

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) College of Medicine is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education (CME) for physicians. As such, the UAMS College of Medicine is responsible for the design and implementation of CME activities and requires activity planners to follow strictly the ACCME's Standards for Commercial Support. The UAMS College of Medicine's Office of Continuing Medical Education has developed these instructional guidelines for activity planners.

## **POLICY**

### **1. Independence**

- Continuing Medical Education activities must be planned independently or “free” from the control of a commercial interest. **A commercial interest is defined as any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients.** This applies to the following aspects of planning:
  - Identification of CME needs
  - Determination of educational objectives
  - Selection and presentation of content
  - Selection of all persons and organizations that will be in a position to control the content of the CME activity
  - Selection of educational methods
  - Evaluation of the activity.
- Commercial supporters may not take the role of a non-accredited partner or participate in a joint sponsorship relationship.

### **2. Resolution of Conflicts of Interest**

- Planners, speakers, authors, and all other individuals who are in a position to control the content of an educational activity must disclose all relevant financial relationships they (and/or their spouse or partner) have with any commercial interest. 'Relevant financial relationships' are defined as financial relationships in any amount occurring within the past 12 months that could create a conflict of interest.
- Gathering information about financial relationships will be accomplished by having all planners, speakers, authors, etc., complete the UAMS College of Medicine Office of Continuing Medical Education Disclosure of Relevant Financial Relationships Form (Disclosure Form) well in advance of the CME activity. Individuals, who refuse or, for some other reason choose not to complete this form, will be disqualified from taking part in the activity. In this case the activity's Course Director must inform the individual that the CME requirements cannot be met and that he/she may not participate in the activity until this requirement is met.
- The Disclosure Form must be reviewed by the planner(s) to determine if any potential conflicts of interest exist and, if necessary, additional steps must be taken in order to resolve the potential conflict(s).

### **3. Appropriate Use of Commercial Support**

**Definition of Commercial Support:** Financial or in-kind contributions given by a commercial interest used to pay all or part of the costs of a CME activity.

- As the accredited provider, UAMS College of Medicine will make all decisions about the disposition and disbursement of commercial support. Commercial interests may not have a role in making these decisions.
- A commercial interest may not require acceptance of advice or services from speakers, authors, or participants as a condition of the commercial support.
- All requests for commercial support associated with any CME activity, whether directly or jointly sponsored, must be submitted with full knowledge and approval of the UAMS College of Medicine's Office of Continuing Medical Education.
- All funds received from commercial interests to support UAMS College of Medicine sponsored CME activities must be given in the form of an unrestricted educational grant made payable to UAMS College of Medicine OCME, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, or the joint sponsor or educational partner as designated by the UAMS Office of Continuing Medical Education.

### **Written Agreements Documenting Terms of Support**

- All educational grants from commercial supporters must be documented by a written agreement between UAMS College of Medicine (the ACCME accredited provider) and the commercial supporter even if the support is given to a joint sponsor.
- The written agreement must describe the terms, conditions, and purpose of the educational grant consistent with the guidelines set forth in the ACCME Standards for Commercial Support. As long as the written agreement is consistent with the ACCME guidelines, it can be initiated by the commercial supporter.
- The written agreement must be signed and dated by both the commercial supporter and the provider or the provider's joint sponsor, as designated by the UAMS Office of Continuing Medical Education.
- In cases where grants are obtained through an electronic system, electronic signatures are permissible. The appropriateness of the electronic signature should be cleared and/or verified by the UAMS Office of Continuing Medical Education.
- Educational grants must be unrestricted without any expectation from the commercial supporter for special acknowledgements, booth space, or sales opportunities at social functions.

### **Honoraria and Reimbursement of Expenses**

- Payment of honoraria to planners, speakers, or authors must be consistent with the UAMS College of Medicine's Honorarium Policy.
- Payment of honoraria and expenses to planners, speakers, or authors must be made directly to the individual from either a University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences or University of Arkansas Foundation account or the account of a joint or co-sponsor according to the UAMS College of Medicine's Honorarium Policy.
- The Commercial Supporter may not make any direct payments to planners, speakers, or authors for services related to the CME activity for which the support is given.

