Conflict Policy

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The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of the organisation's decision-making process, subcontract employees and fulltime employees to enable our stakeholders to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputation of Intech Centre. This document offers guidelines on Intech Centre's Policy and provides some practical assistance to its staff on how they should manage potential or actual conflicts of interest.

This policy applies to all members of Intech Centre including staff, associates, external consultants, and volunteers. A reference in this policy to staff includes any person within the scope of the policy.

All staff, associates and management members of Intech Centre will strive to avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of the organization and personal, professional and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding actual conflicts of interest as well as the perception of conflicts of interest.

If properly managed, activities can usually proceed as normal whilst at the same time upholding the person's obligations to Intech Centre meeting regulatory and other external requirements and protecting the integrity and reputation of the company. By contrast, conflicts which are not managed effectively may jeopardise Intech Centre's standing and may cause serious damage to the reputation of the company and of the individuals concerned.

All Company staff are required to recognise and disclose activities that might give rise to conflicts of interest or the perception of conflicts and to ensure that such conflicts are seen to be properly managed or avoided.

It is the responsibility of each individual to recognise situations in which he or she has a conflict of interest or might reasonably be seen by others to have a conflict, to disclose that conflict to the individual's line manager and through them to the Senior Manager and, to take such further steps as may be appropriate as set out in more detail below. If an individual is uncertain about how this policy might affect his or her activities or has any questions about its application, he or she should contact their line manager.

A conflict of interest arises where the commitments and obligations owed by an individual member of staff to Intech Centre or to other bodies, for example a funding body, are likely to be compromised, or may appear to be compromised, by:

- that person's personal gain, or gain to immediate family (or a person with whom the person has a close personal relationship), whether financial or otherwise; or
- the commitments and obligations that person owes to another person or body.

There can be situations in which the appearance of conflict of interest is present even when no conflict actually exists. It is important for all staff when evaluating a potential conflict of interest to consider how it might be perceived by others.

The duty to declare a possible conflict applies to the perception of the situation rather than the actual existence of a conflict. However, the duty is not infringed if the situation cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to give rise to a conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interest may be financial or non-financial or both. Further information about both types is set out below.

A **financial conflict of interest**, for the purposes of this policy, is one where there is or appears to be opportunity for personal financial gain, financial gain to close relatives or close friends, or where it might be reasonable for another party to take the view that financial benefits might affect that person's actions. Financial interest means anything of monetary value, for example:

- payments for goods or services
- equity interests (e.g., stocks, stock options or other ownership interests)
- resources and assets, including equipment, staff and facilities and/or
- Intellectual property rights (e.g., patents, copyrights and royalties from such rights).

The level of financial interest is not the determining factor as to whether a conflict should be disclosed. What might be 'not material' or 'not significant' for one person might be very significant for another. Good practice in many situations will mean the disclosure of 'any' financial interest, however small. A conflict will arise if the interest might provide, or be reasonably seen by others, to provide an incentive to the individual which affects their actions and where he or she has the opportunity to affect a Company decision or other activity (because for example he or she is the decision-maker or the principal investigator on a research project). For examples of conflicts involving financial interest see Appendix A.

Non-financial interests can also come into conflict, or be perceived to come into conflict, with a person's obligations or commitments to Intech Centre or to other bodies. Such non-financial interest may include any benefit or advantage, including, but not limited to, direct or indirect enhancement of an individual's career, education or gain to immediate family (or a person with whom the person has a close personal relationship). For examples of non-financial conflicts of interest see Appendix A.

It is the duty of every member of staff to accurately and promptly disclose:

- a change in status of an existing actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest and/or commitment.
- a new actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest and/or commitment.

The purpose of these Financial Regulations is to provide control over the totality of the Company resources and provide management with assurances that the resources are being properly applied for the achievement of the Company and the strategic plan and business objectives:

- financial viability
- achieving value for money, for learners and funders
- fulfilling its responsibility for the provision of effective financial controls over the use of public funds
- ensuring that the Company complies with all relevant legislation
- safeguarding the assets of the Company

Apparent or perceived conflicts of interest can be as damaging as actual conflicts of interest. Staff should consult their line manager if they are uncertain about whether a situation or activity presents a conflict of interest. The line manager shall evaluate the activity or situation and advise on the most appropriate course of action.

The general rule is that disclosure should be made at the time the conflict first arises, or it is recognised that a conflict might be perceived, in writing to the line manager. If the line manager has an interest in the matter to be discussed, the disclosure shall be made to the person at the next higher level of authority.

Disclosure in all cases shall include the type of potential conflict (conflict of interest or commitment), the nature of the activity, a description of all parties involved, the potential financial interests and rewards, possible violations of legal requirements, and any other information which the employee feels necessary to evaluate the disclosure.

