

Association for Science Education: Statement on Conflict of Interest

Background

The Association for Science Education (ASE) has been, since its inception 50 years ago, a membership organisation. It is a registered charity (Charity no. 313123/SC042473) and membership body with Chartered status. It exists to promote science education in its broadest sense. The Association works to ensure the provision of a quality science education for all learners across the United Kingdom, and to support schools and colleges to enable learners to experience a rich and rewarding science experience. While its members will always be its core, the Association also takes on development and research projects, in some cases in partnership with other science/education bodies. The Association is committed to a professional approach both from all personnel and in all dealings with its members and partners.

Conflicts of Interest

ASE, as a charity, is bound by charity law and is required to identify and manage all conflicts of interest that might detrimentally impact on its integrity and public standing. To maintain and enhance the reputation of the ASE as an independent, charitable professional organisation, the Trustee Body of the Association, supported by the Quality and Audit (Q and A) Committee of the membership, wishes to ensure that all its activities are free from any form of improper commercial or personal interest that could bring advantage or disadvantage to its members, employees or contracted associates.

This statement is designed to provide further clarification in terms of potential and actual conflicts of interest. It should be read in conjunction with:

- contracts of employment in the case of employees;
- terms of reference in the case of members of the Trustee Body and the ASE Committees;
- agreed contracts of employment in the case of contracted staff
- Reference documents listed in the appendix

The Association defines 'conflict of interest' where:

- the Association's interests in any activity, undertaken by it or on its behalf, have the potential to lead it to act contrary to the interests of its members or aims;
- a person who is connected to the development and/or implementation of an Association activity has interests which have the potential to lead that person to act contrary to the Association's interests and thereby gain advantage as a result;
- an informed and reasonable observer would conclude that either of these situations was the case.

Management and control of actual or potential conflicts of interest

The Association, through the Trustee Body, Q and A Committee and Chief Executive, will identify and monitor all conflicts of interest and any scenario in which such conflict of interest may reasonably arise in the future.

The Association will ensure that all employees, members and contracted staff are aware of this statement and have an understanding of their obligations.

Employees

There is a contractual obligation on employees to disclose possible conflict(s) of interest deemed relevant during the course of their work. Where an employee suspects that a conflict of interest exists or could occur they will be encouraged to discuss this with their line manager/Chief Executive.

Trustees

Trustees must register any business or personal interests that could be deemed relevant to their role as a Trustee. The Declaration of Interest form must be completed online annually at the start of each financial year (ie September).

The register of interests will form a standing item on the Trustee agenda and any changes declared at the start of the meeting .

There is an obligation on Trustees to disclose at the start of each Trustee Body meeting when an agenda item could potentially lead to a conflict of interest.

Trustees are not entitled to any payment by the Association for fulfilling their duties as a trustee.

A Trustee can provide services to the Association (such as a lecture, research project or design work) and be paid for such services providing that there is a written contract to provide such services. The Trustee providing the service should withdraw from any discussions on the issue.

ASE Employees may also apply to become Trustees of the Association. Where this is the case, this conflict of interest should be clearly disclosed at the beginning of each Trustee meeting and the employee Trustee should withdraw from discussions where relevant.

Mitigation

Where a conflict of interest, potential or real, is identified, ASE will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it is either eliminated or mitigated in order to avoid the potential for it to have any adverse effect.

Where a conflict of interest has occurred and there has been an adverse effect on the Association, all reasonable steps to mitigate the adverse effect will be taken.

Useful Links

CC3 [The essential trustee/ What you need to know and what you need to do.](#)

CC11 [Trustee expenses and payments](#)

CC29 [Conflicts of interest/ a guide for charity trustees.](#)

[Charities Act 2011, Section 185 Remuneration of charity trustees etc. providing services to charity.](#)

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