

## Updated Standards for Commercial Support

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Once again we are positioned to implement the Updated Standards for Commercial Support (SCS) (approved September 28, 2004) in our day-to-day CME operations that will help define our relationships with commercial supporters for our sponsored CME activities or regularly scheduled conferences (RSCs) as grand rounds, tumor boards, etc. This provides us another tool that will help in identifying potential Conflicts of Interest by presenters and options for their resolution. The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) has given sponsors an 8 month implementation period to integrate applicable changes as indicated by the new standards into your CME policies. **The Updated Standards for Commercial Support and related information are presented at the end of this article.**

What should you do:

A. Begin your implementation period in October 2004 with the deadline for all steps in place by April 1, 2005. The ACCME expects that after May 2005 accredited providers will have implemented the Updated SCS and will be developing CME activities in compliance with all aspects of the 2004 Updated SCS.

B. Review the new Standards for Commercial Support with your CME Advisory Committee or CME personnel to evaluate what is indicated as compared to what your current policies require. The Updated SCS is presented in 6 Standards:

Standard 1: Independence – *The activity planning must be free of control of a commercial interest. CME provider must select all planners of CME activities. Commercial interest cannot be a joint-sponsor of a CME sponsored activity.*

Standard 2: Resolution of Personal Conflicts of Interest – *Highlighted points:*

*2.1 Disclosure should include instructors, planners and CME managers.*

*\* I have provided you a copy of the Disclosure Form 2005 utilized by Marshall CME that can be used as a review of your current Disclosure Forms. Disclosure of unlabeled uses of FDA approved products is not indicated by the Updated SCS, however, it is up to the individual institutions to obtain appropriate disclosure information to validate clinical content. The form is also available at <http://musom.marshall.edu/cme/facultyform.htm>*

*2.2 An individual who refuses to disclose ... will be disqualified.*

*2.3 Implement a mechanism to identify and resolve all conflicts of interest prior to the educational activity being delivered. The primary sources of information regarding*

***Conflicts of interest is likely to be the relevant financial relationships disclosed by individuals within the past 12 months.***

Standard 3: Appropriate use of commercial support – ***Highlighted points: 3.1 – Provider makes all decisions. 3.5-Letter of Agreement must specify sources of support. 3.7 – The provider must have written policies and procedures governing honoraria and 3.8 - reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for planners, teachers and authors.***

Standard 4: Appropriate Management of Associated Commercial Promotion – ***Highlighted point: 4.5 – Use of a commercial interest as the agent providing a CME activity to learners – Review the Frequently Asked Questions section that spells out the implications of this standard.***

Standard 5: Content and Format without Commercial Bias –Nothing new or different

Standard 6: Disclosures Relevant to Potential Commercial Bias -***Highlighted point: 6.5 –Disclosure must be made to the learners prior to the beginning of the educational activity – verbally or written. Sources of all support must be disclosed – don't forget to include in-kind support-microscopes, other equipment, etc.***

C. Review the presentation of the Updated Standards as presented by the ACCME.

For complete information, please visit the ACCME website:

<http://www.accme.org>

D. Review the Frequently Asked Questions about the 2004 Updated ACCME Standards presented via the website address above or at the end of this article.

E. Review Identifying and Resolving Conflicts of Interest as presented by the ACCME and begin to implement your Conflict of Interest process and steps for Analyzing Conflicts of Interest. The ACCME does a good job in providing alternatives that can be used or modified for your particular institution.