

Conflicts of Interest End Point Assessment Policy

Introduction

The over-arching goal of iPET Network is to provide a robust, fair, and consistent end-point assessment that provides the opportunity for a fair assessment. iPET Network will ensure that IEPAs are clear on what is defined as a conflict of interest and the procedure to follow.

This policy is designed to enable iPET Network to identify, manage and mitigate any conflicts of interest, being them perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interest, when engaging individuals in the delivery and marking EPA

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on identifying, mitigating and managing any perceived, potential or actual conflicts of interest regards End Point Assessment to ensure the integrity of iPET Network EPAO and ensure the apprentice is not advantaged or disadvantaged in any way.

Definitions of Conflicts of Interest

Ofqual guidance on conflicts of interest states that in 'general terms' conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual, or organisation, has competing interests or loyalties. The conflict of interest may adversely affect their judgement or influence their objectivity when making decisions if it is not properly managed. This means that a conflict of interest can be perceived, potential or actual, financial or non-financial, organisational or personal.

Examples of Perceived Conflicts are –

- Perceived conflicts (which may relate to either iPET Network or individuals) where an individual would perceive that an end-point assessment organisation or individual has such a competing interest.

Examples of Potential Conflicts of Interest are –

- A training provider could or appear to compromise the IEPA overall decision or grading of the said apprentice.
- A IEPA could be linked to both the training provider and iPET Network EPAO
- There could be a personal relationship between the apprentice and the IEPA
- When an individual has a position of authority in one organisation that conflicts with his or her interests in another organisation
- Where an individual or organisation may benefit from consulting in the creation and development of resources and knowledge test question banks
- Where an individual is acting as a quality assurer where the apprentice may be a friend, family member, acquaintance
- Where an employee of iPET Network is undertaking an end-point assessment and the QA team moderate.

Examples of Actual Conflicts of Interest are –

iPET Network perceives activities carried out by the end-point assessment organisation itself (or on its behalf) that might impair individuals ability to make objective, unbiased decisions about how best to develop, deliver or carry out end-point assessment and grading decisions under the Ofqual Conditions of Recognition.

Management of Conflicts of Interest

As an End Point Assessment Organisation iPET Network will ensure all stakeholders declare any conflicts of interest from the onset. iPET Network aims to manage perceived, potential or actual conflicts in the following way:

- Review our processes annually to ensure that all conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest are managed and resolved
- Ensure that the contractual arrangements with any stakeholders are clearly set out any obligations on them to manage and declare conflicts of interest arising from other activities that they undertake
- Ensure that clear arrangements are in place to prevent the conflict of interest in relation to the development of assessment activities such as question banks, and the administration and marking of those tests
- Ensure that all members of stakeholders declare any conflicts of interest regards friends or family that have an upcoming End Point Assessment
- Ensure that prior to each EPA the IEPA completed the *IEPA Conflicts of Interest Form* to confirm that the IEPA does not hold a conflict with any stakeholder
- Ensure that where any conflict of interest declared has an impact on the individual's role as an End Point Assessor, action taken may include removing that individual from any involvement in End Point Assessment or alternatively, referring their assessment decisions to another End Point Assessor without a conflict of interest
- Where an IEPA may have worked for a Training Provider the employment will have lapsed for a minimum of 3 years
- iPET Network will record any declared conflicts and in turn the way in which the conflict of interest was mitigated

Responsibility

iPET Network will ensure that anyone involved in the EPA process is free from any conflicts of interest that could adversely affect their judgement or objectivity in administering and undertaking robust and consistent EPA (in line with the requirements set out in the Assessment Plan for the Apprenticeship Standard)

iPET Network review processes for the conduct of EPA and the identification and management of actual or perceived conflicts of interest at least annually, under the oversight of the Executive Committee, to ensure a robust and consistent approach

The ultimate responsibility for the conflict-of-interest policy, dissemination of the policy and management of potential and actual conflicts of interest rests with the Lead End Point Assessor

Monitoring and escalation of a conflict of interest

- The End Point Assessment Lead is responsible for escalating and managing any actual or potential conflicts of interest to an appropriate level within the EPAO
- Any stakeholder will be expected to complete and declare any conflicts of interest annually and provide any updates ongoing as necessary when they may arise
- The nature and threat of the conflict will be assessed
- If required a preliminary report will be made available to the concerned within 5 working days.
- Steps will be taken to avoid and manage any adverse conflicts

Conflict of interest in investigations

Where investigations are conducted by iPET Network for apprenticeship malpractice, maladministration and / or breach of GDPR, all reasonable steps will be taken to avoid those under investigation being investigated by anyone with a personal interest.

Investigating Breaches of Conflicts of Interest

Suspected violations of conflicts of interest protocols may be brought to the attention via whistleblowing or the complaints process. Should apprentices, employers or training providers come across situations where conflicts have not been appropriately declared, acknowledged or disclosed as required, these such instances provide grounds for an appeal in line with relevant policies that can be located on the website [iPET Network: International Pet Education and Training Network | Policies and Procedures](#)

Complaints and Appeals End Point Assessment Policy

Whistling Blowing – Public Interest and Disclosure End Point Assessment Policy

Document Control

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Date of Correction	Version Number	Correction Reason
	1	
18/7/2023	2	Full review of the policy to ensure it is valid.
16/1/2024	3	Annual Review