

CEPD Policy on Support of University of Toronto Sponsored Continuing Education Activities from Commercial Sources

(to be used in partnership agreements and other support of
Continuing Education activities)



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Introduction / Background

This document outlines the Faculty of Medicine's policies pertaining to the support of continuing education activities or resources by commercial supporters (e.g. pharmaceutical companies, instrument and device manufacturers). Such activities or resources include but are not restricted to courses, conferences, workshops, University-approved rounds, Internet courses, and the production of learning resources, e.g. CD-ROM or videotape, designed for participation or use by health professional learners.

This policy has been derived from an earlier document created and approved by the Faculty Council CE Committee in 1998, and modified by a task force struck by the FCCEC in spring 2004. The policy is intended for use as a component of a larger suite of materials and guidelines to assist planners and developers of CE activities and materials in the University of Toronto. See www.cepd.utoronto.ca for further details.

In addition to the official policies stated herein, individuals are advised to also review any specific rules of their own department and hospital.

The following documents have been employed in the preparation of these statements and form the basis for these policies.

- 1) Canadian Medical Association Policy Summary on Physicians and the Pharmaceutical Industry, 1998 (updated 2001).
- 2) Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education Standards for Commercial Support, 1992 (updated 2004 - unofficial at time of review).
- 3) American Medical Association Ethical Opinion on Gifts to Physicians from Industry, 1998.
- 4) Association of American Medical Colleges Guidelines for Faculty Involvement in Commercially Supported Continuing Medical Education, 1992.

Definitions of Terms

Accreditation (applies to organizations only)

The official recognition by the Council on Accreditation of CME that a medical school has undergone a review process and has proven its ability to plan, present and evaluate CME programs that meet recognized standards of quality. The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada has an accreditation process for National Specialty Societies; The Committee on Accreditation of CME accredits Canadian Medical Schools' CME divisions.

Approval

(applies to CE courses, events and educational resources)

For the purposes of this policy, approval implies the successful review of an educational activity or resource by the Faculty Council CE Committee. Upon approval, the Office of CEPD, Faculty of Medicine may assign credits of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the American Medical Association. *Only approved CE events (or other activities) may use the name and logo of the University of Toronto and/or sponsoring Faculty of Medicine department.*

Conference/Meeting

The American Medical Association Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs defines a legitimate "conference" or "meeting" as any activity, held at an appropriate location, where "the gathering is primarily dedicated, in both time and effort, to promoting objective scientific and educational activities and discourse (one or more educational presentation(s) should be the highlight of the gathering), and the main incentive of bringing attendees together is to further their knowledge on the topic(s) being presented".

Enduring Materials

Any printed or similar learning material such as a monograph, self-assessment quiz or other item meant to provide educational information to learners.

Provider

Normally non-profit, physician-led organizations or groups planning and delivering CE or continuing professional development (CPD) activities. This definition excludes pharmaceutical companies or their advisory groups, medical and surgical supply companies, communication companies, and other for-profit organizations and ventures/activities.

Sponsor

The institution under whose auspices a course is being held. For University of Toronto-approved courses, the sponsor includes the Faculty of Medicine, generally in conjunction with the course director's department. Other sponsors may be hospitals, National Specialty Societies, associations or not-for-profit organizations (e.g. The Heart & Stroke Foundation).

Supporter

A company, organization, institution, government agency or other entity (for-profit or not-for-profit) which contributes financial resources to a CE course or other activity.

Teachers

Members of the Faculty of Medicine and guest faculty invited by course directors as workshop leaders, lecturers and speakers. The term teachers may also be taken to mean small group facilitators, workshop leaders, and developers of educational resources such as web-based learning modules or printed materials.

1. Selection of Subjects / Clinical Areas

CE planners are strongly encouraged to use all needs assessment means at their disposal

<http://www.cepd.utoronto.ca/directors/step1.asp>

including reflection on the appropriateness, evidence and clinical burden regarding a specific disease, disorder or subject area, prior to any negotiation with potential commercial supporters.

