development of an assessment.
 - A member of staff who is connected to the development or delivery of an award who has interests in any other activity which may have potential to lead that person to act contrary to his or her interests in that development or delivery of the award.
 - Another member of staff identifies or has observed a conflict of interest situation with another member of staff.

Assessment in the context of this Policy shall be taken to mean:

3.2 Summative Assessment

Assessment/examination/online assessment which provides a measure of achievement in respect of a student's performance in relation to the intended learning outcomes. It contributes to the overall attainment of the certification. Summative assessment must be objective, equitable and proportionate.

3.2 Internal Assessment

Any assessment conducted, for any awarding body, invigilated and marked within UHI Argyll

3.3 External Assessment

Any assessment conducted, invigilated, and marked by a member of staff employed by an

awarding body, and not a member of UHI Argyll staff.

4. All Staff Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 All Staff

All UHI Argyll members of staff, and any Awarding Body members of staff (External Verifier/Invigilator etc.), have a responsibility to be aware of potential conflicts of interest and to ensure that any issues are raised promptly and appropriately. All identified conflicts of interest should be dealt with in line with this policy to ensure there is no detrimental effect to the quality and integrity of any awarding body qualifications offered by UHI Argyll.

All perceived and identified conflict of interest situations should be recorded on the [Conflict of Interest Declaration Form \(sharepoint.com\)](#), or a copy can be requested from any member of centre management staff, or by emailing the Quality Officer (jen.mcfadyen@uhi.ac.uk).

All perceived conflict of interest situations should be reported in the first instance to the Quality Officer. The Quality Officer will pass to the Quality Committee for discussions on mitigations and further processes and will decide on a suitable action to address the conflict of interest, if they feel this is required. This could include the following:

- Move the student to another group,
- Change the assessor/internal verifier/invigilator,
- Restrict the access to the assessment (for Invigilation conflict of interest issues),
- Implement re-marking of the assessment,
- Supervising the delivery of an assessment,
- Including a student's assessment work in the sample for 100% internal verification

Once the required actions are finalised, the agreed actions are passed to the Assessor or other staff member, Curriculum Lead or Line Manager and Head of Curriculum for implementation. The Quality Officer will retain all evidence in accordance with the AC FE Academic Records Management and Retention Policy and notify ACIVAdmin and ACSITS for IV and retention purposes.

4.3 Quality Officer (SQA Co-ordinator)

The Quality Officer is responsible for the following:

- Fully actioning and reporting all cases of conflicts of interest to the UHI Argyll
 - Quality Assurance Committee.
 - Ensure staff are aware of this procedure and actions required of the in each academic year.
- If required, reporting the results of a conflict-of-interest investigation to the appropriate awarding body.
- Pass agreed actions are passed to the Depute Principal (Quality Manager), Assessor or other staff member, Curriculum Lead or Line Manager and Head of Curriculum for implementation.
- Retaining all evidence related to a conflict-of-interest situation for 12 months after the date of the assessment(s) in question ([UHI Argyll FE Academic Records Management and Retention \(sharepoint.com\)](#))
- Notifying the Head of Student Services (ACIVAdmin and ACSITS) of the retention

requirements for appropriate documentation/evidence.

4.4 Curriculum Lead/Line Manager/Head of Curriculum

The Curriculum Lead/Line Manager/Head of Curriculum are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring staff are aware of the Conflict-of-Interest process.
- Ensuring that any Conflict-of-Interest Declarations are forwarded to the Quality Officer.
- Monitoring declared Conflict of Interest situations and ensuring mitigations/ongoing actions are followed throughout the academic year.
- Ensuring IV actions are completed as directed and forwarded to the relevant Progression Boards in the academic year.

4.5 Depute Principal (Quality Manager)

The Depute Principal has overarching responsibility to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures in relation to conflict of interest are adhered to at all times.

