

## Conflict of Interest Policy – Examinations

This policy applies to all JCQ governed qualifications, including vocational qualifications such as BTEC, ASDAN and Cambridge Nationals.

### **1. Introduction**

Marshland High School supports staff who work for Awarding Organisations (exam boards). Such work is professionally fulfilling, provides opportunities for career development, and helps ensure the high-quality operation of the public exams system on which thousands of candidates and schools depend for fair and accurate results. An in depth understanding of the marking process and nuances of mark schemes are of direct teaching and learning benefit to both teachers and students.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Marshland High School manages conflicts of interest by informing the awarding bodies, before the published deadline for entries, of:

- any members of centre staff who are taking qualifications at their own centre which include internally assessed components/units;
- any members of centre staff who are teaching and preparing members of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) for
- qualifications which include internally assessed components/units;

and maintains clear records of all instances where:

- exams office staff have members of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) being entered for examinations and assessments either at the centre itself or other centres;
- centre staff are taking qualifications at their centre which do not include internally assessed components/units;
- centre staff are taking qualifications at other centres.

The Process for this is as follows;

- Contact all members of staff to ascertain any conflict of interest.
- Any confirmed cases are compiled into a written record and retained by the Exams Officer including steps taken to mitigate.
- Steps to mitigate will be shared with the relevant staff member to ensure they are aware of all actions in place and additional requirements which they must adhere to.
- The Exams Officer informs the JCQ and various awarding bodies of any relevant conflicts of interest.

## **2. Categories of examination duty**

There are broadly four categories of examining duties.

- A. Teachers involved in the preparation of exam papers (question setting, reviewing, vetting) – i.e. teachers who see question papers before an exam is sat.
- B. Teachers who mark public exams but who only see question papers and scripts after the exam has been sat (e.g. assistant examiners).
- C. Staff involved in checking examination material prior to the exam (e.g. exams officers, lab technicians for practicals, etc.).
- D. Teachers involved in the marking and moderation of internally assessed coursework.

Teachers involved in category A and B work are required to register this work with the examinations officer, and through the Associate Headteacher. Teachers who carry out category A work must obtain the express approval of the Headteacher who will meet with such teachers to discuss the starred items in section 4, below.

All staff involved in category A, B, C, and D public exam work must follow all centre, exam board, JCQ and regulator regulations in full. The integrity of the exam process is critical and no actions should be taken that either undermine, or appear to undermine, the fairness and integrity of public exam assessment. The centre and its staff must maintain the highest professional standards at all times.

## **3. Whistle blowing**

Anyone concerned about the integrity of any aspect of the public exams process should raise these concerns with the relevant authority in the exam board / JCQ / regulator. Concerns about the conduct of exams at the school should be raised with Marshland High School's Head of Centre and Exams Officer. If a concern relates to the Head of Centre then the Chair of Governors should be contacted. Concerns should be addressed in a reasonable and timely fashion; if they are not, the concern should be escalated in accordance with the school's Whistleblowing Policy.

## **4. Category A work**

Teachers who are involved in the production, review and checking of examination material prior to assessment undertake work that is essential to the smooth and accurate running of the public exams system. However, they also face conflicts of interest that require very careful management to preserve the integrity of the exams system and safeguard the professional standards and reputations of teachers and their schools or colleges. All category A work must be done in accordance with exam board / JCQ / regulator regulations. Where exam boards provide training for how to manage conflicts of interest, staff must complete this training to protect themselves and the integrity of the public exam system.

Above and beyond the requirements of exam board / JCQ / regulators, category A teachers must follow the relevant starred practical measures below.

- a\* Do not inform pupils and parents of category A work. Keeping exam setting / checking work confidential (but notifying the school/college and appropriate

- colleagues of such work) safeguards against student and / or parent questioning / intrusion.
- b\* Always set past examination questions, or questions that are on publicly available sample papers.
  - c\* Always cover the whole specification (where appropriate); never question spot.
  - d\* Never discuss future examinations with students, parents and / or colleagues.
  - e\* All internal assessment papers should be set by a member of the department not involved in setting public exam papers.
  - f\* Never give any indication of what is in a future paper, by suggesting what, or what not, to revise.
  - g\* Where students write essays, ensure there is an explicit and transparent mechanism for the choice of essay, e.g. essays chosen by pupils or other department staff.
  - h\* Do not use school/college IT resources for any category A work.
  - i\* **Never complete category A work in school/college.**
  - j\* Examination advice given to students should be based only on material which is available to all centres (e.g. examiners' reports, mark schemes, etc.).
  - k\* Category A staff should withdraw from any discussion that could lead to a conflict of interest – for example the contents of a revision schedule.
  - l\* Staff with any concerns about the integrity of their category A work, or conflicts of interest arising, should protect themselves and the exams system by raising such concerns with the exam board. If in doubt proactively report.

