Conflicts of Interest Policy (Exams)

How staff declare and manage personal relationships or interests that could affect a fair assessment.

Awarding organisation	VQA
Approved by	Christine Jamieson, Head of Centre
Date approved	November 2026
Next review	November 2027

Conflicts of Interest Policy (Exams)

Centre	Maximize Education Ltd, 9 Telford Court, Loansdean, Morpeth, NE61 2DB
Awarding organisation	VQA, formerly TQUK (Functional Skills English and maths, Levels 1 and 2)
Head of Centre	Christine Jamieson, CEO
Centre Contact and Exams Officer	Joe Briddon, General Manager
Date approved	November 2026
Next review	November 2027, or sooner if VQA guidance changes

1. Purpose and scope

This policy makes sure that any conflict of interest affecting VQA assessments is declared, recorded and managed, so that results are fair and secure.

VQA requires every recognised centre to have, and follow, a written conflicts of interest policy, and to have arrangements to identify, monitor and manage actual and potential conflicts. This is that policy. It applies to all staff, including tutors, assessors, invigilators, administrators and the management team, who are involved in teaching, assessing, quality assuring, invigilating or administering VQA qualifications. These staff must also be aware of VQA's own Conflict of Interest Policy.

2. What counts as a conflict of interest

A conflict of interest exists where a member of staff has a personal relationship or interest that could affect, or be seen to affect, a learner's assessment. This includes:

- Teaching, preparing, assessing, quality assuring or invigilating a relative. This includes partners, children, step and foster family, and other close relationships.
- Teaching, preparing, assessing, quality assuring or invigilating a close friend, or a member of their immediate family.
- A member of staff taking a qualification at Maximize Education.
- Any other personal or financial interest that could affect a fair assessment.

3. Declaring a conflict

- Staff declare any conflict in writing to the Head of Centre as soon as they become aware of it, and before the learner is registered or assessed.
- All staff who support the delivery of VQA qualifications complete a declaration at the start of each academic year, even if they have nothing to declare, and update it whenever their circumstances change.
- If a conflict cannot be managed within the centre, the Head of Centre contacts VQA's compliance team for advice, at compliance@tquk.org or on 0333 358 3344.

4. How we manage conflicts

- A member of staff with a conflict does not invigilate, assess, quality assure, mark or handle exam materials for that learner.
- Another trained member of staff carries out any internal assessment, such as Speaking, Listening and Communicating.

- The Head of Centre agrees the mitigating actions for each conflict and records them.
- Speaking, Listening and Communicating work from a learner with a declared conflict is always included in the internal quality assurance sample, and is made available to VQA's External Quality Assurer.

Staff taking qualifications at our centre

- This is a last resort, only where the staff member cannot find another centre. The reason is recorded in the register.
- The staff member must not access exam materials before or during their assessment, and is treated like any other candidate with no preferential treatment.
- Other staff are briefed on keeping exam materials confidential and secure.

5. Records and review

The Head of Centre keeps an up-to-date conflicts of interest register, including the measures taken to protect each assessment. It is stored securely in line with data protection law. We make this policy and the register available to VQA on request, and provide evidence that we follow this policy during External Quality Assurance activities.

Records are kept for at least 3 years, and until any appeal, malpractice case or results enquiry is complete, whichever is later. The register uses the format below.

Learner	Registration no.	Qualification	Staff member and role	Relationship	Mitigating actions	Date recorded

The Head of Centre reviews this policy every year, or sooner if VQA guidance changes, and shares it with all staff.

Approval

	Name	Date
Approved by Head of Centre	Christine Jamieson	
Signed		
Next review		November 2027

References

- VQA, Conflict of Interest Policy (C.P.2)
- VQA, EQA Strategy including Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Strategy (QA.P.11)