Following this exercise, and to ensure scientific integrity, the selection of topics, speakers, course materials and enduring materials is entirely the responsibility of the course organizer. If a resource person is recommended by a commercial organization, he or she must be acceptable to the course director and his/her planning committee. In this way, CE providers may be assured that teachers deliver current, objective, scientifically rigorous, and expert coverage of the subject at hand. *As a condition of contributing funds or services, a CE provider cannot be required to accept advice or services concerning the selection of teachers, authors, participants or other education matters, including content, from a commercial supporter as a condition of contributing funds or services. While not a regular custom, commercial supporter representatives may be permitted to join planning committees, so long as the process of content determination abides by the foregoing principles.*

Specifically, the course planner must ensure that the following decisions are made free of the control of a commercial interest:

- (a) identification of CME needs
- (b) determination of educational objectives
- (c) selection and presentation of content
- (d) selection of all persons and organizations that will be in a position to control the content of the CME
- (e) selection of educational methods
- (f) logistics associated with planning and hosting the event or activity
- (g) evaluation of the activity.

The invitation to participate in planning must emanate from the CE provider (course director), not from the commercial organization.

2. Extent and Nature of Commercial Support

As a general guiding principle, commercially supported social events at continuing education activities should not compete with, nor take precedence over, educational events. (See note 1) Further, registrants' travel arrangements, hotel accommodation and other activities should be in keeping with arrangements normally made without commercial support. They must not be in the control of or handled by, commercial supporters. (See also Section 9)

3. Disclosures

Disclosure of affiliations, sponsorships, honoraria, monetary support, and other potential conflicts of interest (e.g. stock options, patents, research grants) must routinely be made to the participants in a CE activity by University of Toronto faculty and visiting speakers.

Course directors are responsible for conveying to participants in writing, any potential conflicts relevant to the topic area of the presentation declared by their course faculty and/or any funding received by the course for their support. Faculty disclosures should cover relevant relationships for a period of two years prior to the course.

Disclosures may be made in the course syllabus or handouts, and should be included as the first or second slide in the speakers' presentations. If there are no handouts or slides, a one-page summary of declared relationships should be distributed to participants. Commercial supporter representatives participating on planning committees must be so designated on course brochures and other relevant materials.

4. Unbiased Presentation of Content

Topics chosen for presentation during a CE activity must not be product or promotion oriented, and presentations must give a balanced view of all relevant therapeutic options available. Use of generic names is required wherever possible. If trade names are employed, use of those of several companies is preferable to that of a single supporting company.

Under certain circumstances, balance may not be possible, in which case the rationale for the inclusion of a one-sided presentation should be explained to the participants (e.g., the discussion of a new product within a class of drugs, or in the instance of research presentations which focus on only one drug within a class and for which there is no drug class evidence). Use of the University of Toronto or similar institutional logo or name in a manner that constitutes promotion of a product is prohibited.

All speaker and overall course evaluation forms should include a question concerning commercial bias, e.g., "Did the program avoid commercial bias or influence?"

Compilations or summaries of evaluation forms must be made available to the CE Office at the conclusion of each approved CE activity.

5. Commercial Displays

When commercial exhibits are part of the program, arrangements for these should be separately considered so as to not influence planning or interfere with the presentation of CE activities. A single commercial organization may support a course and provide a relevant exhibit of its products. Exhibits (including banners which name products) may not be placed in the same room as the educational event.

6. Satellite Symposia

Many conferences and meetings are held in proximity (either spatially or temporally) to "satellite" symposia. These are separate meetings, frequently produced by commercial interests, often without the restrictions of commercial support policies and guidelines. *Registrants may perceive such programs as integral to the approved event and be unaware of commercial bias.* Thus, conference organizers must take care to ensure that: 1) registrants at the approved program are aware that such satellite symposia are not approved by the University of Toronto; 2) such activities are promoted (marketed or 'branded') in a way which *clearly* identifies the satellite activity as distinct from the approved event; and 3) the satellite symposia are located in an area separate from the University of Toronto-sponsored event.

7. Registrant Issues

a) Registration Fees

A registration fee is generally required from all non-teaching participants, since it is preferable that registrants bear some responsibility for the program in order to avoid perceived or real influence on learning. Exceptions to this general rule include rounds, faculty development activities, and research-oriented programs or events. A supporting company may not cover the entire cost of a Continuing Education activity.

Subsidies to underwrite the costs of continuing education conferences or professional meetings may contribute to the improvement of patient care and therefore are permissible. Since the giving of a subsidy directly to the physician by a commercial representative may create a relationship that could influence the use of the company's products, such funds should be received only by the conference organizer. He/she in turn may use the money to reduce the conference registration fee. (See Note 2)

b) Registration Lists

Prior to a Course:

Privacy restrictions preclude the distribution of registration lists prior to courses to commercial supporters or attendees under any circumstances. Such lists may be made available to course organizers and teachers in order to make workshop assignments or for other educational purposes (e.g. sending pre-course reading material).

