

The decision and reasons of the Regulatory Assessor for the case of Mr Nadeem Siddique FCCA and ASN Partnership Ltd referred to him by ACCA on 12 January 2023

Introduction

1. ASN Partnership Ltd is the incorporated sole practice of ACCA member, Mr Nadeem Siddique FCCA. I have considered a report, including ACCA's recommendation, together with related correspondence, concerning Mr Siddique's conduct of audit work.

Basis and reasons for the decision

2. I have considered all of the evidence in the booklet sent to me, including related correspondence and the action plan prepared and submitted by the firm since the monitoring visit.
3. In reaching my decision, I have made the following findings of fact:
 - a Firms which Mr Siddique controls have had four auditing standards monitoring reviews;
 - b Mr Siddique's first and second reviews were to his limited liability partnership, ASN Partnership LLP, during March 2013 and March 2017 respectively. On both reviews, the Compliance Officer found that the audit work was not of a consistent standard. Although the overall outcome of both reviews was satisfactory, on one of the three files inspected at each review, the opinion was not adequately supported by the work performed and recorded. In addition, on the second review there were serious deficiencies in the work undertaken to support a report to the Solicitors' Regulation Authority;
 - c At the second review, the firm was warned that failure to make the necessary improvements may jeopardise the firm's audit registration. The firm acknowledged receipt of the report and provided an action plan outlining the action it was taking to improve the quality of its audit work;
 - d At the third review, which took place during May 2021, the Compliance Officer found that the firm had not maintained the improvements to its audit procedures and the standard of the firm's audit work had deteriorated. None of the files

reviewed showed that the firm had obtained sufficient audit evidence in key audit areas to support the audit opinion. Mr Siddique produced an action plan to overcome the deficiencies and was referred to the ACCAs audit regulatory assessor;

- e On 01 February 2022, the Regulatory Assessor ordered that Mr Siddique be subject to an accelerated monitoring visit before December 2022;
- f At the fourth review, which took place during November and December 2022, the Compliance Officer found that the firm had not improved the standard of its audit work. On two of the three audit files inspected, there were serious deficiencies in the performance and recording of the audit work in key audit areas. The firm had failed to fully implement the action plan it had committed to in response to the findings of the previous monitoring review and its procedures were not adequate to ensure that it conducts all audits in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (UK). As a result, on two of the files examined the audit opinion was not adequately supported by the work performed and recorded;
- g The firm has subsequently relinquished its firm's auditing certificate and Mr Siddique has relinquished his practising certificate with audit qualification and been issued with a general practicing certificate;

The decision

4. I note that Mr Siddique has relinquished his practising certificate with audit qualification and his firm's auditing certificate. On the basis of the above, I have decided pursuant to Authorisation Regulations 7(3)(b) and 7(4) that any future re-application for audit registration by Mr Siddique, or by a firm in which he is a principal, must be referred to the Admissions and Licensing Committee, which will not consider the application until he has provided an action plan, which ACCA regards as satisfactory, setting out how Mr Siddique intends to prevent a recurrence of the previous deficiencies and attended a practical audit course, approved by ACCA and, following the date of this decision, passed paper P7 (or the equivalent advanced level audit paper) of ACCA's professional qualification.

Publicity

5. Authorisation Regulation 7(6) indicates that all conditions relating to the certificates of Mr Siddique and his firm made under Regulation 7(2) may be published as soon as practicable, subject to any directions given by me.

6. I have considered the submissions, if any, made by Mr Siddique regarding publicity of any decision I may make pursuant to Authorisation Regulation 7(2). I do not find that there are exceptional circumstances in this case that would justify non-publication of my decision to impose conditions and the omission of the names of Mr Siddique and his firm from that publicity.

7. I therefore direct pursuant to Authorisation Regulation 7(6)(a), that a news release be issued to ACCA's website referring to Mr Siddique and his firm by name.

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David Sloggett FCCA
Regulatory Assessor
01 March 2023