



RACGP | QI&CPD Program

Sponsorship guidance
for all accredited activities

2017-
19

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triennium

Sponsorship guidance for all accredited activities: QI&CPD Program 2017–19 triennium

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We recognise the traditional custodians of the land and sea on which we work and live.

Sponsorship guidance for all accredited 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) Quality Improvement and Continuing Professional Development (QI&CPD) Program must have improving the quality of patient care as their primary purpose.

Interactions with 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. The *Sponsorship guidance for all accredited activities: QI&CPD Program 2017–19 triennium* aims to ensure the educational material covered within each accredited activity meets or exceeds acceptable clinical and ethical standards. It applies to all sponsored accredited activities.

‘Sponsorship’ in the QI&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 QI&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.

Sponsorship requirements

To obtain and retain accredited status, accredited activities must comply with a number of requirements:

- Education delivered to GPs must be developed completely independently of any sponsorship.
- The QI&CPD Program will not accredit educational 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 QI&CPD Program’s activity standards.
- Facilitators and speakers 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 and speakers must declare to attending GPs any conflicts regarding payment, or other benefits or inducements from a sponsor prior to delivering the accredited activity.
- Speakers may be provided by a sponsor to present education, where appropriately trained and professional. However, the speaker will need to declare their conflict as a representative of the sponsor organisation prior to any delivery.
- Sponsored accredited activities must declare how and by whom it is sponsored each time that accredited activity is promoted, advertised or delivered.
- All event administration, and any aspect that includes interaction or contact with the participants (from registration to evaluation), must be handled by the provider and not the sponsor. This includes:
 - distribution of event flyer and processing of participants registration
 - collection and collation of participants’ completed evaluation forms
 - sponsors hosting accredited activities on their online management systems
 - online activities, including sponsor banners, pop-ups, resources being directed to the sponsor.

- Accredited 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 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
 - experimental treatments and methods that have not been fully evaluated by intervention research
 - experimental treatments without the support of the medical profession including by reason of inconclusive evidence of therapeutic benefits
 - theories and methods of treatment not supported by scientific evidence
 - 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 accredited activity's clinical, scientific or ethical standards, 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) accreditation of that activity if it fails to meet the activity standards.

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 generic name (also known as the Australian-approved name) is usually selected by the sponsor during registration, and the brand name is usually selected by a manufacturer or distributor of the drug.

Generic names must be used on all occasions within QI&CPD Program sponsorship. If, for any reason, it is imperative 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 also applies to any 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).

Sponsor promotion

In connection with an accredited activity, sponsors may deliver presentations concerning a therapeutic good, whether or not it is related to the content of that activity. Such presentations:

- must be an addendum and clearly separated from the accredited activity being delivered
- must not precede the accredited activity
- must be announced or introduced in such a way so as to ensure attendees are aware the educational content has finished
- must not be considered when determining the duration of an accredited activity in calculating the number of allocated QI&CPD points
- must only show sponsor logos and branding on either the first or last presentation slide
- may be accompanied by trade displays, either preceding or following an accredited activity, or during meal or break times. These displays must not be integrated within the accredited activity and must be kept separate in all aspects, including by not incorporating trade materials into any accredited activity's take-away content.

Entertainment and meals

Entertainment and meals must be separated from the focus of the accredited activity.

When compiling a session plan, adequate time for the serving and consumption of food must be accounted for. 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 accredited activity in calculating the number of allocated QI&CPD points.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

All sponsorship must comply with all applicable provisions in:

- Medicines Australia's 'Code of conduct'
- the TGA's 'Therapeutic goods advertising code'
- *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989* (Cth) and all codes or guides authorised under it
- all relevant laws.

Related documents

- The RACGP's 'Acceptance of gifts from the pharmaceutical industry' – www.racgp.org.au/support/policies/clinical-and-practice-management
- The Australian Medical Association's (AMA) 'Code of ethics' – <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/ama-code-ethics-2004-editorially-revised-2006>
- Medicines Australia's 'Code of conduct' – <https://medicinesaustralia.com.au/code-of-conduct>



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