The starred practical guidance can limit a teacher's ability to discharge his / her teaching and departmental duties. This is especially so if the category A worker is a head of department, or works in a smaller department where there may not be sufficient other colleagues to fill workload gaps created by a 'conflicted' member of staff. In such circumstances it may not be possible for a teacher to carry out category A work; they may instead carry out category B roles. This will be discussed with the Head of Centre/Headteacher as part of the approval process. A *Declaration of Personal Interest Form* is included in Appendix A. This must be completed each academic year. A *Conflicts of Interest* log will be maintained to record any potential conflicts of interest and will be kept by the Exams officer.

## **5. Attending examiner meetings / completing examination work (Category A and B work)**

Whilst we actively encourage and support teachers who undertake public exam work, it is important that this additional 'private' work does not compromise teaching, pastoral, administrative and extra-curricular duties. Teachers must endeavour to minimise their time out of school for examiners' meetings and ensure there is minimal disruption to their work for the school.

## **6. Category C and Category D work**

Any member of staff involved in these processes must adhere to the JCQ procedures and follow all instructions provided by the Examination Boards and JCQ precisely. If one of these

members of staff has a relation in Year 11 or the relevant year group who is sitting the examination, whether at Marshland High School or any other High School, a conflict of interest must be recorded. A *Declaration of Personal Interest Form* is included in Appendix A. This must be completed each academic year. A *Conflicts of Interest* log will be maintained to record any potential conflicts of interest and will kept by the Exams officer.

#### **7. Familial conflicts of interest**

Should any member of school staff involved with the preparation for or delivery of examinations have a close relative who is in Year 11 or the relevant year group who is sitting the examination, a conflict of interest must be declared. Each year, the Exams officer will send an email to all staff to declare any conflict of interest via return email or completion of the *Declaration of Personal Interest Form* (included in Appendix A). This action must be completed each academic year. A *Conflicts of Interest* log will be maintained to record any potential conflicts of interest and will kept by the Exams officer.

#### **8. Centre staff sitting examinations**

Any centre staff who are sitting examinations, either at this centre or another, must complete the *Declaration of Personal Interest Form* that is included in Appendix A. This must be completed each academic year. A *Conflicts of Interest* log will be maintained to record any potential conflicts of interest and will kept by the Exams officer.

### Appendix A - Declaration of Interest form

To comply with the regulations, the centre is required to manage Conflicts of Interest and inform the relevant awarding body/bodies for any of their qualifications of:

- any members of centre staff who are taking qualifications at their own centre which include internally assessed components/units;
- any members of centre staff who are teaching and preparing members of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) for qualifications which include internally assessed components/units; **and**

maintains clear records of **all instances** where:

- exams office staff have members of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) being entered for examinations and assessments either at the centre itself or other centres;
- centre staff are taking qualifications at their centre which **do not** include internally assessed components/units;
- centre staff are taking qualifications at other centres.

To ensure compliance, you **must** declare (by ticking) any of the statements that apply to you and complete the required information in the white boxes.

Your name		Your job title(s)	
Subject(s) you teach (if applicable to your role)			

Please tick any statement/statements that applies/apply to you and complete the required information (or will apply to you during the current academic year)

- I am taking a qualification(s) at this centre which includes an internally assessed component/unit

Qualification(s) I am taking	Awarding body	Qualification type	Specification (Subject)
Steps I have taken to seek an alternative centre at which to take the qualification(s)			

- I am teaching and preparing a member of my family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) for a qualification(s) which includes an internally assessed component/unit

(Where more than one related person, please complete a separate form)

Name of related person (the candidate)			
Candidate number		Relationship to me	
Qualification(s) being taught and prepared for	Awarding body	Qualification type	Specification (Subject)

- I am a member of exams office staff and have a member of my family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) being entered for examinations and assessments at this centre or another centre

(Where more than one related person, please complete a separate form)

Name of related person (the candidate)			
Where the candidate is being entered	<input type="checkbox"/> This centre <input type="checkbox"/> Another entering centre (tick box as applies)		
Candidate number (if this centre)		Relationship to me	
Entering centre name (if not this centre)			
Entering centre number (if known)			

- I am taking a qualification at this centre which does not include internally assessed components/units
- I am taking a qualification at another centre

Qualification(s) I am taking	Awarding body	Qualification type	Specification (Subject)	Exam series
Entering centre name				
Entering centre number (if known)				

- I have none of the above statements to declare

Date declaration(s) made:

Signature to confirm declaration(s):

**This completed form (including date and signature) must be returned to the Exams Officer**

The declaration(s) you have provided will be used to inform the relevant awarding body/bodies (where required) and to record details of the measures taken to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected. You will be informed if/where any measures or protocols put in place directly affect you.

**All records are subject to inspection by the JCQ/awarding body on request and will be retained until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later (for the relevant exam series).**

**FOR HEAD OF CENTRE/EXAMS OFFICER USE ONLY**

Date	Action
	Completed Declaration form received
	Declaration(s) recorded on Conflict of Interest (COI) log
	Awarding body/bodies informed of specific COI (where applicable)
	Staff member informed of measures/protocols in place to manage the risk represented by the COI