



# **End Point Assessment Service**

## **Conflict of Interest Policy**

Version 4

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# CONTENTS

1.	Overview of the policy .....	3
	Scope of the policy .....	3
	Purpose of the policy .....	3
	Who needs to know about the policy?.....	3
	Obtaining copies of the policy .....	3
	Reviewing the policy .....	3
	Complaint .....	3
2.	Introduction.....	4
3.	Types of Conflict of Interest .....	4
4.	Acknowledging a conflict of interest .....	5
5.	What should you do if you think someone is acting improperly?.....	5
6.	Managing Conflict .....	5
7.	Mandatory disclosure and confidentiality.....	6
	Mandatory disclosures .....	6
	Confidentiality .....	6
8.	Termination for Convenience .....	7
9.	Contact Details .....	7
	Appendix A: Declaration of Conflict of Interest Form .....	8

# 1. OVERVIEW OF THE POLICY

## Scope of the policy

This policy covers the delivery of End Point Assessments (EPA) by PIABC Limited, which are subject to internal and external quality assurance.

The policy is designed to:

- protect apprentices who are registered with us
- minimise the risk of an Adverse Effect occurring
- help support us and all other individuals involved in risk management and risk minimisation
- help ensure we and all individuals comply with all relevant legislation and guidance
- help improve and refine our products and services

For individuals, this policy supports the compliance with the Contract. It does not replace any of the requirements contained within that Contract. Non-adherence to our Apprenticeship Services EPA policies may constitute Maladministration, Malpractice, and/or a breach of the Contract. Please ensure all policies are read and implemented carefully.

## Purpose of the policy

PIABC Limited is committed to the highest standards of integrity, openness, and probity. We are committed to directly providing, and working with our individuals who provide, a transparent and honest working environment that is free from wrongdoing, malpractice, or corruption.

The purpose of this policy is to allow our apprentices, staff, individuals and other organisations to feel comfortable and secure in raising relevant disclosures, made in good faith and reasonable believed to be true, without fear of victimisation or other adverse repercussions. Relevant disclosures are likely to be those which may conflict with our commitments as outlined above.

## Who needs to know about the policy?

Apprentices and staff (including, site, sub-site, or contractual staff) who are involved in the design, delivery, management, assessment and quality assurance of PIABC Limited EPA aware of, and familiar with, the contents of the policy.

## Reviewing the policy

PIABC Limited will review this policy annually and may revise it as required in response to the findings of any review.

## Complaint

Individuals have the right to express their dissatisfaction regarding PIABC Limited actions, products, or services. PIABC Limited's *End Point Assessment Service – Complaints Policy* outlines when PIABC Limited will and will not accept a complaint, and when PIABC Limited decisions are final. Please see *End Point Assessment Service - Complaints Policy* for more information.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Due to the nature of PIABC Limited business there are many situations when a conflict of interest may arise. For the purpose of this policy a conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which an individual, or organisation, has competing interests or loyalties.

This policy applies to all individuals working for or on behalf of PIABC Limited, including all colleagues at all locations and at all levels, board members, external contractors, agency workers, individuals, any associates, any subsidiaries or their employees or any other person associated with us.

This policy is intended to set out the responsibilities on all individuals in managing conflicts of interest in line with their contract/agreement and in supporting PIABC Limited to meet the requirements of regulators.

All existing and reasonably foreseeable Conflicts of Interest will be identified by our organisation and monitored in line with our standard procedures and escalated to the Director of Operations & Professional Development where appropriate. These Conflicts of Interest will be monitored closely, particularly during periods of change, to mitigate the possible impact of any potential adverse effect.

