

Office of Continuing Professional Development

Important Accreditation Updates: Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education For Regularly Scheduled Series (RSS)



JOINTLY ACCREDITED PROVIDER™
INTERPROFESSIONAL CONTINUING EDUCATION

In support of improving patient care, University of Minnesota, Interprofessional Continuing Education is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.



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Purpose

- The information provided within this document is to inform Course Directors and Planning Committee Members of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education's (ACCME) recent updates to their Standards for Commercial Support, now known as Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education and OCPD's policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the Standards.
- For more information, view [ACCME's Website](#)
- For questions or support regarding how this information impacts your role, email cme@umn.edu

ACCME's Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education are effective as of January 1, 2022



Standard 1: Ensure Content is Valid

- Overview:

- Accredited education must be fair and balanced and that any clinical content presented supports safe, effective patient care.

- OCPD Process:

- Application materials address the Planning Committee's commitment to provide education based on current science, evidence and clinical reasoning while giving a fair and balanced view of diagnostic and therapeutic options.
- All faculty are advised via the attestation form that they should ensure that all scientific research referred to must conform to the generally accepted standards of experimental design, data collection, analysis and interpretation.



Standard 1: Ensure Content is Valid - continued

- OCPD Process:

- All faculty are advised via the attestation form that if they plan to discuss/debate/explore new and evolving topics, they must clearly identify these topics as such and facilitate engagement with these topics without advocating for or promoting practices that are not (or not yet) adequately based on current science, evidence and clinical reasoning.
- All faculty are advised via the attestation form that advocating for unscientific approaches to diagnosis or therapy or if their education promotes recommendations, treatment, or manners of practicing healthcare that are determined to have risks or dangers that outweigh the benefits or are known to be ineffective in the treatment of patients, it is not eligible content for an accredited activity.



Standard 2: Prevent Commercial Bias and Marketing in Accredited CE

- Overview:

- Accredited continuing education must protect learners from commercial bias and marketing.

- OCPD Process:

- OCPD is involved with planning the activity with the Education Partner to ensure that all decisions related to planning, faculty selection, delivery and evaluation are made without any influence from owners and employees of an ineligible company.
- OCPD prohibits the marketing or sale of products or services. Faculty cannot actively promote or sell products/services that server their professional or financial interests during accredited education (i.e. no book sales, referral generation, etc.)
- OCPD and/or the Education Partner cannot provide the names or contact information of learners with any ineligible company or its agents without explicit consent from the individual learner.



Standard 3: Identify, Mitigate, and Disclose Relevant Financial Relationships

- Overview:

- Many healthcare professionals have financial relationships with ineligible companies. These relationships must not be allowed to influence accredited continuing education. The accredited provider is responsible for identifying ***relevant financial relationships*** between individuals in control of educational content and ineligible companies and managing these to ensure they do not introduce commercial bias into the education.
- Financial relationships of *any* dollar amount are defined as relevant if the educational content is related to the business lines or products of the ineligible company.

Definition: Ineligible companies are those whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients. For more information, including a list of examples see [ACCME's webpage](#).

Standard 3: Identify, Mitigate, and Disclose Relevant Financial Relationships - continued

- 1. Collect Information - OCPD Process:
 - OCPD collects information from all Planning Committee Members, faculty and others in control of the educational content about **ALL** of their financial relationships with ineligible companies within the prior **24** months. Financial relationships of any dollar amount must be reported.
 - OCPD uses an online form via our CE Portal to collect this information. The form asks:
 - the name of the ineligible company with which the person has a financial relationship
 - whether or not the financial relationship has ended.
 - the nature of the relationship (e.g. employee, researcher, consultant, advisor, speaker, independent contractor [including contracted research], royalties or patent beneficiary, executive role, and ownership interest*)
 - Individual stocks and stock options should be disclosed; diversified mutual funds do not need to be disclosed.
 - Research funding from ineligible companies should be disclosed by the principal or named investigator even if that individual's institution receives the research grant and manages the funds.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The individual completing the form must report ALL financial relationships with ineligible companies, not just those they deem as relevant. OCPD will work with the Course Director to review relevance of disclosed relationships. Furthermore, spouse/partner relationship disclosure is no longer required.

Standard 3: Identify, Mitigate, and Disclose Relevant Financial Relationships - continued

- 2. Exclude owners or employees of ineligible companies - OCPD Process:
 - Owners or employees of ineligible companies must be EXCLUDED as planners or faculty in an accredited CE activity.**
 - There are three exceptions to this exclusion. OCPD is responsible for reviewing the exceptions with the Course Director to determine if they are applicable:
 - When the content of the activity is not related to the business lines or products of their employer/company.
 - When the content of the accredited activity is limited to basic science research, such as pre-clinical research and drug discovery, or the methodologies of research, and they do not make care recommendations.
 - When they are participating as technicians to teach the safe and proper use of medical devices, and do not recommend whether or when a device is used.



