

3 May 2018

Dear Colleague

You will be aware of the focus this past year on teachers who set examination question papers, including Ofqual's review and consultation, as a result of the high profile malpractice cases. As an industry-wide working group set up to look at this issue, we wanted to write and share some best practice on how you as a school or college leader can support teachers to manage effectively the conflicts of interest that may arise in your centre.

Each year, thousands of teachers contribute to the drafting of exam questions. As well as being rewarding and contributing to their own and the whole school or college's CPD, these teachers are faced with a challenging situation in that they will have seen some part, and sometimes all, of the questions that are to be set. Managing the conflict of preparing their students for an exam on which they have privileged information requires careful thought and consideration.

Teachers who set question papers are required to undergo training with awarding bodies and complete conflict of interest and confidentiality declarations. As incidents in 2017 have shown, failure to act with integrity can lead to significant damage to a career.

Following last year's cases and Ofqual's subsequent review and consultation into this area, we have been working collaboratively to improve our systems and provide these highly valued teachers with the support and guidance they need. And we believe that you, as their employers, can also make an important contribution.

We have, therefore, developed two examples of good practice, which can be found annexed to this letter, to provide an opportunity to consider what some other schools and colleges are already doing and to take the time to review what systems and processes you have in place.

In the examples, schools/colleges have put in place a range of safeguards to support any member of staff who knows in advance the content of a public examination to be sat by any pupil. For example, teachers are advised by their schools/colleges that they should not:

- set any internal exam or revision material for that public examination
- save confidential public examination material on computers used for school/college activity
- bring paper-work relating to the public examination into the school/college
- adapt his or her teaching to fit the questions
- engage in "question spotting"
- divulge to pupils his or her role with the examination board

You can find out what further actions we have planned on the JCQ website (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/media-centre/news-releases>). This includes working collaboratively to explore the possibility of a standard format for conflict of interest documents and to develop industry level principles about confidentiality clauses in contracts.

We hope you find the information useful and interesting. If you have any questions, please contact us.

With best wishes on behalf of:

AoC, ASCL, Cambridge Assessment International Education, HMC, IBO, JCQ, NAHT