During or after a Course:

Registrants' names, city, province/state and institution only may be distributed.

c) Payments to Registrants

Course planners must avoid participating in arrangements through which inducements are offered to attend CE programs that might directly or indirectly influence participants' judgment of those products, procedures, devices, etc. that are subjects of the presentation. This includes accepting any support or emoluments that may induce feelings of indebtedness and thereby affect objectivity. Specifically, commercial supporters may not subsidize or provide travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses directly to practising health professional attendees or their guests.

In the case of students, residents or fellows in accredited programs, commercial interests may support the participation of such learners by contributing to a scholarship fund. The selection of physician trainees and the expenditures of these funds are the responsibility of the course director and the relevant Postgraduate Program chair, director or designate.

8. Direction of Funds

All funds from a commercial source should be in the form of an unrestricted educational grant payable to the institution or organization sponsoring the CME/CPD activity (e.g. University of Toronto, the course director's hospital or similar academic unit). Subsidies specifically designated for hospitality should not be accepted.

9. Payment of Teachers

a) University of Toronto Faculty

No teacher who is a University of Toronto faculty member may be directly supported by, receive gifts from, or be supported by commercial organizations while taking part in University of Toronto-sponsored CE activities.

Under normal circumstances, University of Toronto faculty members are not paid for their contributions to CE. At the discretion of the course director, expenses incurred in making a presentation (e.g. parking) may be allowed, and small gifts (e.g., gift certificates) are acceptable.

Additionally, exceptional circumstances may occasionally be recognized. For example, status only faculty, longitudinal course coordination or teaching, major or lengthy contributions to CE may be reimbursed according to departmental/divisional guidelines and this policy.

b) Guest Faculty/Visiting Speakers

It is appropriate for guest faculty at conferences or meetings to accept reasonable honoraria and to accept reimbursement for personal travel, lodging, and meal expenses. However, they may not be paid directly by commercial organizations.

c) Token Consultation

Token consulting or advisory arrangements may not be used to justify the compensation of participating health professionals for their time or their travel, lodging, and other out-of-pocket expenses. (See also number 7c, Payments to Registrants)

The following outlines ways in which course directors may acknowledge commercial support in the following formats. Advertising for commercial products by name or by indication is not permitted.

(a) Course Brochures:

Educational grants are documented in course brochures under "Acknowledgements." Commercial supporters may not be listed in the schedule of activities, the list of faculty or on the front of brochures.

(b) Posters, Flyers and one-page Brochures:

Acknowledgements may be listed at the bottom in an unobtrusive manner.

(c) Websites and other Electronic Formats:

In a one-page or one-screen format, acknowledgements may be listed unobtrusively at the bottom. In a multi-page or multi-screen format, acknowledgements may not be on the main (home) page, on a list of faculty or with the learning activities. Advertisements and promotional materials must not be visible on the screen at the same time as the CME content and not interleaved between computer "windows" or screens of the CME content. Links to commercial supporters' home pages (but not to pages related to product) may be established, so long as disclaimers are clearly in place, indicating that the University of Toronto is not responsible for the linked content. "Pop-ups" are not allowed. Links must open a new window, leaving the educational site open in the background.

(d) In printed CE handouts or syllabi, advertisements and promotional materials may not be interleaved within the pages of the CME content. They may be inserted at the end of the syllabus, not facing any content, and clearly marked as advertising/promotion.

(e) Live Activities:

In live, face-to-face CME activities, advertisements and promotional materials may not be displayed or distributed in the educational rooms. Providers may not allow representatives of commercial interests to engage in sales or promotional activities while in the CME activity. Commercial supporters may be acknowledged on a slide by company name only.

(1) "Precedence" is not taken in this clause as implying ordering of social and educational activities, rather it is taken in the sense of importance and duration: University of Toronto approved activities must give equal or greater weight to educational (vs. social) activities. For example, an event that featured a cocktail reception and dinner and a lecture of shorter duration would not qualify for approval.

(2) The estimated registration fees for events are in the range of:

- a) Specialists \$225/day;
- b) Family physicians \$150/day;
- c) Non-MD health professionals \$100/day.

The minimum daily fees are \$75, \$50, and \$35 respectively. Instances in which there is a demonstrable gap in care, or in which a health provider group requires lower-fee inducements to participate in CE may be considered on an individual, case-by-case basis. Reduced or waived fees for Postgraduate students are at the discretion of the Course Director.

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