

## BVNA Conflict of Interest

### POLICY STATEMENT

A conflict of interest is where an individual or organisation has competing interests or loyalties. Conflicts of interest can arise in a variety of circumstances and it is likely that people working with or for BVNA may encounter potential conflicts of interest from time to time. The purpose of this policy is to:

- highlight and illustrate potential situations where conflicts of interest may arise
- identify the principles that BVNA will adopt in the management of conflicts of interest
- Determine what actions should be taken by individuals who encounter conflicts of interest
- Determine how we will manage identified conflicts of interest

### Introduction

The overriding aim of BVNA as a CPD provider, is to ensure fit for purpose learning outcomes and assessment with quality assurance, that meet the needs of learners and the awarding bodies requirements.

Key stakeholders are involved in a variety of activities and have a range of functions. BVNA recognises that these key stakeholders, and the individuals who work for them, will be keen to maintain the integrity of the training courses as well as their own integrity. The policy aims to reflect this.

More importantly, when a conflict or potential conflict is identified by anyone working to assess a learner then the Education Managers attention should be drawn to it. Individuals should always disclose an activity if they are in doubt about whether it represents a conflict of interest.

Some examples may include:

- where someone works for BVNA or carries out work on our behalf, but may have paid or unpaid personal interests in another business which uses our products or services or produces similar products
- where someone has a position of authority in one organisation which conflicts with their interests in another organisation
- where someone has personal interests that conflict with their professional position
- where someone works for or carries out work on behalf of the BVNA who has friends or relatives undertaking our training provision or assessments
- where there is a conflict between income and regulatory responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff at BVNA to ensure that they are familiar with this Conflict of Interest Policy and the requirement to disclose any activity that has the potential represent a conflict of interest.

**The ultimate responsibility of the management of potential and actual conflicts of interest lies with the Education Manager**

BVNA acknowledges that it is not always possible to pre-empt when a conflict of interest is likely to arise and this policy is not designed to cover every eventuality. Conflicts of interest can occur in a number of ways and from a variety of situations. For example, if, for any reason:

- One learner is favoured above another
- An assessor/ verifier works for multiple stakeholders and has difficulty being impartial
- A conflict arises between the learner, tutor, assessor, internal quality assurance or awarding body

### **Minimising and Preventing Conflicts**

BVNA sees one of its functions as facilitating the process of assessment and internal quality assurance by focusing on their responsibilities. In particular:

- providing and facilitating open dialogue with all stakeholders
- not creating unreasonable barriers to any learners wishing to undertake CPD with BVNA
- providing the learner with objective information on CPD provision
- providing key stakeholders with objective advice on the viability of training and CPD provision for the needs of the profession
- providing all learners and stakeholders with equal access to its services and information
- enabling open and frank dialogue with learners and stakeholders

Although this list is not exhaustive, it is felt that by adhering to the principles of neutrality, openness and fairness, conflicts can be avoided or managed without compromising the integrity of the BVNA, or any individual or organisation concerned.

### **Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of all persons involved in the assessment of training provision and internal quality assurance to:

- conduct their activities so that the aims of CPD/training provision assessment strategies are implemented
- ensure that they make their role clear and separate this from their other functions, as far as is possible
- monitor their activities, in order to maintain the integrity of assessments
- devote enough time to their specific responsibilities
- recognise and report any potential or existing conflict
- The possibility of a conflict or potential conflict may be declared by any key stakeholder as an entity, or any individual

### **Managing Conflicts**

In most cases, it is envisaged that simple measures will be enough to manage conflicts of interest. This may involve an individual having to prioritise the interests of BVNA and the awarding body or managing activities in a different manner to avoid potential conflict. Memorandum of agreements and contracts will also be utilised to define responsibilities by all stakeholders. Only in extreme circumstances where the conflict of interest may be so fundamental and unmanageable, will an individual be prevented from undertaking specific activities. The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it is fit for purpose.

## Conflict of Interest – Procedure

The procedure for reporting and managing potential or existing conflicts is as follows:

### 1. Declare Interest

Individual or key stakeholder to declare identified potential or actual conflict

### 2. Resolution of Conflict:

A discussion should take place within the education committee. The purpose of the discussion is to reach a decision about how the conflict will be managed. Normally, at least three people should be involved at this stage.

The circumstances of the disclosure will dictate who is involved in the discussion. Generally, the discussion will take place between the Education Manager, the Education Development Co-ordinator and a senior council representative on the education committee, unless they are involved, or close to the disclosure. In this case, an independent Director will make the decision about who should hold the discussion. It may, for example, be more appropriate for individuals working outside the committee to undertake this role. The individual raising the possibility of a conflict will also take part in the discussion, if this is appropriate.

### 3. Decision

Normally it will be sufficient to:

- gain an undertaking from the individual or key stakeholder to conduct their responsibilities so that the integrity of the centre is maintained, as well as their own integrity
- reorganise activities and/or key functions so that the conflict is mitigated

If neither of the above steps is possible, another solution must be agreed by the discussion group. The solution should be in proportion to the nature of the conflict; in extreme circumstances, activities may need to be monitored or even restricted. The decision about how the conflict is managed is final.

### 4. Log Conflict and Resolution

A declaration of interest form is provided for this purpose. An example is provided below.

### 5. Monitor and Review Decisions and Actions

The log should be reviewed from time to time to ensure that actions forming part of the resolution have been implemented.

# Declaration of Interest Form

Person raising conflict	Date	Nature of conflict	Discussion	Resolution
			Date:	
			Attendees:	
			Discussion Points	