PLAINWARD

INDEPENDENT DEMONSTRATION

ASSESSMENT

Conflicts of interest knowledge check

Select the best answer for each question. Suggested pass mark: 8 out of 10.

Instructions

Complete the questions without referring to the answer key. Agency policy always takes priority where it sets a specific disclosure or approval process.

1. Which statement best describes a real conflict of interest?

A. A personal interest improperly influences how an employee performs public duties.
B. A colleague dislikes a decision.
C. An employee has any personal interest, even one unrelated to work.
D. A conflict that has been reported in the media.

2. Why can an apparent conflict require action?

A. It proves the employee acted dishonestly.
B. It can damage public confidence even when no improper influence occurred.
C. It always requires dismissal.
D. It only matters for senior executives.

3. When is a personal interest more likely to be material?

A. When the connection to the employee's duties is remote and theoretical.
B. When no reasonable person could connect it to the decision.
C. When there is a real or sensible possibility of a real or apparent conflict.
D. Only when money is involved.

4. A supplier in an active tender offers a panel member expensive hospitality. What is the best immediate response?

A. Accept it because no decision has been made.
B. Ask the supplier to offer the same benefit to the whole panel.
C. Check agency policy, disclose the offer and avoid involvement until directed.
D. Accept it privately and declare it after the tender closes.

5. You discover that a close friend has applied for a role you are assessing. What should you do?

A. Continue because you believe you can remain objective.
B. Disclose the relationship before assessing the application and follow the delegate's direction.
C. Give the candidate a lower score to balance the relationship.

D. Tell the other candidates about the relationship.

6. Which factor is relevant when assessing materiality?

A. The significance of the agency decision.
B. Whether the employee likes the work.
C. The age of the employee.
D. Whether the issue is convenient to disclose.

7. Which option can help manage a conflict?

A. Restrict access to relevant information.
B. Keep the interest secret and promise to be fair.
C. Delete the record after the decision.
D. Let the interested person choose the control.

8. What should an employee do before accepting outside work that may overlap with agency duties?

A. Take annual leave so the conflict disappears.
B. Consult agency policy and notify the authorised person for assessment.
C. Accept it if the hours are outside normal work time.
D. Discuss it only with the outside employer.

9. What is the main purpose of disclosing a material personal interest?

A. To punish the employee.
B. To make the interest public.
C. To allow the agency to identify and manage the risk.
D. To transfer every matter to another agency.

10. After a conflict has been disclosed and a management action agreed, what should happen if circumstances later change?

A. Nothing, because the original disclosure remains valid forever
B. Update the disclosure and management arrangements if necessary
C. Delete the original record
D. Wait until the annual performance review

Score	Result
___ / 10	☐ Passed ☐ Review required

Answer key and rationale

Question	Answer	Rationale
1	A	A real conflict exists when a personal interest improperly influences the performance of public duties.
2	B	The APSC guidance says appearance can damage public confidence even when no improper influence occurred.
3	C	Materiality requires a real or sensible possibility of conflict, rather than a remote or theoretical connection.
4	C	A tender participant creates heightened risk. The employee should consult policy, disclose the offer and avoid worsening the conflict.
5	B	Relationships connected to recruitment must be disclosed so the delegate can decide whether the panel member should stand aside.

Answer key and rationale

Question	Answer	Rationale
6	A	The significance of the decision forms part of the APSC materiality assessment.
7	A	Restricting information, abstaining, withdrawing and reassigning duties are examples of possible controls.
8	B	Outside employment may create a real or apparent conflict even when performed during leave or outside normal hours.
9	C	Disclosure enables the agency to assess, record and manage the risk.
10	B	The disclosure should be updated when circumstances change so the agency can reassess the conflict and adjust the management response if needed.

Source and use note

Primary source: Australian Public Service Commission, APS Values and Code of Conduct in practice, Section 5: Conflict of Interest. https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/aps-values-and-code-conduct-practice/section-5-conflict-interest

Supporting source: Australian Public Service Commission, APS values. https://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-values

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