



Conflict of Interest policy

In line with the Conditions of Recognition set out by the regulator of qualifications in England (Ofqual), the regulator of qualifications in Wales (Qualification Wales) and the regulator of qualifications in Northern Ireland (CCEA Regulation), YMCA Awards at all times maintains and implements a robust conflict of interest policy with respect both to its own operations and in setting requirements for approved centres.

In placing requirements on centres to have an effective Conflict of Interest policy and procedure, YMCA Awards takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it does not impose unnecessary burden.

Policy overview

This document sets out YMCA Awards' approach to identifying and managing conflicts of interest. This policy includes reference to the management of conflicts of interest within both YMCA Awards and our approved centres. The structure of this document is as follows:

- Definition of conflict of interest
- Example conflicts of interest – to be managed directly by YMCA Awards
- Example conflicts of interest – to be managed by approved centres
- Identification and management of conflicts of interest within YMCA Awards
- Requirements for centres

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Terms and Conditions, Centre Sanctions Policy, and Malpractice and Maladministration Policy; available on the YMCA Awards [website](#).

Definition of conflict of interest

YMCA Awards has a regulatory responsibility to manage conflicts of interest in relation to:

- a) our interests in any activity undertaken by us, or on our behalf, which may have the potential to lead us to act contrary to our interests in the development, delivery and award of qualifications in accordance with the regulators' Conditions of Recognition
- b) a person who is connected to the development, delivery or award of qualifications by YMCA Awards who has interests in any other activity which have the potential to lead that person to act contrary to his or her interests in that development, delivery or award in accordance with the regulators' Conditions of Recognition
- c) an informed and reasonable observer would conclude that either of the situations outlined in a) and b) is the case.



In order to meet these responsibilities, YMCA Awards is required to:

- a) identify and monitor all conflicts of interest which relate to our activities as an awarding organisation
- b) identify and monitor any scenario in which it is reasonably foreseeable that any such conflict of interest will arise in the future
- c) establish and maintain an up to date record of all conflicts of interest which relate to our activities as an awarding organisation
- d) take all reasonable steps to ensure that no conflict of interest has an Adverse Effect. An Adverse Effect describes situations in which a learner or learners may have received an unfair advantage or disadvantage and/or any of the following are compromised: our ability to undertake the development, delivery or award of qualifications in accordance with the regulators' requirements; the standards of our qualifications; public confidence in qualifications.
- e) take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a learner (including quality assurance) being undertaken by any person who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment, or, in cases where this is not possible, to make arrangements for the relevant part of the assessment to be subject to scrutiny by another person.

To meet these obligations and to ensure the ongoing validity of our qualifications, we require our approved centres to manage conflicts of interest that can occur during the delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance of our qualifications and we monitor and record this activity.

Example conflicts of interest (YMCA Awards)

Examples of potential conflicts of interest, which YMCA Awards are directly responsible for identifying and managing, include (but are not limited to):

- a member of YMCA Awards staff who has a personal or financial interest in the outcome of the assessment of a learner (e.g. a learner who is a relative or close friend of a YMCA Awards' staff member or freelancer)
- a current or former member of YMCA Awards staff who enrolls on a YMCA Awards qualification
- a freelance technical contributor/subject matter expert who has developed assessment instruments, or had access to confidential assessment materials, and acts as an onprogramme tutor/ assessor for a YMCA Awards approved centre, at any time
- a member of YMCA Awards staff or freelance technical contributor/subject matter expert who has had access to confidential assessment materials, who seeks to develop a learning or teaching resource (including written or delivered revision guidance) for staff or learners associated with approved centres, at any time.



Example conflicts of interest (approved centres)

Examples of potential conflicts of interest which centres are responsible for identifying and managing include (but are not limited to):

- an assessor, acting on behalf of or directly employed by the centre, who may have a vested interest in the outcome of an assessment (e.g. an assessor assessing a family member, close friend or colleague)
- an Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) who has a vested interest in the outcome of an assessment (e.g., where a learner is a relative or close friend)
- an assessor or IQA who gains a financial reward based on the outcome of assessments undertaken by them over and above the normal pay/salary (e.g. a bonus based on achievement rates).

Identification and management of conflicts of interest within YMCA Awards

Roles and Responsibility

It is the responsibility of individual members of staff to inform their line manager of any possible conflicts of interest; for those situations where a conflict of interest may arise, appropriate arrangements must be put in place to ensure that the potential conflict of interest cannot influence the outcome of an assessment. Line managers are responsible for recording all conflict of interest declarations and sharing these with YMCA Awards' Responsible Officer.

