



Policy

Conflict of Interest

Training Centre Staff and Candidates

Version: 1

Summary:	The Institute of Fire Safety Manager’s policy for candidates and training centre staff on conflicts of interest covering procedures, types of conflict and responsibilities.	
Target Audience:	Staff, Council, Members, Non-Members, Candidates & Delegates	
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1. Introduction

As a professional body it is essential the Institute conducts all its activities with professionalism, integrity and transparency to ensure continued confidence within the industry and stakeholders of the Institute.

The Institute prides itself on providing a high-quality service and takes great care to ensure that all policies and processes are followed. This comprehensive Conflict of Interest policy is enacted under the By-Laws of the Institute and is available publicly on the Institute's website.

2. Responsibility for the Policy

The Institute's Council has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with its regulatory and ethical obligations, and that all those under its control comply with it.

The management team have day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy, monitoring its use and effectiveness, dealing with any queries about it, and auditing internal control systems and procedures to ensure they are effective in processing conflict of interest notifications.

Management at all levels are responsible for ensuring those reporting to them understand and comply with this policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to members, employees, contractors, council officials, volunteers, and any other individuals affiliated with the Institute where specifically involved with the Institute's activities as a training center and awarding qualifications. It covers a wide range of conflicts of interest, including but not limited to:

- Fraud, corruption, or financial malpractice.
- Discrimination, harassment, or abuse of authority.
- Violations of laws or regulations.
- Actions that harm the reputation of the Institute.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The Ethics Policy
- Council Members & Institute Officials Policy

4. Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest is a circumstance where the interests of two parties, whether individuals, businesses or organisations, are incompatible or where those concerned could derive a personal benefit from the actions or decisions that are made in their professional capacity.

Examples of conflicts of interest, although not an exhaustive list, are:

- Where a member of the Institute's staff is involved in the training, assessment, quality assurance or invigilation of a candidate that is a family member or close friend.
- Where an Institute member of staff have a personal or familial relationship with a member of staff within an awarding organisation and is involved in the quality assurance and/or oversight of the operations within the centre.
- Where Institute members of staff have personal interests, paid or unpaid, in another business, that either uses the Institutes products and services, or produces similar products and services

Conflicts of interest can impact on the awarding of qualifications by:

- Putting at risk the safety and integrity of the development, delivery, quality assurance and certification of a qualification.
- Putting at risk the reputations of the regulator(s), the qualification framework(s) and awarding body.
- Causing disadvantage to a candidate(s).
- Inhibiting the free flow of information and/or discussion that could aid in the development, delivery, quality assurance and certification of a qualification or the operations of the regulator(s), awarding body and/or the Institute.

5. Types of Conflict

Conflicts fall under three categories:

- General
- Prejudicial
- Irreconcilable

5.1. General Conflicts

These are conflicts where the interests of an individual would not impact on others more than as if the action or decision were taken by an individual who does not have the perceived or actual conflict.

5.2. Prejudicial Conflicts

These are conflicts where the interests of an individual would materially impact the action or decision in question to either benefit their own interest or position or to act to the detriment or inject perceived or actual bias within an action or decision regarding others.

5.3. Irreconcilable Conflicts

These are conflicts where the interests of an individual are irreconcilable with the interests of the organisation or others who could be impacted by the action or decision.

Decisions as to the categorisation of a potential or actual conflict will be that of public and regulatory perception, i.e. would a reasonable member of the public or regulatory bodies perceive a conflict to be general, prejudicial or irreconcilable?

6. Personal Interests

Throughout the monitoring and management of perceived and/or actual conflicts of interest, the principle of personal interest will be considered.

Personal interest can be financial or non-financial in nature and relate to the operations of external organisations, the Institute and awarding bodies. It could cover instances such as assessment, investigations, and decisions relating to appeals or complaints.

In considering whether a personal interest could be present within a situation, the Institute will ask whether an informed and reasonable person would conclude that such a reason or incentive would exist.

Staff members should register potential conflicts on the Institutes register of conflicts document. Interests may include external employment, positions held within other organisations and relationships with other Council members, staff, or connected individuals.

7. Responsibilities of the Institute

The Institute will protect against the potential for conflicts to be introduced within the delivery, assessment and quality assurance processes of the qualification it offers.

7.1. Transparency and Robust Processes

The Institute will publish, operate, and continuously review and update robust processes for preventing and discovering conflicts of interest.

7.2. Actions

The Institute will take all appropriate measures to prevent conflicts of interests occurring. To include but not limited to candidate and staff declarations. Decisions regarding conflicts of interest will be made by the Chair and/ or appropriate management within the Institute or by the awarding body.

7.3. Reporting and Recording

The Institute will notify awarding bodies promptly about any conflicts of interest where they exist and could reasonably be expected to have influenced the delivery, assessment, quality assurance and/or management of the qualification(s) being delivered. The Institute will record conflicts of interest for review by awarding bodies.

8. Declaring Conflicts of Interest

The Institute generally expects individuals within the scope of this policy to proactively consider whether matters relating to their circumstances could potentially amount to a conflict of interest and, if so, reach their own judgement about when it may be appropriate to declare that interest in accordance with the practical arrangements set out and in line with the Institutes policies.

A conflict of interest must be declared as soon as possible. This conflict can then be assessed and recorded and where applicable actions will be taken in order to uphold the reputation of the Institute and awarding bodies and the integrity of the qualifications being offered by the Institute.

Failure to report conflicts of interest may impact on the ability of the Institute to deliver courses/ qualifications and may affect candidate's certification.

If a member of staff or candidate is unsure as to whether their personal interests/ relationship constitutes a conflict of interest, they should seek further guidance from the Institute.

9. Management of Conflict of Interests

Where a matter has been determined to amount to a conflict of interest that requires managing, depending on the scope of the conflict, the options available to the Institute or awarding body include, but are not limited to:

- preventing or limiting the relevant person from:
 - Being responsible for decision-making, including as part of a collective decision-making process.
 - Being involved in recommendations or discussions relating to the candidate.
 - Having access to papers related to the subject of the conflict.
- Notification to regulators.
- Termination of contract.

Please refer to the specific awarding body's Conflict of Interests policy for further information:

Qualifications awarded by Firequal <https://www.firequal.com/qualifications>

10. Confidentiality

The Institute will always endeavor to keep information pertaining to a conflict of interest confidential, however where a conflict of interest is found, the Institute will need to disclose the identity of relevant parties to the awarding bodies or other relevant organisations.

Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for Change

Reviewers/contributors

Name	Position	Version Reviewed & Date