

Conflict of Interest Policy

Introduction

WSET School London has been approved by WSET Awards as an Approved Programme Provider (APP). As a regulated awarding organisation, WSET Awards is required to identify, monitor and manage actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest ('Conflicts of Interest'). This is essential to safeguard the integrity of WSET qualifications and promote confidence in WSET Awards processes.

This document offers guidance to individuals engaged in activities undertaken on behalf of WSET Awards (the awarding organisation of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust) which have potential to lead them to act contrary to the interests of WSET Awards in the development, delivery, assessment and award of its regulated qualifications.

It defines what is meant by conflict of interest, describes such conflicts of interest in the context of working with WSET Awards, identifies those conflicts of interest that can be managed and are therefore acceptable and those that cannot be managed and are therefore unacceptable. It also gives examples of potential conflicts of interest.

Scope of this Policy

This policy is applicable to all members of staff employed by the Wine & Spirit Education Trust and to any individuals acting on behalf of WSET Awards. This includes those involved in the development of WSET qualifications, question-setting, marking of assessments, delivery of WSET programmes of study leading to WSET qualifications, marketing of WSET qualifications, production of study materials, examination papers, qualification certificates and all other associated resources and services.

It relates to WSET regulated qualifications offered in the United Kingdom and our international markets.

Definition of Conflict of Interest

A Conflict of Interest exists where an individual has interests or loyalties that could adversely influence their judgement, objectivity or loyalty to WSET Awards when conducting activities associated with WSET qualifications.

Examples of Conflicts of Interest in the context of an awarding organisation include:

- The undertaking of any moderation of assessment of student by an individual who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment for any or all individuals concerned;
- The tutoring of students by an individual involved in the assessment process;
- The undertaking of a WSET qualification by any individual employed by an Approved Program Provider;
- The undertaking of a WSET qualification by any individual employed by WSET Awards;
- The invigilation of a WSET assessment by any individual involved in the delivery of training leading to the assessment;
- The coaching of students by any individual involved in the assessment of student scripts or the authoring of examination questions;

- The employment by an APP of individuals engaged in the delivery of taught programmes or in the role of Internal Assessor in another APP;
- The investigation of a non-compliance incident by someone who is unable to act impartially.

Some of these Conflicts of Interest can be managed and are therefore acceptable. For example, the marking of WSET Level 3 tasting assessments by Internal Assessors is verified by WSET Awards to mitigate the risk of a Conflict of Interest. Similarly, where an employee of the WSET or one of its APPs undertakes a WSET qualification, measures can be put in place to maintain the integrity of the assessment, provided this has been notified to WSET Awards in advance.

Some Conflicts of Interest cannot be managed and are not acceptable. For example, it would be inappropriate for an individual involved in the authoring of examination questions or the compilation of examination papers to teach or coach students.

Identification of Conflicts of Interest

Any individual involved in the delivery of WSET qualifications who becomes aware of a Conflict of Interest must inform the Head of Quality and Compliance (HOQC) in writing immediately. Conflict of Interest declarations will be recorded by WSET Awards on the Conflicts of Interest Register.

Please note that any APP who fails to declare a Conflict of Interest may be in breach of its terms of approval and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy. Where a Conflict of Interest is identified by WSET Awards rather than the individual(s) concerned, the HOQC will take steps to mitigate the effect of the Conflict of Interest and may apply sanctions to an APP in accordance with the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

Management of Conflicts of Interest

WSET Awards has procedures in place to manage specific Conflicts of Interest. These include the exclusive involvement of WSET Awards staff in the creation of all assessment materials, moderation of all internal assessments conducted by APPs and moderation of all written examinations not marked by optical mark readers. Other Conflicts of Interest will be managed on a case-by-case basis. The HOQC has responsibility for the management of Conflicts of Interest relating to the work of WSET Awards. The members of the WSET Senior Management Group have responsibility for the management of conflicts of interest relating to functions of the Wine and Spirit Education Trust's functions. The HOQC will consult with the Director to agree how to mitigate any Conflict of Interest. The Director will decide when and how Conflicts of Interest and the steps taken to mitigate them should be escalated within the Wine & Spirit Education Trust, to the Board of Trustees or to the Regulator.