Standard 3: Identify, Mitigate, and Disclose Relevant Financial Relationships - continued

- 3. Identify relevant financial relationships - OCPD Process:
 - OCPD will compile the responses from all Planners and faculty and share with the Planning Committee. OCPD and the Planning Committee will review the information about financial relationships to determine which relationships are relevant. Financial relationships are relevant if the educational content an individual can control is related to the business lines or products of the ineligible company.
- 4. Mitigate relevant financial relationships – OCPD Process:
 - OCPD will take steps to mitigate relationships prior to the individuals assuming their roles and will take steps appropriate to the role of the individual.
 - This requires all Planning Committee members to submit their financial disclosure forms at the time of an activity certification request to ensure mitigation steps for any members of the Planning Committee can be taken prior to the initiation of planning the CE activity.
 - Faculty members are expected to submit their financial relationships early in the planning process to ensure OCPD and the Planning Committee are aware of all financial relationships and can make plans for mitigation as needed. Faculty members should be aware that a common mechanism for mitigation is peer review and an expectation is that a copy of the presentation slides and/or content will be due in advance of the course date to allow time for review.



Standard 3: Identify, Mitigate, and Disclose Relevant Financial Relationships - continued

- 5. Disclose all relevant financial relationships to learners – OCPD Process:
 - OCPD will populate a course webpage that includes a faculty tab. That tab notes the following details:
 - The names of all faculty and planners and their relevant financial relationships, including the nature of the relationship and the name of the ineligible company. The list will also note the absence relevant financial relationships.
 - OCPD will provide the “Digital File of Learner Materials” to the Education Partner that includes important information to be shared with learners. The Digital File of Learner Materials will also include the Onsite Disclosure Summary details. This information must be shared on screen and/or as a handout with learners prior to the start of the education.



Standard 3: Identify, Mitigate, and Disclose Relevant Financial Relationships – *at a glance*

The Course Director and Planning Committee Members contact OCPD to initiate course planning. At the time they submit the Request for Activity Certification, they identify all individuals responsible for planning the activity. OCPD collects their financial disclosure information, and manages the review and mitigation of disclosed financial relationships prior to the start of course planning.

The Planning Committee selects the content areas and faculty for the course.

The RSS Coordinator enters the speaker's information into the RSS Dashboard, initiating the collection of the speaker's financial disclosures.

If the speaker has financial relationships, OCPD works with the identified Peer Reviewer (typically the Course Director) to conduct a peer review, which is OCPD's default mitigation strategy for RSS activities. The Peer Reviewer will also be responsible for working with OCPD to determine which financial relationships are relevant.

The RSS Coordinator uses the icon on the RSS Dashboard to create the Session Flyer. This includes the disclosure summary information that MUST be shared with all learners prior to the start of the session. You can share the disclosure on screen or in print, but you must make this information available prior to the start of each session.

There are various options to consider for conflict mitigation. Those options vary depending on the individual's role in the activity and the nature of their relationship. Common options include:

- Peer review (for faculty only) ***DEFAULT FOR ALL RSS SESSIONS***
- Remove the Planner or Faculty member and identify someone new
- Identify a co-presenter to help ensure balance
- And more

Remember that owners and employees of ineligible companies must be excluded from participating as Planners and/or Faculty in accredited continuing education.



It is important that Planners and Faculty submit their disclosures on time to ensure that there is sufficient time to review and mitigate potential conflicts of interest. Failure to do so can compromise the ability to qualify for credit.

Standard 4: Manage Commercial Support Appropriately

Per University of Minnesota Office of Continuing Professional Development's policy, Regularly Scheduled Series (RSS) activities are not eligible to receive commercial support (educational grants). Contact cme@umn.edu if you need additional information about Standard 4.



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Standard 5: Manage Ancillary Activities Offered in Conjunction with Accredited Continuing Education

Per University of Minnesota Office of Continuing Professional Development's policy, Regularly Scheduled Series (RSS) activities are not eligible to allow promotional activities such as exhibitors. Contact cme@umn.edu if you need additional information about Standard 5.



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Questions

The Education Consultant assigned to your course is your primary resource for information on accreditation rules and standards. Please contact them with any questions you might have.

The OCPD planning process has been developed to ensure compliance with the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing. The information in this document is provided to give you background on the recent changes to ACCME's Standards and to help ensure that all Course Directors and Planning Committee Members recognize their role in ensuring compliance with all accreditation rules when developing a continuing education activity in collaboration with the University of Minnesota's Office of Continuing Professional Development.



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