## 3. TYPES OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflicts of interest can arise in a variety of circumstances in relation to PIABC Limited business activity, for example:

- when any Independent End Point Assessor (IEPA), partner and/or invigilator we appoint does not disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest
- when an individual has a position of authority in PIABC Limited which conflicts with his or her interests in another organisation
- when an individual has a position of authority in PIABC Limited, which conflicts with his or her interests in The Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IOM3)
- when an individual has personal interests or relationships that conflict with his/her professional position
- where an individual works for or carries out work on PIABC Limited behalf, but who may have personal interests – paid or unpaid – in another business which either uses PIABC Limited products or services, or produces similar products to PIABC Limited
- where an individual works for or carries out work on PIABC Limited behalf, who has friends or relatives taking PIABC Limited assessments, including examinations
- when one part of PIABC Limited creates and follows a procedure that conflicts with its regulatory responsibilities as an End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO)
- where an individual takes on additional paid work (on either an employed or self-employed basis) or voluntary work outside PIABC Limited which conflicts with the work of the IOM3

Conflicts of interest can also arise where:

- an individual may be employed in one organisation involved in EPA and has links with and/or is employed in the same organisation as the apprentice or an organisation undertaking the on-programme delivery.
- an individual involved in EPA has a prior link with the apprentice, their employer or an organisation involved in the on-programme delivery for the standard they are assessing against. For example, they may have friends or relatives involved in delivery.
- an individual involved in EPA may be working for an organisation that is in direct competition with the organisation involved in on-programme delivery.
- at both organisational and individual level, the official role of the individual/organisation undertaking the EPA has any other interests that may compromise their assessment decisions.

## 4. ACKNOWLEDGING A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If a conflict of interest arises or individuals anticipate that it might arise, they need to let the EPA team know using the *Declaration of Conflict of Interest Form* (Appendix A). PIABC Limited will work with individuals to take steps to minimise any risks and resolve the issue or escalate it to the Director of Operations & Professional Development if this is not possible. If you are an individual any declarations of Conflicts of Interest should be logged by email using the template provided in Appendix A, to the EPA team under Conflict of Interest, individuals can add as many conflicts as they need to. This information will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by PIABC Limited who will work with individuals to address any areas of concern. If there is any doubt whether an activity represents a conflict of interest - report it! Where further action is needed because of a declaration, this is documented and managed accordingly, this may include removing the individual from any involvement in EPA or referring their assessment decisions to another assessor with no vested interest.

All individuals must immediately communicate any issue s/he feels are urgent to an appropriate manager, director, or board member as detailed in the *End Point Assessment Service - Whistleblowing Policy*, which may be done in confidence. It should be noted that individuals are protected under the *End Point Assessment Service – Whistleblowing Policy*. PIABC Limited will also monitor any conflicts of interest and may on occasion take steps to minimise any conflicts due to the level of the risk or the frequency that the risk occurs.

## 5. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK SOMEONE IS ACTING IMPROPERLY?

If individuals become aware of something, they don't feel comfortable with, or they feel someone may be acting in an improper way, please refer to the *End Point Assessment Service – Whistleblowing Policy*.

## 6. MANAGING CONFLICT

Any conflict of interest should be declared and recorded at least annually and that these should be reviewed, maintained, and evaluated.

PIABC Limited will request (Lead) Independent End Point Assessor ((L)IEPA) annually complete a *Declaration of Conflict of Interest Form*. These will be constantly reviewed, maintained, and evaluated and PIABC Limited will require (L)IEPA complete additional *Declaration of Conflict of Interest Form* to confirm that there is no conflict of interest before each EPA is undertaken.

Where further action is needed because of a result of a declaration, this is documented and managed accordingly, this may include removing the individual from any involvement in EPA or referring their assessment decisions to another IEPA with no vested interest.

PIABC Limited will make every effort to manage and mitigate any potential or real conflict of interest in the delivery of the end-point assessment service. This may mean, for instance, removing individuals from any involvement in the assessment process where there is a risk of conflict. The independence of our decision on the competency of the apprentice is paramount. Any actual or perceived conflict of interest can undermine both the outcome of the end-point assessment and our credibility as a trusted assessor of apprentices.