It is the responsibility of all YMCA Awards staff and freelance external quality assurers, technical contributors, subject matter experts and any other associate or consultant contracted by YMCA Awards, to declare any potential or actual conflict of interest at the point of recruitment, and to adhere to the conflict of interest information provided within their contract. In addition, during staff induction, we establish whether conflicts of interest and related threats to the maintenance of the confidentiality of our assessments exist or may be likely to occur. In some circumstances, potential or actual conflicts of interest may be identified and options to manage the conflict explored during recruitment. Where new conflicts or potential conflicts arise following recruitment and induction, it is the responsibility of the staff member or freelancer to notify their line manager as soon as reasonably possible.

Freelance associates: additional requirements

Where YMCA Awards recruits individuals to work on its behalf, such as freelance External Quality Assurers, technical contributors, and subject matter experts, we ensure that any actual or perceived conflicts of interest are declared at the point of recruitment or induction. Where necessary and appropriate for ongoing monitoring, these details are kept by YMCA Awards and considered when making decisions about workload allocation.



Contracts for freelance associates who will have access to confidential assessment materials include a clause that prohibit the associate from disclosing the content of confidential assessment to any third party, including restrictions on the development of teaching and learning resources relating to such assessment content.

Positions of responsibility with other organisations

Where an employee, or someone who works on behalf of YMCA Awards, wishes to accept a paid or unpaid position with another organisation, such as an approved centre, or other stakeholder related to the qualifications we offer (for example, an educational publisher or an aligned trade organisation or membership body) which might pose a potential conflict of interest, they must discuss the matter with their line manager. If deemed appropriate, steps will be put in place to manage any potential conflict of interest. Such permission will not be unreasonably withheld, but YMCA Awards retains the right to refuse permission where it is felt there would be a conflict of interest or the employee would find difficulty in fulfilling both roles.

Investigating concerns relating to conflicts of interest

The YMCA Awards Responsible Officer is responsible for investigating credible concerns relating to conflicts of interest, whether these have been declared by the individual(s) or not. This applies to concerns raised in relation to conflicts of interest within YMCA Awards as well as concerns relating to centres, which are brought to the attention of YMCA Awards. In situations where the conflict of interest relates to the Responsible Officer, an independent party will investigate and make recommendations on actions required to the Director of YMCA Awards.

Requirements for centres

YMCA Awards' approved centres must at all times have a written Conflict of Interest Policy and comply with the arrangements set out within their policy. A copy of this policy must be supplied during the centre approval application process and must be made available to YMCA Awards upon request at any other time thereafter.

A centre's Conflict of Interest Policy and associated procedures must be of sufficient detail and clarity to allow the centre to identify, manage and record actual and potential conflicts of interest as defined in the YMCA Awards Conflicts of Interest Policy.

Centres must declare conflicts of interest to YMCA Awards by making records relating to the identification and management of conflicts of interest available during external quality assurance activity carried out by YMCA Awards and at any other necessary and appropriate times. Centres should ensure that contact is made with YMCA Awards if they are made aware of any concerns relating to conflicts of interest, whether these conflicts are the responsibility of the centre or YMCA Awards itself. If a centre is unsure how to appropriately manage a

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foreseeable or existing conflict of interest of any type they should seek advice from YMCA Awards either through their External Quality Assurer, the Lead External Quality Assurer or YMCA Awards Head of Quality and Assessment, using the contact details at the end of this document.

If a centre is making use of a subcontractor for any part of the delivery, assessment or quality assurance of YMCA Awards' qualifications, the centre should ensure that its Conflict of Interest Policy makes adequate provision for identifying and managing potential conflicts of interest that may occur through the subcontracting arrangement. Any conflicts of interest identified by the approved centre, relating to the subcontracting arrangement, must be declared to YMCA Awards' Quality Manager at the point that the conflict of interest is identified.

Review arrangements

YMCA Awards review this policy and its associated procedures annually as part of self evaluation arrangements and revise it when necessary in response to customer or regulatory feedback. If you would like to comment on anything in this document please contact us via the details provided below.

Understanding this policy

All enquiries relating to this policy should be addressed to:

Head of Quality and Assessment
YMCA Awards
112 Great Russell Street
London
WC1B 3NQ

Telephone: +44 (0)20 3994 9500

Email: awards.feedback@ymca.co.uk