Access, Fair Assessment and Conflict of Interest Policy

Ginger Nut Training (GNT) aims to provide fair access to assessment for all learners on qualification-based programmes. Assessment practice will be open and consistent within the codes of practice and regulations laid down by the relevant awarding and validation bodies.

Induction and support sessions will take place at GNT/learners place of work, which is fully accessible to learners with mobility problems. In addition, we have a Learner Support Facilitator whose responsibility is to ensure that learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully supported to achieve their learning goals.

All assessments are conducted rigorously and accurately and, where appropriate, in accordance with the awarding organisation's published criteria and standards.

Assessment evidence will be judged according to the principles of:

- Sufficiency – consistent performance to the required level over a period of time
- Currency – evidence should prove that the student is competent now
- Validity – evidence should be appropriate and relevant to the syllabus/standards it is addressing
- Authenticity – evidence must reflect the knowledge/skills/understanding of the learner. The work of another person must not be submitted as that of the learner. Other sources can be used in certain circumstances as long as the learner references these and will be assessed against the pass criteria in each unit and the merit and distinction criteria as identified in the specification.

The chosen format and method of assessment is appropriate to the qualification and any conditions specified by Awarding Organisations. Assessment materials are presented in clear and unambiguous language and must differentiate only on the basis of a learner’s knowledge, skills and understanding. Such materials must be free from any overt or covert discrimination against an individual, either in wording or content.

GNT will appoint assessment staff whose knowledge; skills and understanding are appropriate for the programme(s) they access. Staff will maintain their competence by regular staff development organised internally or externally.
Initial Assessment

As part of the induction process all new learners will undertake an initial assessment of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. This will be used to assess Basic Skill levels and to inform decisions about any additional learning support offered to learners in the early stages of their course.

They must be ready to access study (recruit with integrity + appropriately) + have adequate evidence of underpinning knowledge or achievement.

Internal Assessment

Assessment will be internally quality assured or moderated according to GNT’s Internal Quality Assurance/Modification Procedure. Written and oral feedback must be given to learners as soon as possible after assessment. In the case of written or other product work submitted the feedback must be given within 2 working weeks of the official submission date. Feedback should be as helpful as possible to the learner, i.e. confirming what has gone well and giving clear guidance on what the learner needs to do in order to improve on their performance.

Both formative and summative assessments will be recorded, tracked and given according to the planned assessment schedule.

External Assessment

External assessment will be administered strictly in accordance with instructions issued by the relevant awarding organisations. (Pearsons/EDI).

Arrangements for learners with Special Assessment Requirements

The assessment process will take into account the individual needs of learners with disabilities and learning difficulties and reasonable adjustments can be made as described above, where learners supply evidence of their disability. This means that they will need appropriate support in their development to help them meet the required standards such as:

- Help with communication and number skills;
- Adapted equipment and physical environment;
- Special information technology;
- Support time for exams (up to 25% extra)
- Confidence building.
Assessment practice will be monitored through assessor induction, IQA of assessment decisions, observation of Assessor/Tutor delivery and regular standardisation meetings attended by the Centre Co-ordinator, Lead Internal Quality Assurer, Internal Quality Assurance and Assessors. The internal quality strategy and appeals procedures will also help ensure assessment is fair and consistent.

Conflicts of Interest

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to relevant individuals on handling possible conflicts of interest that may arise as a result of their role within GNT, Assessor and IQA of accredited units and qualifications. This policy applies to all staff and other individuals whenever they interact or potentially interact with any of GNT functions.

This policy:

- Defines the meaning of conflict of interest
- Sets out roles and responsibilities for managing conflict of interest, and
- Illustrations of potential conflict of interest situations.

