

Appendix 7: Sponsorship guide for CPD education activities

An ethical relationship with sponsoring organisations concerning the delivery of education to healthcare professionals is essential. Education activities accredited by The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program must have as their primary purpose improving the quality of patient care.

Interactions between providers and sponsors, especially those dealing with therapeutic goods, are only appropriate if they do not affect, breach, distort or influence the general practitioner (GP)–patient relationship. This guide aims to ensure the educational material covered within each CPD educational activity meets acceptable clinical and ethical standards. It applies to all sponsored CPD Program education activities.

‘Sponsorship’ in the CPD Program’s context includes any benefit transfer for an event in return for various rights to the sponsoring party. Sponsorship may involve financial, ‘in-kind’ or other support (such as free advertising, event promotion or hosting services). Sponsorship benefits may be received directly or indirectly. Their receipt may be the dominant reason for the sponsor’s involvement, or merely an ancillary purpose.

‘Advertising’ in the CPD Program’s context is any image or statement, or series of such (including as part of a campaign), intended to promote the use or supply of particular goods or services.

All RACGP CPD Education providers must comply, and ensure their EARS and sponsors comply, with this guide. The RACGP may decline (or withdraw, as appropriate) an activity if the provider fails to meet the requirements stipulated in this guide.

Sponsorship requirements

Providers must comply with a number of requirements.

- Education delivered to GPs must be developed completely independently of any sponsorship.
- The CPD Program will not accept activities with sponsor input into its design, development, content or delivery. The RACGP considers such input as a conflict of interest and a breach of the CPD Program’s activity standards.
- Facilitators delivering the material must have independence. They must not be briefed by the sponsor or otherwise influenced with regard to how they present or deliver the education.
- Facilitators must declare to attending GPs any conflicts regarding payment, or other benefits or inducements from a sponsor, prior to delivering the accredited activity.
- Providers must declare how and by whom their educational activity is sponsored each time that activity is promoted, advertised or delivered.
- All education and CPD Program administration concerning participants must be handled by the provider and not the sponsor. This includes ensuring all components of the activity are completed by the participant.

- Providers must undertake, without sponsor input, all collection and collation of completed evaluation forms from participants, and integration with the RACGP's CPD Program systems (including uploading GP points and activity reports). Providers may share de-identified evaluation outcomes with their sponsors upon request.
- Sponsor pop-ups, advertising, online resources or event flyers must include clear details of the activity and the provider's contact details. The sponsor's contact details must not be included, but their logo may be featured.
- Educational activities must not at any stage, either directly or indirectly, promote:
 - products by use of their brand or trade names (refer to 'Use of generic product names')
 - products or methods of treatment disproportionate to their normal contribution to high-quality patient care
 - products or methods of treatment in areas of clinical practice where accepted management standards are insufficient and a balanced rationale is not provided
 - theories and methods of treatment without the support of the medical profession, including by reason of inconclusive evidence of therapeutic benefits
 - techniques not accepted by a significant proportion of the medical profession, or not supported by accepted medical theory
 - therapeutic goods not authorised by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for use in Australia.
- When there is uncertainty about an educational activity's clinical, scientific or ethical content, the RACGP reserves the right to seek clarification on the program design and evidence-based methodology. The RACGP may then decline (or withdraw, as appropriate) the activity if it fails to meet aspects of the CPD Education Provider Agreement.

Sponsor promotion

In connection with an education activity, sponsors may deliver presentations concerning a therapeutic good. Such presentations must:

- be an addendum and clearly separated from the education activity being delivered
- be delivered before the education activity commences, during designated breaks or immediately after the activity finishes
- be announced or introduced in such a way to ensure attendees are aware the sponsor's presentation is not part of the education activity and not compulsory to attend
- not be counted when determining the duration of an education activity and calculating the number of allocated CPD points
- only show sponsor logos and branding on either the first or last presentation slide.

Presentations may be accompanied by trade displays, either preceding or following an education activity, or during meal or break times. Sponsors should not be in the room during the activity delivery. Displays must not be integrated within the education activity space and must be kept separate in all aspects, including by not incorporating trade materials into any education activity's take-away content.

Sponsor logos may be included on the bottom of certificates of completion as long as the role of the sponsor is identified. The certificate must clearly display the provider details with all required education information.

Use of generic product names

Every drug has at least three names – chemical, generic (approved by the TGA) and brand. The chemical name describes the molecular structure of the drug. The sponsor usually selects the generic name (also known as the Australian-approved name), and the manufacturer or distributor of the drug usually selects the brand name.

Generic names must be used wherever possible within CPD Program sponsorship. If, for any reason, it is necessary and justifiable that a branded product be named for a specific contextual purpose, the product must be named once only, and the trade name of all other products in the same drug class must also be named and given equal prominence. This applies to all presentations or materials.

However, the use of products' generic names is not always acceptable and caution is urged. Generic product names may, by reason of widespread use over a prolonged period of time, often be identified by users as the brand name of the drug (eg aspirin).

The RACGP recommends that the GP or medical specialist on the planning committee of the activity be the person to confirm the most appropriate use of names in any presentation or materials.

Entertainment, meals and beverages

Entertainment and meals must be separated from the focus of the education activity and secondary to the activity content.

When compiling a session plan, adequate time for serving and consuming food and beverages must be provided. The RACGP recommends event organisers allow at least 15 minutes for morning or afternoon tea, and at least 30 minutes for lunch or dinner. This time must be deducted when determining the duration of an activity and in calculating the number of allocated CPD points.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

All sponsorship must comply with all applicable provisions in:

- Medicines Australia's Code of Conduct
- TGA's Therapeutic Goods Advertising Code
- *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989* and all codes or guides authorised under it
- all other relevant laws.

Related documents

- Medicines Australia, Code of Conduct, <https://medicinesaustralia.com.au/code-of-conduct>
- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Advertising and sponsorship, www.racgp.org.au/advertising
- Therapeutic Goods Administration, Therapeutic Goods Advertising Code, www.tga.gov.au/publication/therapeutic-goods-advertising-code

Appendix 8: GP feedback form

GP feedback to the RACGP – In confidence

Quality improvement is an integral component of the CPD Program and this includes reviewing the ongoing quality of the activities that are delivered. This form is provided for you to give confidential feedback on any aspects of the activity in which you have taken part.

Please contact, or submit this form to, your local RACGP office if:

- the advertising was misleading, incorrect or in any other way did not reflect the activity you attended
- there was a specific product, medical service or medical device promotion within the education content of the activity – for example, images, biased or unbalanced clinical data or specific product information
- the content presented was not evidence-based or had the potential to adversely affect the safety of patients
- you have any concerns about how the activity may reflect on the reputation of the RACGP.

Title

First name

Surname

Email

Phone

RACGP CPD Program number

Date of activity

Title of activity (if known)

Activity venue

Provider name (if known)

Please provide us with information about your specific concerns below (or attach a separate page).

This will be used to initiate discussion with the education provider. Your personal information will not be disclosed.