
Guide to Bias Management for Planning Committee Members and Administrative Professionals

Accredited CME educational events must meet CMA Guidelines for Physicians in Interactions with Industry:

<http://policybase.cma.ca/dbtw-wpd/Policypdf/PD08-01.pdf>

and in Quebec, Relations between Medical Organizations and Business Corporations:

Code of Ethics: http://cqdpdm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Code-d%C3%A9thique_en-r%C3%A9vision.pdf

You must meet the requirements that the relevant college (CFPC, RCPSC) has put in place to prevent or to mitigate bias.

- Any sponsorship / funds / in-kind support from commercial entities must be given as an educational grant to the physician organizing body; the physician organizers must control the funds.
- All scientific planning committee members, speakers, facilitators, presenters, and moderators ('speakers') must complete a declaration of conflict of interest (COI) even when they have nothing to declare. Find an example COI form on the CME&PD Office website: <http://cumming.ucalgary.ca/cme/accreditation>
- The scientific planning committee members must declare any potential conflicts of interest to the participants, even if they have nothing to declare. For example, this can be done on a PowerPoint slide in the opening remarks, on a table, or on the registration webpage.
- Speakers must announce their COIs to participants, even if nothing to declare. Find the CFPC three-slide COI declaration template on the CME&PD Office website, as above. The CFPC Quick Tips on Identification and Management of Conflicts of Interest and Transparency to Learners gives guidance on correct completion: http://www.cfpc.ca/Commonly_Referenced_Resources_and_Policy_Updates/
- When a potential conflict is declared, or off-label use of products is planned, the physician organizing body must take steps to mitigate any bias.

Mitigating Bias: General measures for all CME educational events

The existence of a financial relationship does not necessarily imply bias or decrease the value of a learning event.

Presentations must be evidence-based, scientifically valid, and balanced. Avoid sponsor colours and logos in any of the learning materials (handouts, presentations, publicity). Refer to the relevant college's website(s) concerning acceptable methods for sponsor acknowledgement, along with the National Standard for support of accredited CPD activities:

CFPC Understanding Mainpro+ Certification, pages 16-22.

<https://www.cfpc.ca/CFPC/media/PDF/Understanding-Mainpro-Certification-English-April15-2021.pdf>

RCPSC Frequently asked questions – Scroll down to "On Sponsorship".

<https://www.royalcollege.ca/ca/en/cpd/accreditation-continuing-professional-development-cpd-activities/cpd-activity-toolkit.html>

National Standard for support of accredited CPD activities, pages Elements 4-7, pages 5-7.

<https://www.royalcollege.ca/content/rcpsc/ca/en/cpd/royal-college-accredited-cpd-providers/tools-resources-accredited-cpd-providers/national-standard-accredited-cpd-activities.html>

Add references to support any recommendations; inform the participants if there is limited or no supporting evidence for any recommendations. Use generic names for products, or use generic name followed by trade name, consistently. Inform participants if off-label use is being recommended.

Teaching materials **may not be changed** once they have been approved for certification / accreditation (study credits).

Mitigating Bias: When a conflict of interest has been declared

It is the responsibility of the physician organization to have a process in place for managing bias, should a significant conflict of interest be declared (for example, when a planning committee member or speaker has a financial arrangement with a drug company whose product is relevant to the educational content). Appropriate mechanisms can include:

- Excusing the Planning Committee member.
- Altering control over educational content by:
 - changing the topic
 - asking the speaker to avoid making personal recommendations and limit their presentation to a discussion of the evidence.
 - inviting peer review of the speaker's presentation in advance to ensure scientific integrity, objectivity, and balance.
- Changing the speaker.

Organizers should keep a record of mitigating measures, and the resolution of the conflict of interest, on file.