Scope

It is the policy of GNT that Tutors, Assessors and IQA’s acting on behalf of GNT (including those with whom GNT have a Partnership Arrangement) must be free from conflicts of interest that could adversely affect their judgement or objectivity to the organisation in conducting business activities and assignments. GNT recognises that tutors and assessors may take part in legitimate financial, business, charitable and other activities outside of the GNT centre and GNT recognised provider roles, but any potential conflict of interest raised by those activities must be acknowledged, disclosed, and in relevant cases properly managed. It is the responsibility of each individual to recognise situations in which they have a conflict of interest, or might reasonably be seen by others to have a conflict; to disclose this conflict and to take such further steps as may be appropriate and set out in more detail under the procedure below.
**Definition of conflict of interest**

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual, or organisation, has competing interests or loyalties. Conflicts of interest can arise in a variety of circumstances in relation to awarding organisation activity, for example:

- Where the training delivery function and the awarding function rest within one organisation and the functions are not strictly defined
- When an individual has a position of authority in one organisation which conflicts with his or her interests in another organisation
- When an individual has personal interests that conflict with his/her professional position
- Where someone works for or carries out work on GNT’s behalf, who has friends or relatives taking GNT assessments
- A conflict of interest may generally be defined as a conflict between the official responsibilities of a tutor, assessor, and IQA and any other interests the particular individual may have and as such could compromise or appear to compromise their decisions with learners
- A person who is connected to the development, delivery or award of qualifications by GNT has interests in any other activity which have the potential to lead that person to act contrary to his or her interests in that development, delivery or award in accordance with the awarding organisations conditions of recognition
- An informed and reasonable observer would conclude that either of the above situations was the case

**Examples of conflicts of interests**

It is not possible to provide a definitive list of examples of conflicts of interests, but the following are examples of situations that could lead to actual or perceived conflicts of interest:

- Tutors, assessors and IQA’s working with a business outside of the approved GNT centre or GNT recognised provider that is in direct competition with them
- Tutors, assessors and IQA's participating in the appointment, supervision evaluation or assessment of a person with whom the person, has close or familial ties
- Tutors, assessors and IQA’s having a close or familial relationship with GNT registered learner(s), or learners' family whilst being involved in decisions about the outcome of their accreditation or qualification
• Or where the person whose remuneration is in part determined by the outcome of the assessment

• Tutors, assessors and IQA’s using non public GNT information or GNT learner data for personal gain or advantage

The existence of such interests as those outlined above, does not necessarily imply conflict, but is likely to give an appearance of conflict and as such should be declared.

Roles and responsibilities

All relevant staff undertaking assessment (‘assessors’), IQA (‘Internal Quality Assurer’) and other individuals have a responsibility to be aware of the potential for a conflict of interest. It is likely that individuals working closely with GNT’s function will encounter potential conflicts of interest from time to time. Such situations must be carefully managed to ensure that any conflict of interest does not detrimentally impact on the standards of, or public confidence in, regulated units and qualifications and in GNT or any awarding organisations’ reputation. A declaration of interest by an assessor or IQA is a declaration of a personal interest in the result of the assessment.

It is the duty of all tutors and assessors to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest, and the process for doing this is documented below:

Any conflict of interest should be disclosed and recorded on a conflict of interest document, which is maintained by a designated person at GNT. If the individual concerned has any changes to their declared circumstances, they must inform their line manager immediately in writing, so that the conflict of interest can be evaluated, and the register updated. The information submitted is then evaluated to identify if any further action is required and a written record of the outcome of the evaluation is kept.
Action

Most situations require no further action than the completion of the conflict of interest form. In some instances, however, the information declared on the form will require some follow up action, in order for the conflict of interest to be managed appropriately. The approach agreed between the Co-ordinator/Manager/Centre Manager and the tutor/assessor/learner will be documented and held with the conflict of interest forms.

Examples of actions that could be taken:

- Individual not taking part in discussions or decisions of certain matters
- Referring certain matters such as assessment, verification and recommendations for credit for decision to others with no vested interest
- Agreeing not to be involved in a particular project
- Declaring an interest when it is appropriate to do so
- Referring the matter to GNT for advice and guidance.

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