

# Authoring conflict of interest policy

Version 3.3

This document is for use by proof readers, publishers, authors, reviewers and AQA members of staff.

The following associates are affected by the Authoring COI policy: all senior examiners and moderators who have attended ITEC meetings or have had advance sight of future question papers in full (eg but not limited to, chair of examiners, chief examiner, lead examiner, lead assessment writer, item writer, item assessor, reviser, scrutineer and for some subjects, principal moderator).

When reviewing any book, resource or marketing material (print or digital) for conflict of interest, please ensure that the book or material **does include**:

- the AQA approval box placed on the bibliographic page only
- the phrase 'approved by AQA' on the title's back cover.

When reviewing any book, resource or marketing material (print or digital) for conflict of interest, please ensure that the book or material **does not include any**:

- references to a 'partnership with AQA' or 'working with AQA'. If a book has entered an AQA approval process though, reference to the book having 'entered an AQA approval process' must be used on marketing material at pre-approval stage
- references to the book providing 'complete coverage of the specification'/'all you need' (or similar)
- reference to the resource being needed to successfully complete an assessment or qualification
- over-emphasis on examination preparation at the expense of the course content. The main focus of the book **must** be on good teaching and students gaining knowledge and skills. Examination preparation must build on this approach – preferably at the end of the book. Any book which does not adopt this approach

and is too heavily exam-focused will not be able to successfully complete the approval process

- references to the books being 'written by senior examiners' or 'by the people who will be marking your exam' (or similar). The phrase 'with examining experience' is acceptable though
- references to 'the examiner is looking for', 'examiner insights', 'examiner commentary', 'examiner tips' or similar inferences. The inclusion of examiner reports is also not permissible
- references to 'AQA tips', advice from AQA, AQA comments or what AQA is looking for
- icons and devices such as 'on your marks', 'grade-boosting tips', 'bump up your grade' boxes or 'moving up the grades' icons. NB reference to these must also be kept to a minimum on external resources that are not part of the AQA approval process (eg on marketing material)
- references to tips or 'top tips' on how to achieve a particular level or grade; how to get 'a high/good grade' or how to 'gain all the marks/full marks' etc
- revision tips for a particular specification, though general revision tips are acceptable. Revision topics can be suggested, but these must be flagged as a sample and students must be encouraged to devise their own revision lists/tables
- references to content in the book being appropriate for a particular level or grade
- references as to what students should/should not study and what may come up in any examination
- references to authors' own material in the textbooks (ie for promotional purposes). Only comprehensive, balanced reading lists should be included
- underlying theme or narrative characters which run throughout the book.

Questions **can** be used if they are previous AQA exam questions or if they are exam-style questions – though the latter must be headed ‘Practice questions’. They must **not be used** if any of the authors is a senior examiner for the specification in question at point of writing. See also our separate *Senior examiners as authors restrictions*.

All AQA publications are subject to copyright and may not be reproduced without prior written consent. AQA requires a minimum of four working weeks to process applications and takes seriously the publication of any AQA material without permission. It is strongly recommended that publishers do not send requests for copyright permission to AQA during the exam season (ie June to late August). AQA does not grant permission for the reproduction of complete exam papers. Applications will only be considered for permission to reproduce up to 50% of the paper. Please contact [copyright@aqa.org.uk](mailto:copyright@aqa.org.uk) for a copy of our full Policy on the use of AQA material so you are aware of these restrictions from the start of your publishing process.

Where practice questions are used you may be asked to include the following wording: ‘Please note that the Practice Questions in this book allow students a genuine attempt at practising exam skills, but they are not intended to replicate examination papers’.

Questions from AQA sample assessment materials (SAMs) may be used on occasion, though this must be confirmed by the relevant AQA subject team in each case. Marks awarded for each question may be shown, but not for any answers.

Questions should be in a range of formats, ie not exclusively in the form they may be in the exam.

Practice questions cannot reflect live exam content.

If you use marks on your example questions, you may be asked by AQA to include the following text: ‘Marks stated on the example questions are to be used as a guideline only, AQA have not reviewed and approved the marks’. Please note that this particularly applies to Maths.

If answers are provided to questions then this must be skills-based support rather than responses which are too instructive or definitive.

In the case of student exemplar material:

- student answers must be written by students and not by authors and must have copyright clearance. They should include examples by students of different ability levels and not provide a model response
- comments following student answers must not be flagged as ‘examiner comments’ (or anything that implies that this is the examiner’s response)
- marks or grades (eg 8/10) cannot be included in the commentary, nor phrases such as ‘this would achieve a high grade’
- instead of comments, we prefer skills-based approaches. For example, students using the book could discuss and compare the student exemplar material.

In the case of sample answers (by the authors):

- sample answers must not provide a definitive or a model response, but should focus on developing skills as to how to answer different types of questions. For example, a sample answer can show how an argument could be developed throughout an essay
- instructions must not be too directive, eg how long to spend on a question or how many paragraphs to write. Also phrases such as ‘to answer this question successfully... you need to do xyz’ or ‘doing xyz would have gained more marks’ are prohibited. This is however permitted if specific guidance is included in the draft specification, eg word count
- practice questions cannot reflect live exam content
- please also refer to our separate *Senior examiners as authors restrictions*. Senior examiners for the specification in question may not author books which include exemplar answers by authors or students.

Mark schemes can be used, but not:

- if the author is a current senior examiner for the specification in question
- if they are live mark schemes
- if they are an abridged version in the author’s own words.

Where mark schemes are used, publishers must also include the following text nearby: For the latest mark schemes, please also refer to the AQA website.

Assessment objectives (AOs) can be referred to briefly but there must not be an extensive use of AOs with skills or questions matched to them. Ideally they should be listed clearly in a separate box with reference to the specification.

Please also note that our approval processes also require that all 'AQA approved' books match the specification for which they were written.

Content may extend beyond the specification to enhance students' general knowledge. This must clearly be flagged and/or boxed as 'Stretch and challenge', 'Beyond the specification' (or similar).

In the case of English, Drama and MFL, please also see our policy for the use of set text extracts in AQA approved English, Drama and MFL textbooks.

In the case of study tips (or similar), general tips are permitted, but they must not make statements on what will be covered in an exam or give directive advice on what to say in an answer. They should advise rather than dictate, using phrases such as 'it is important to', 'you should aim to', 'you could' 'one approach might be' etc rather than 'you need to'.