Many situations will require nothing more than a declaration and a brief written record of that declaration, which must be held by the HR department. However, some instances will need to be dealt with by agreeing how the conflict can be actively managed to eliminate the conflict, safeguard against prejudice toward Company activities and provide continuing oversight. The approach adopted should be documented in a management plan and copies provided to the relevant parties. A copy of the final plan must also be held in the HR department. One or more of the following strategies may be appropriate to manage the conflict of interest:

- not taking part in discussions of certain matters
- not taking part in decisions in relation to certain matters
- referring to others certain matters for decision
- resolving not to act as a particular person's supervisor
- divesting or placing in trust certain financial interests
- publishing a notice of interest
- standing aside from any involvement in a particular project; and/or
- declaring an interest to a particular funder, awarding body or third party.

It is the responsibility of those affected to comply with the approach that has been agreed. There are however some particular instances where the general procedure is varied, and further specific steps are required such that approval is obtained.

External consultants to Intech Centre are also required to divulge any personal or family financial holdings or situations that could create a conflict of interest and/or introduce bias into their professional judgement. Such disclosures should be made and appropriate determination shall be made on the management of any conflict.

Failure to follow the procedure set out in this policy or failure to comply with any stipulated management plan for managing the disclosed conflict will be considered a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the individual.

This policy is meant to supplement good judgment and staff, managers, associates and sub-contractors should adhere to its principles wherever possible.

Data Protection

Information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the GDPR 2018 and Data Protection Act 1998. Data will be processed only to ensure that staffs act in the best interest of the company. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or following changes to Government updates and statutory guidance and company risk assessment policies and processes.

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APPENDIX 1

Examples of Conflict of Interest

This list is not meant to be exhaustive. The primary obligation rests with the individual to recognise situations in which he or she potentially has a conflict of interest and to disclose and discuss that conflict to their line manager.

Financial interests:

Staff of Intech Centre serving on other bodies, boards or committees will typically be asked by those parties to declare financial interests.

Learner supervision and teaching:

- Staff with a close personal or familial relationship with a learner or a learner's family who may be involved in decisions about that learner's enrolment, assessment, supervision or progress. For example, if the staff member attends a meeting of the Awarding Body, or EPA organisation, the interest should be declared.
- A member of staff who is in a position to judge or evaluate the quality of a learner's work holds a financial stake or a formal position in any learner-run, owned or controlled commercial venture whilst that learner is enrolled at Intech Centre.

Other examples of possible conflicts of interest:

- Any casual, associate or sub-contract employee who undertakes work for any other organisation, person or company, whose business activities are the same as Intech Centre.
- Participating in the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision or evaluation of a person with whom the staff member has a close personal relationship. All staff recruitment should be carried out in accordance with the Company's Recruitment Guidelines.
- A staff member takes part in the negotiation of a contract between Intech Centre and a company, where the staff member or his or her family or a close personal friend has a financial or non-financial interest (e.g. a directorship) in that company.
- Where there is a family or personal relationship between two members of staff, neither member of staff should be involved in any decision or process affecting the other, including promotion, remuneration, discipline or grievance.

Sale, supply or purchase of goods or services

- All purchases for the supply of goods or services should comply with Intech Centre's Procurement Rules, including the code of ethics. Where a conflict of interest could occur, those responsible for making the decision should take particular care in deciding which supplier or contractor to choose. So as to be able to show impartiality, individuals should take appropriate steps to ensure value for money.

This list is not exhaustive and any individual who thinks that they may have a conflict of interest, or is unsure what to declare, or whether/when their declaration needs to be updated, should approach on the side of caution and contact their line manager or Senior Manager for confidential guidance.

Appendix 2

CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM TEMPLATE

Name of Employee	
Position	
Pecuniary interests	**Details of Interest**
Current employment/s	
Businesses (of which I am a partner or sole proprietor)	
Company directorships – details of all companies of which I am a director	
Charity trusteeships – details of all companies of which I am a trustee	
Membership of professional bodies, membership organisations, public bodies or special interest groups of which I am a member and have a position of general control or management	
Gifts or hospitality offered to you by external bodies while acting in your position as a staff and whether this was declined or accepted in the last 12 months	
Contracts offered by you for the supply of goods and/or services to the company	
Any other conflict of interest	

Personal interests	Name	Relationship to me	Organisation	Nature of the interest
Immediate family/close connections to Learner/s /Staff/Partner Institution/ Awarding Body/Funder				
Company directorships or trusteeships of Partner Institution/ Awarding Body				

I Mr/Mrs/Ms/ (Please delete)…… declare that the information submitted above is accurate at the time of completion to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: **Date:**

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APPENDIX 3

REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Name of Staff	Role	Description of Interest	Relevant Dates	Has the Management been notified of the interest	Date of Disclosure	Steps taken by the Management in dealing with the conflict	Actions taken by the Staff to address the conflict