

**POLICY ON SUPPORT OF UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SPONSORED
CONTINUING EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FROM COMMERCIAL SOURCES
(1999)**

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

The following outlines the Faculty's policy pertaining to the support of continuing education activities (see note 1) by commercial sponsors (e.g. pharmaceutical companies, instrument and device manufacturers). The following documents have been employed in the preparation of these policies and form the basis for this statement.

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

1. Selection of Subjects/Clinical Areas

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. The invitation to participate emanates from the course director, not from the commercial organization. While not a regular custom, commercial sponsor representatives are permitted to join planning committees, so long as the process of content determination abides by the foregoing principles.

2. Unbiased Presentation

Topics may not be product or promotion oriented, and presentations must give a balanced view of all relevant therapeutic options available. Use of generic names will contribute to this impartiality. If trade names are employed, use of those of several companies is preferable to that of a single sponsoring company.

3. Registration Fee

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

4. Commercial Displays

When commercial exhibits are part of the program, arrangements for these should not influence planning nor interfere with the presentation of CE activities. Negotiations for space or for types of promotional displays at CE functions may not be influenced by industry sponsorship of the activity. A single commercial organization may sponsor 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.

5. Payment of Faculty/Visiting Speakers; Direction of Funds

Funds from a commercial source must assume the form of an educational grant made payable to the University of Toronto, the course director's hospital or similar academic unit. Specifically University of Toronto faculty members may not be supported by, receive gifts from or be sponsored by commercial organizations while taking part in University of Toronto-sponsored CE activities. (See note 2) Visiting speakers may not be paid directly by commercial organizations. Payment of reasonable honoraria and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for visiting speakers is customary and acceptable.

6. Payments to Registrants

Commercial sponsors may not substantially subsidize or provide travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses directly to attendees, unless they are students, residents or fellows in accredited programs and this contribution is approved by their program chair, director or designate.

7. Extent and Nature of Commercial Support

Commercially supported social events at continuing education activities should not compete with, nor take precedence over, educational events. (See note 3) Further, travel arrangements, hotel accommodation and other activities should be in keeping with arrangements normally made without commercial support. Sequential or longitudinal programs which follow accreditation criteria may be approved, based on their adherence to established continuing education planning principles.

8. Disclosures

Disclosure of affiliations, sponsorships, honoraria, monetary support, and other potential conflicts of interest must routinely be made to the participants in the continuing education activity by University of Toronto faculty and visiting speakers. Continuing education course directors are responsible for conveying to the participants any potential conflicts declared by their speakers, and to course faculty, any funding received in support of them.

9. Acknowledgements

(a) Course Brochures: Educational grants are acknowledged in course brochures under "Acknowledgements". Commercial sponsors 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: The same general policy as above applies. 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. Links to commercial sponsors may be established, so long as disclaimers are clearly in place, indicating that the University of Toronto is not responsible for the linked content.
- (d) Other Issues: Advertising for commercial products by name or by indication is not permitted in the above captioned formats.

Approved by CE Committee: September 30, 1999

Approved by Faculty Council: December 6, 1999

Notes

- (1) Continuing Education activities include but are not restricted to courses, conferences, workshops, Continuing Education-approved rounds, Internet courses, and the production of learning resources, e.g. CD-ROM or videotape.
- (2) Under normal circumstances, University of Toronto faculty members are not paid for their contributions to CE. However, exceptional circumstances are recognized: For example, status only faculty, longitudinal course coordination or teaching, major or lengthy contributions to Continuing Education. These may be reimbursed according to departmental/divisional guidelines and this policy.
- (3) “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 which featured a cocktail reception and dinner and a lecture of shorter duration would not qualify for approval.