5. Retention of Evidence

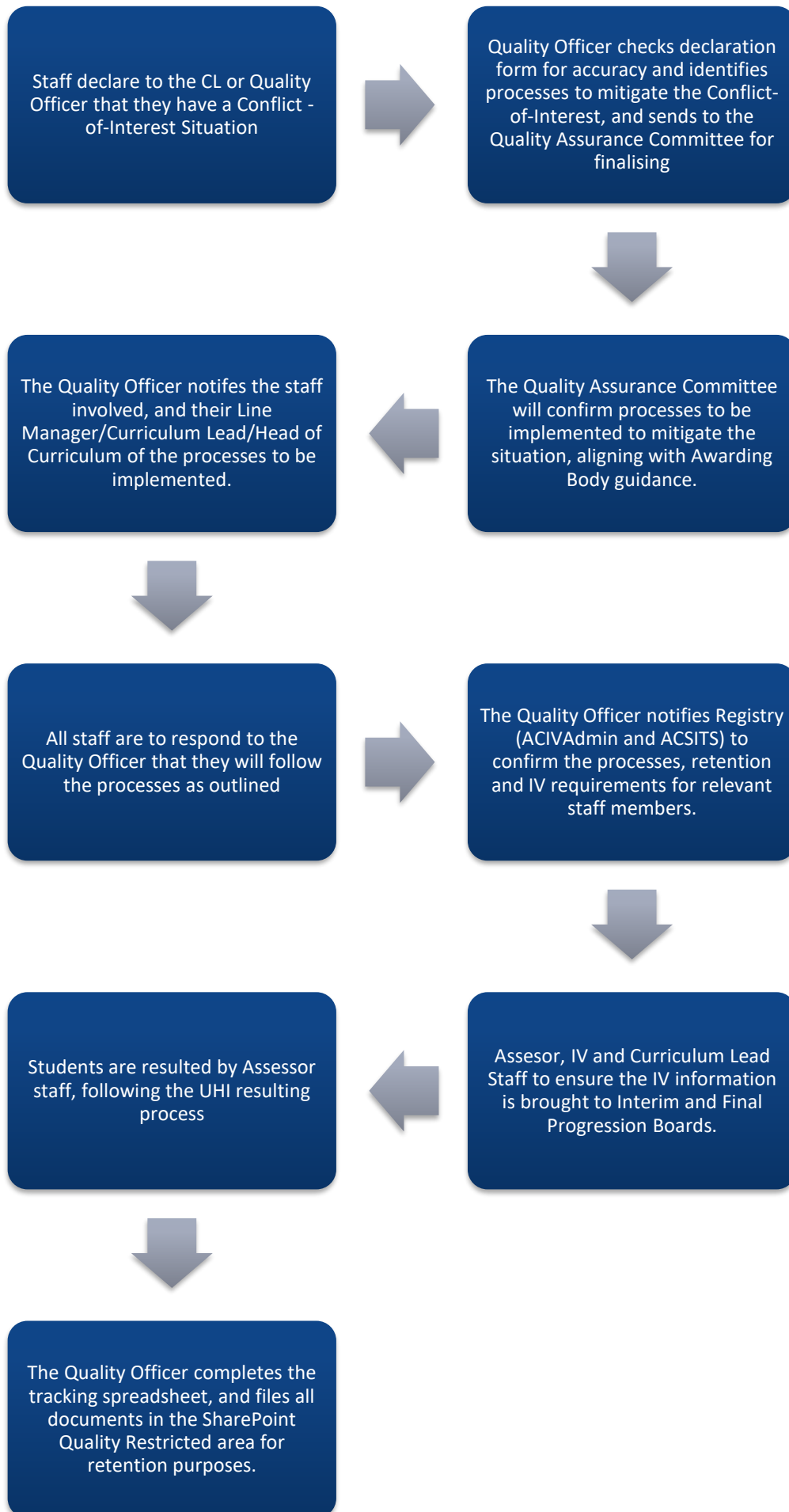
Copies of documentation from all investigations into conflict-of-interest situations (even if no further action is required) will be gathered by the Quality Officer for storage and will be retained for 12 months after completion of the assessments in question.

All Assessment information is retained in line with Awarding Bodies requirements and outlined within the [UHI Argyll FE Academic Records Management and Retention Policy](#).

6. Storage and Transportation of evidence

All members of staff should ensure that any conflict-of-interest evidence is transported and secured in accordance with the Policy for the storage and transport of assessment materials and student evidence ([Policy for the storage and transport of assessment materials and student evidence](#)).

7. Process



8. References

This policy will operate in conjunction with and be supported by the following Argyll College UHI Policies and Procedures. These are available to all staff in the Quality Matters section of the UHI Argyll SharePoint ([AC Quality - Quality Assurance Policies \(sharepoint.com\)](#))

- UHI Argyll - Student Malpractice Policy
- UHI Argyll - Staff and Centre Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- UHI Argyll - Policy for the storage and transport of assessment materials and student evidence
- UHI Argyll - Internal assessment booking and invigilation procedure
- UHI Argyll – FE Academic Records Management and Retention Policy and Procedures
- UHI Argyll – Forms for Assessment and Invigilation [Systems Verification and Approval support guidance \(sqa.org.uk\)](#)

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years or sooner if changes in linking policies or awarding bodies necessitate amendments.

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Conflict of Interest Declaration Form

(STAFF-IN-CONFIDENCE (when completed))

Full name of member(s) of staff declaring a conflict of interest.	
Nature of the staff members relationship to the student	
Role in delivery	
Name of Student	
Student's Scottish Candidate number (if applicable)	
UHI Argyll Student Number	
Qualification the student is undertaking	
Unit (s) assessments involved	
Details of the conflict of interest situation	
Quality Officer review and declaration	
I have reviewed the above declaration and noted the issue raised, but have decided that no action is required. OR	n/a
I have reviewed the above declaration and recommend the following action to be taken to address the declared conflict: (eg move the candidate into another group, change assessor/IV/invigilator, include the candidate in samples for verification, have the assessment marking supervised or re-marked).	
Assessor Signature and Date:	
Quality Officer Signature and Date:	
Student Services Manager notified for IV and Registry Retention Purposes.	Date:
Management review and approval	
Curriculum Lead Signature and Date:	
Head of Curriculum Signature and Date:	
Quality Manager Signature and Date:	
Retention: All documents relating to a Conflict of Interest processes must be kept for 12 months from the date of course completion.	