



CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Purpose

Conflicts of interest can arise in various and innocuous ways, and do not present a threat as long as such conflicts are declared honestly and addressed proactively. Undeclared conflicts of interest risk compromising the impartiality and accountability of Lincoln Education Australia (LEA) operations, in serious cases leading to severe disruptions of LEA's ability to deliver high quality education. Consequently, it is important that practical and comprehensive guidelines be established to address the occurrence of conflicts of interest.

This *Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures* identifies possible instances of conflict of interest within LEA and establishes the framework for resolution of such conflicts of interest.

POLICY

Scope

This policy applies to all staff members at LEA.

Principles

Conflicts of interest are never entirely unavoidable and often a natural feature of organisational business. The mere presence of a conflict of interest is not necessarily deleterious.

However, all conflicts of interest must be declared openly by the party who has such a conflict, and the party to remove themselves from any decision-making that would be compromised by the conflict of interest.

All cases of conflict of interest shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and fairness.

Conflicts of interest must be resolved in order to promote and protect the impartiality and accountability of decision-making and transparency and integrity of processes at LEA.

PROCEDURES

Types of Conflicts of Interest

If unsure about whether a situation constitutes a conflict of interest, the person involved should consult with a senior staff member at LEA. This is usually their immediate supervisor or the Chair of the group the staff member contributes to.

In general, a conflict of interest is when a staff member is in a position to advance the objectives of multiple parties that are incompatible with each other. Conflicts of interest at



LEA may involve the following:

- A staff member handling the admission, course assessment, or granting or financial support to a student with whom they have a personal or private relationship.
- A staff member handling the hiring, promotion, or performance review of another staff member with whom they have a personal or private relationship.
- Showing favouritism among students or colleagues.
- A staff member holding religious or political beliefs that affect the manner in which they carry out their duties.
- A staff member taking on external work or being involved in external partnerships that affect their duties.
- A staff member holding a role with one of LEA's competitors that compromises LEA's ability to achieve its objectives.
- A staff member handling or providing advice on financial transactions that could benefit them personally.

Reporting Conflicts of Interest

Staff are expected to disclose all conflicts of interest, perceived, potential and actual, to their respective manager as soon as possible.

Students and academic staff should report conflicts of interest to the COO. Board or committee members should report conflicts of interest in the manner outlined in their respective Terms of Reference.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

There will be an annual register of Conflicts of Interest for the Corporate Governance Board and Academic Board. At the beginning of each meeting, the chairs of each Board will call for members to announce conflicts of interest. Where a conflict of interest is present among a decision-making body (such as a Board or committee) that conflict of interest should be recognised at the commencement of the meeting and recorded in that meeting's minutes.

On receiving and recording a report of a conflict of interest, LEA will take steps to reduce the risk of the conflict of interest affecting LEA's operations. These steps may include:

- Inviting the staff member to remove themselves from relevant decision-making processes.
- Involving an impartial party to replace the staff member in affected duties.
- Provide the staff member with support to ensure the conflict of interest does not unduly affect their duties.



Breach of Policy

Where it becomes apparent that a conflict of interest has not been disclosed as per the *Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures*, especially in the event that this leads to a disruption to LEA's operations, LEA may:

- Require the person involved to undergo additional training to prevent further offences
- Issue an official written warning without probation period.
- Issue an official warning with a probation period, during which time any further offence will result in suspension or termination of employment.
- Issue an official warning and suspension of employment.
- Terminate the employment contract of the person involved.

The extent of disciplinary action will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate Board or Committee based on the level of malicious intent and the affect on LEA's operations.

Compliance

All staff members at LEA are required to comply with this policy and its procedures, and with related policies and respective procedures. Non-compliance may result in a disciplinary action or withdrawal from these activities.

File Number	LEA-GEN-COR-70016-D
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Contact Officer	Chief Operating Officer
Legislative Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015</i>• <i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</i>
Supporting Documents	
Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Governance Policy Framework</i>
Superseded Documents	
Effective Date	1 January 2022
Next Review	3 years from the effective date

Definitions

Conflict of Interest: Any situation in which there is a perceived, potential or actual conflict between an employee's personal interests and those of LEA, such that a reasonable person may believe or it is likely or obvious that the individual's potential personal gain may compromise their ability to fulfil their professional position.

Corporate Governance Board: Governing body responsible for oversight of all higher education operations, including the ongoing viability of LEA and the quality of its higher education delivery. The Corporate Governance Board guides the Management and delegates responsibility for academic matters to the Academic Board.



Review Schedule

This policy shall be reviewed by the Corporate Governance Board every three years.

Version History			
Version number:	Approved by:	Approval Date:	Revision Notes:
1.0	Corporate Governance Board	17/12/2020	New policy