### **Expenditures for Learners**

- Meals and social events at CME activities must be modest and not take precedence over the educational activity.
- Commercial support may not be used to pay for travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses for non-teacher or non-author learners at a CME activity. Commercial support may be used to off set expenses incurred for the activity itself including travel and associated expenses for individuals who are staffing the activity.

## **Accountability**

- The UAMS College of Medicine Office of Continuing Medical Education is the entity within the College responsible for documentation of all CME activities. Departmental sponsors or joint sponsors who are managing the CME activities must provide the OCME with accurate documents detailing the receipt and expenditures for all commercial support upon completion of the CME activity. This documentation requires a detailed budget summary to be completed and returned with the activity's final closing report.

## **4. Appropriate Management of Associated Commercial Promotion**

- Where exhibits are part of the overall program, arrangements should not influence planning or interfere with the presentation of the CME activity.
- Exhibit placement should not be a condition of the provision of the support for the activity.
- Commercial promotional materials may not be displayed or distributed in the same room where the CME activity takes place.
- Representatives of commercial supporters may attend the activity, but may not engage in sales activities while in the same room where the CME activity takes place.
- Educational materials must not contain advertising, trade names or a product group message.
- Written agreements are not required for sale of exhibit space. However, if exhibits are permitted and exhibit fees are received, they must be clearly documented in the activity's closing report.

## **5. Content and Format without Commercial Bias**

- Educational activities must be presented to promote improvements in the quality of healthcare and not a specific proprietary business or commercial interest.
- All presentations must give a balanced view of therapeutic options using generic names of products discussed. When trade names must be used, those from more than one manufacturer should be mentioned.

## **6. Disclosures Relevant to Potential Commercial Bias**

- The information gathered from the Disclosure Forms must be communicated to the participants before the educational activity begins.
  - If relevant financial relationships exist, the following information must be presented:
    - The name of the individual(s) who has(have) such a financial relationship(s);
    - The name of the commercial interest(s);
    - The nature of the relationship that person has with each commercial interest.
  - If no relevant financial relationships exist, the audience must be informed that:
    - The individual(s) reported that no relevant financial relationship(s) exist.
- Disclosure information may be presented to the audience in a written format or verbally by the moderator or speaker. The UAMS COM OCME strongly encourages a written method of disclosure be used.
  - Written disclosure can be:
    - Included in handouts or syllabus

- Presented on a slide before the activity begins
  - Posted on a sign at the door
  - Printed on sign-in sheets
  - Included in pre-activity announcements
- Verbal disclosure must be documented. If the disclosure information is presented to the audience verbally, it must be documented, in writing, by someone present at the time of the disclosure. The OCME's Disclosure Attestation Statement may be used for this purpose.
    - The attestation statement must include:
      - the name of the presenter(s),
      - the name of the company with which the financial relationship(s) exist,
      - the nature of the financial relationship and
      - the signature of the person making the attestation.
- **Acknowledgement of Commercial Support**
    - The audience must be informed about the source(s) of all commercial support before the activity begins. When the support is 'in-kind', the nature of the support must be acknowledged.
    - This acknowledgement must not include the use of a trade name or product group message.
- **Records and Documentation for Disclosure and Commercial Support**
    - Disclosure - In order for the CME activity file to be complete, the following documents for "Disclosure and Resolution of Conflict(s) of Interest" must be included.
      - Disclosure forms for all Planning Committee Members
      - Disclosure forms for all speakers, authors, moderators, and/or panelists
      - Documentation of written disclosure to the audience or a signed Verification/Attestation Statement by someone who witnessed verbal disclosure during the activity
      - Documentation that all commercial support was disclosed/acknowledged to the audience
    - Commercial Support - If the CME activity receives commercial support, the following documents for use and management of commercial support must be included:
      - Written letters of agreement for all commercial support (educational grants and "in-kind" support) signed and dated by both the provider or provider's designee and a representative from the commercial supporter.
      - A budget summary accurately detailing all receipts and expenditures including funds received for exhibit booth rentals.
  - Absence of any of the above documentation during the final file review at the conclusion of the CME activity will result in remediation of the disclosure procedures. It may also jeopardize accreditation of future activities developed by the department or the joint sponsor.