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**Conflict of Interest Policy**

**Trailblazer Apprenticeship**

**Scope and purpose of policy**

This conflict of interest policy relates specifically to RWPN’s proposed status as an End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO).

The purpose of the policy to provide procedures which RWPN will be held accountable and responsible for delivery of the End Point Assessment (EPA) in relation to apprenticeship standard ST0431 (Rehabilitation Worker (Visual Impairment)); this policy relates solely to this apprenticeship standard.

The policy acknowledges that the vision rehabilitation sector is not large because it is very specialist and that there is frequent dialogue between RWPN (as the sector professional body), any current or future on-programme delivery organisations, employers, the third sector and the identified External Quality Assessor lead-body organisation (Vision UK). This dialogue, in itself has led directly to the creation of the Standard. However, RWPN recognises its responsibility to be, and be seen to be, independent of other parties involved in any relationships connected with the Standard in matters relating to the EPA. The purpose of the policy is, therefore, to identify areas where conflict of interest may arise and identify measures that RWPN will take to address these.

1. **Identifying Conflicts of Interest for Individual Assessors**

We have identified that a conflict of interest is most likely to arise in the situations listed below. The requirements RWPN will make to address these are given alongside each.

1. The relationship between any committee member of RWPN and/or any EPA assessor and the delivery of the on-programme training element of the Standard
2. The location of any element of the delivery of the EPA and the location of the on-programme training element of the Standard
3. The relationship between any individuals developing and marking materials for the EPA and any organisation that those individuals may have a relationship with
4. The relationship, professional or personal, between an EPA assessor and any apprentice
5. The relationship between any EPA assessor and the employer organisation of any apprentice
6. The relationship between any member of the employer-led External Quality Assurance body and any EPA assessor

**The steps RWPN will take to address individual’s potential conflicts of interest**

**Declarations of Interest**

Any individual who is contracted to design course materials, assess and grade students or handle data in relation to students will be required to complete a declaration of interest as part of the contractual arrangement. This declaration will form the basis for any action that is taken to mitigate any conflict of interest. Any action that is identified will recorded in writing and available to the External Quality Assessment body. Any such declarations will be required for review and evaluation on an annual basis.

**Specific Measures**

1. **The relationship between any committee member of RWPN and/or any EPA assessor and the delivery of the on-programme training element of the Standard**

Any individual will not be eligible to be an EPA assessor if they are a member of staff at an on-programme board training provider or provide more than ten hours of lecturing to students/apprentices as a visiting lecturer. In delivering any of these lectures as a visiting lecturer, it would not be permissible to discuss with students any details relating to the delivery of the EPA (other than what is publicly available as bank question material) and this would be part of a contractual arrangement.

1. **The location of any aspect of the EPA and the location of the on-programme training element of the Standard**

If the location of either component of the EPA takes place in the premises of an on-programme training provider, all handling of materials, all invigilation, all distribution of materials for marking and any aspect of the administration will not be undertaken by any member of staff from the on-programme training provider.

1. **The relationship between any individuals developing and marking materials for the EPA and any organisation that those individuals may have a relationship with**

Any individual contracted to develop such materials will be required to sign a declaration of interest form. Until the intake of any cohort of students is known, any conflict of interest may not be apparent. In the event of a conflict of interest being identified by the assessor, the assessor will be required to demonstrate how they will ensure separation of their role as a developer of materials will not conflict with the needs of any organisation they are a relationship with. Because this professional field is small, there could be a chance relationships have been formed in the past. Having two people as assessors at all times should negate any bias. If a person does not adhere to the agreement, this will result in ending the role of the assessor)

1. **The relationship, professional or personal, between an EPA assessor and any apprentice**

As for 3 above. No assessor will be permitted to assess either component of the EPA of any individual with whom they have a declared conflict of interest. No assessor will be permitted to mentor any apprentice during the on-programme delivery of the apprenticeship. The assessor must declare if an apprentice is known and in what capacity.

1. **The relationship between any EPA assessor and the employer organisation of any apprentice**

As for 3 above.

1. **The relationship between any member of the employer-led External Quality Assurance (EQA) body and any EPA assessor**

Where an assessor is also an employee of a member of the EQA employer-led body, the assessor will be required to notify their employer so that the employer can, themselves, declare a potential conflict of interest in their EQA role. Where an employee of a member of the EQA body is also an apprentice there may be a conflict of interest that the EQA body needs to be aware of – however, notification of this would not be the responsibility of the EPA assessor organisation.

1. **Identifying Organisational Conflicts of Interest**

It is to be expected that RWPN, as a professional body, will have reason to have a working relationship with an on-programme training provider and have had involvement in aspects of the on-programme training. Such a relationship would also be expected to cover the delivery of joint enterprises such as conferences and through allowing apprentices to become student members of RWPN. RWPN will not disclose any information relating to the precise location or requirements of either the Orientation and Mobility component or the content of the case study questions of the assessment to any on-programme provider.

An employer may be responsible for paying either the membership fee of RWPN or any the cost of any future professional registration administered by RWPN. It is anticipated that contracting out the EPA function to independent assessors will create separation between RWPN and any such employer.

**Review of Policy**

This policy shall be subject to review on a 12-monthly basis. The purpose of any review is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the policy and to amend the policy in the light of any recommendations.

Date of Policy: April 2018

Next review date: April 2019

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**Conflict of Interest Declaration Form**

The Rehabilitation Workers Professional Network values the involvement of its members, its committee, and business, voluntary and statutory sector partners to support and enable the organisation’s work. Conflicts of interest are not uncommon when individuals undertake different roles with different responsibilities. Individuals covered by the Conflict of Interest policy are required to complete a declaration form.

A conflict of interest is identified where a personal interest (including those of their partner or close family) or professional interest could have the potential to influence or affect their ability to act in the best interests of RWPN. Interests may be financial or non-financial or commercial and may be specific or non-specific to the matter in question.

**Name of project or role**:

e.g. *Apprenticeship Standard End Point Assessor*

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| Type of interest | Description of interest |
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Signature

Name Date

Job title (if relevant) Employer