

CIOB CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

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CIOB CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

1. Introduction - about this policy

This policy applies to all parties, including members and non-members, engaging in activities on behalf of the CIOB. All such parties are responsible for identifying, declaring and managing any conflict of interest that could lead to an adverse event affecting the CIOB.

It is inevitable that conflicts of interest occur and they have the potential to negatively affect the integrity of the person concerned and the CIOB. The management of conflicts of interest is therefore vital to maintain the standards and reputation of the CIOB and its members and officers. Failure to declare a conflict of interest could result in disciplinary action or relevant legal action.

2. What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest is any situation where a member's or party's personal interests, or interests which they owe to another body, and those of the CIOB clash or offer undue influence or financial gain to the member. Members who are acting in any decision making capacity for the Institute should not personally, or by means of family or colleagues, receive any personal, pecuniary or related business benefit from that activity nor should their actions in any way compromise the impartiality of decisions affecting the Institute.

The Institute currently operates a conflict of interest process in the areas of Professional Review, Fellowship, Chartered Environmentalist and Examinations, where members are asked to declare any potential for conflict; i.e. where they may know a candidate personally. In such cases the member concerned is not allowed to take part in a decision. Standards of ethical behaviour are widely accepted by members; for example, not promoting their family or business interests in their dealings with the Institute.

Examples of conflicts of interest may include:

- The undertaking of accreditation or assessment activities on behalf of the CIOB where the member, or a relation or colleague of the member, has a personal or commercial interest in the organisation seeking accreditation or assessment.
- The disclosure of confidential information arising from CIOB activities to the benefit of another party, or parties, or to the detriment of the CIOB.
- Conflict of loyalties, such as when a member has personal or commercial interests in the outcomes of an assessment.

The CIOB expects members to be able to identify conflicts of interest when they arise and to ensure that they are declared and avoidance action is taken. Failure to declare conflict of interest may result in disciplinary action.

3. Managing and monitoring conflicts of interest

All members need to be alert to possible conflicts of interest which they might have and to take steps to avoid adverse events arising from such a conflict of interest. A key aspect of avoiding the effects of conflicts of interest is to be open and transparent about such situations when they arise. We require that all members advise the CIOB Institute Secretary promptly of any actual or potential conflicts of interest of which they are aware.

Members or parties serving on CIOB boards or committees are required to make an annual written declaration of interests. This policy extends to any interest of members' relations or colleagues, which could compromise a member's ability to act impartially on behalf of the CIOB.

4. Avoiding adverse events arising from conflicts of interest:

Avoidance actions can include:

- The temporary removal of the member / party from a meeting when an item of conflict arises on the agenda.
- The temporary removal of the member / party concerned from the decision making process.
- The temporary removal of an assessor, member or party from an approval panel.
- Close monitoring of the conflict of interest to ensure no adverse events have taken place.
- Recording details of discussions and any actions to be taken in potentially sensitive situations.
- Disclosure of any emerging potential conflicts and updating the CIOB register of interests.

5. The register of interests

All parties working on behalf of the CIOB are required to register any potential conflict of interest by completing a CIOB declaration of interests form upon enrolment, and, thereafter, on an annual basis for the duration of participation in the CIOB activities. In the event of any changes to the status of the conflict, or any new arising conflict, it is the obligation of the member / party to inform the Institute Secretary. Where no such interests are identified, a nil return must be given. **If in doubt, either make a declaration or seek the advice of the Institute Secretary.**

The Institute Secretary maintains the register of the interests of Officers, Trustees, Senior Staff, and Members actively engaged in Committees / Regional Councils, Professional Review Assessors, Professional Review Management Panel members, Chartered Environmentalist Assessors and Panel members, Examiners and Training Providers, who prepare people for Professional Review. The register is updated annually and is not limited to those categories listed above.

In addition, the provision of the Bribery Act 2010 requires all parties working on behalf of the CIOB to make a full disclosure of the receipt of gifts and hospitality offered and received as a consequence of any work undertaken.

6. Mitigation of adverse events

In the event that a conflict of interest has occurred and has affected a decision or action, members or parties concerned with or aware of the conflict of interest must bring this to the attention of the Institute Secretary. In cases where it concerns a CIOB board or committee, the chair of that board or committee must also be informed unless the chair of the board or committee is party to the conflict of interest whereby the conflict should be brought to the attention of the Chief Operating Officer and Institute Secretary. A full written account of the conflict of interest must be provided including:

- The name and details of the person concerned.
- The nature of the conflict of interest.
- Any adverse events arising from the conflict of interest.
- The actions taken to mitigate the effects of the conflict of interest. The Chief Operating Officer and Institute Secretary will decide the actions needed to mitigate against adverse events.

7. Investigation of conflicts of interest

Any serious breach of this Policy by a member may result in a complaint being made to the Professional Conduct Committee. If the party concerned is not a member, further legal action will be investigated and conducted as appropriate.

8. Confidentiality

The CIOB takes the confidentiality of all information very seriously. Members and parties that are involved in discussions of boards, committees and other forums have a duty to maintain the confidentiality of those discussions and must not disclose any information that is acquired through their work for the CIOB. In some cases parties may be required to sign a separate confidentiality agreement in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

The term confidential information shall extend to all forms of representation, developments, research and functions, documentation and correspondence. This includes all information acquired by the member during the course of their tenure / engagement on the board or committee.