All EPA assessments will be delivered in such a way that no organisation or individual who has been involved in the management or training of the apprentice can conduct an assessment method without the independent assessor being present, or make the sole decision on competence and passing the EPA. This means that an end-point assessor or invigilator should not be employed by the same organisation as the apprentice, nor involved in, nor responsible for any on-programme delivery, line-management, or on-programme assessment of the same apprentices.

As an organisation required to develop question banks and administer and mark those tests, we have in place clear arrangements to ensure the development, administration and marking of the tests is not subject to conflict of interest and that there is clear separation across these activities.

As of the date of this policy, PIABC Limited does not provide apprenticeship training, or intend to provide apprenticeship training, for any of the apprenticeship standards for which we have applied to be an EPAO. This is a significant mitigation factor in terms of potential conflict of interest.

## **7. MANDATORY DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **Mandatory disclosures**

It is imperative that the integrity of PIABC Limited assessments is maintained. PIABC Limited are aware that partner organisations often work with more than one EPAO in, and that therefore more than one EPAO may be at risk when things go wrong.

PIABC Limited regulators have outlined some specific conditions that must meet to protect the integrity across the sector. This includes the requirement that where certain things are identified (such as malpractice), or certain actions taken (such as when sanctions are applied), the Regulators and other relevant EPAOs who may be affected must be informed.

Depending on the seriousness of the matter, PIABC Limited may be required to declare to our regulators that PIABC Limited are no longer compliant due to an act or omission by individuals which has put us in breach. In this event, PIABC Limited may have regulatory action directed against us, such as Monetary Penalties. In accordance with the Contract relating to EPA, PIABC Limited reserve the right to direct such financial penalties against individuals, should they be because of the act or omission.

### **Confidentiality**

PIABC Limited may need to access confidential information. We will ensure that such information is kept secure and only used for the purposes of the investigation and in line with relevant data protection legislation. PIABC Limited will not normally disclose the information to third parties unless required to do so (e.g. to our regulators and/or the Police or other relevant and/or Statutory Bodies).

## 8. TERMINATION FOR CONVENIENCE

Our actions under this policy will be proportionate. Where possible, we will always try to work with our individuals in resolving issues. However, nothing within this policy precludes us from invoking our right under our agreement to terminate our relationship with our individuals.

## 9. CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact the EPA team at:

Email: [piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org)

Telephone: +44 (0)1476 513884

Post:  
PIABC Limited  
The Boilerhouse  
Caunt Road  
Grantham  
NG31 7FZ

Website: [www.piabc.org.uk](http://www.piabc.org.uk)

## APPENDIX A

### DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Position:</b>	
<b>Organisation (if applicable):</b>	

<b>Conflict of Interest or potential conflict of interest</b>
<i>Describe the conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest that have the potential to impact on your ability to carry out, or be seen to carry out, your allocated role or your organisation's role with regards to the PIABC Limited's End Point Assessment Service – Conflict of Interest Policy.</i>

<b>Describe the expected roles/duties you are required to perform.</b>

<b>Declaration:</b> I declare that the above details of my private interests (or my organisation's interests) are correct to the best of my knowledge and am aware of my responsibilities to take reasonable steps to avoid any real or apparent conflict of interest in connection with my employment (or that of my organisation) and to advise PIABC Limited of any relevant changes in my (or our) personal (or professional) circumstances.	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

## Action by PIABC Limited

<b>Describe the action proposed to mitigate the real or perceived conflict which has been disclosed and the reasons for the decisions</b>

<b>The above action has been discussed and is appropriate to resolve the real or apparent conflict of interest disclosed above.</b>	
Signature of PIABC Limited Representative:	
Date:	

***When finalised this form is to be forwarded by email with subject header "Assessment-in-Confidence" to [piabc@iom3.org](mailto:piabc@iom3.org). You are advised to retain a copy.***