



Principles Governing Relationships between Health Professionals, Health Professional Trainees and Industry within the Faculty of Medicine

General Principles

The following principles apply to activities sponsored by the University of Toronto. Central to these are the integrity and the fiduciary nature of the health professional – patient/client relationship, the confidentiality of information regarding the patient/client, and the avoidance of any conflict of interest for the health professional trainee and for the training program.

1. The primary objective of professional interactions between the health professional/trainee and industry is the advancement of health care. Through education and research, such professional interactions should promote this objective.
2. The relationship between the physician/trainee and industry is governed by the Canadian Medical Association Code of Ethics.
3. The health professional/trainee has as her/his primary obligation the care and welfare of the patient/client. Relationships with industry are appropriate if they promote education and research and do not affect the integrity of the professional-patient relationship.
4. The health professional/trainee must resolve any conflict of interest resulting from interactions with industry in favour of the patient. In particular, she/he must avoid any self-interest in prescribing, treating, and referring practices.
5. In any interaction with industry, the health professional/trainee must maintain professional autonomy and commitment to the scientific method.
6. The health professional/trainee must disclose the nature of any relationship with industry to patients where that relationship might create or be perceived to create a conflict of interest in the professional's decision-making regarding the care of that patient, as well as to organizers and audiences involved in educational events or research.
7. The health professional/trainee must not receive personal gifts from industry for educational activities within the University of Toronto and affiliated institutions, except for educational material of minimal monetary value.
8. No teacher who is a University of Toronto faculty member may be directly supported by, or receive gifts from, commercial organizations while taking part in University of Toronto-sponsored educational activities. Indirect payments through unrestricted grants for University of Toronto-sponsored Continuing Education events are similarly proscribed unless an unusual time commitment has been made by the faculty member and there is previous agreement on the stipend by the department Chair or delegate.
9. Speakers at all University of Toronto teaching events in the clinical setting should provide disclosure statements at the outset regarding potential conflict of interest with the subject matter (e.g., including honoraria, consultancies, advisory boards, and stock holdings). This expectation holds for faculty appointees and guest lecturers alike.
10. Direct individual sponsorship (i.e., covering travel costs, registration, hotels and meals) by industry of individual health professional trainees and faculty (other than faculty speaking at industry-sponsored symposia) to attend local, national and international conferences is prohibited. However, industry-sponsored travel awards for trainees, awarded competitively through a process determined and controlled entirely by the relevant Departments and programs will be allowed. These travel awards must be consistent with the ethos of this document.
11. All physicians holding clinical faculty appointments shall disclose annually to their Chief and/or University Program Director potential sources of conflict of interest related to industry (honoraria, consultancies, advisory Boards). All tenure-stream professional colleagues should make disclosures consistent with the University's Policy on Conflict of Interest: Academic Staff.

Education

1. A training program (undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate) should determine that an educational event offered on behalf of the members of that training program is appropriate for the curriculum offered by that training program. The educational event must address educational needs of the health professional trainee.
2. The training program must control the content, organization and funding arrangements for an educational event offered on behalf of the health professional trainees.
3. The training program must ensure that a balanced presentation of information regarding therapeutic interventions offered within any educational event for its health professional trainees. Any agent or device discussed must be discussed within the context of the disease or condition and of the available therapeutic interventions. Generic names of agents and devices, where possible, should be used within educational events.
4. Special funds, scholarships and other support to allow health professionals/trainees to receive salary support or attend educational events are permitted, as long as the training program administers such funds and oversees a fair process of application for such funding support.
5. A description of educational support must be provided to the University Department Chair or delegate, to industry supporting the educational event, and to the attendees of an educational event.
6. A training program must include formal training within the curriculum regarding the ethical guidelines for the relationship and interaction of health professionals/trainees with industry.
7. Formal teaching on conflict of interest will be introduced into the core curriculum for all health professional trainees.
8. Faculty development will be undertaken through dissemination of this report and dissemination of the CMA guidelines.
9. With regard to educational events targeted specifically to health professionals/trainees, and consistent with University requirements, faculty members/trainees may not receive honoraria specifically for such teaching within our academic community

Research

1. Health professionals/trainees may participate in research sponsored by industry if the research is ethically defensible, socially responsible and scientifically valid. Colleagues and trainees must retain the right to publish findings without censorship or undue delay in all research relationships with industrial-sponsors.
2. Participation by a health professional/trainee in research sponsored by industry must occur within the context of formal approval and monitoring of the research by an appropriate ethics review board, agency or body. A health professional/trainee must not accept any remuneration or reward for proposing patients as subjects of research. The Faculty's *Policy on the Offer and Acceptance of Finders' Fees or Completion Fees in Research involving Human Subjects* should be observed.
3. Each Chief of a teaching hospital Department shall report annually to the Department Chair on total research funding and the proportions that reflect industry and other non-peer-reviewed support versus peer-reviewed funding.
4. All health professionals/trainees conducting research will read, consider and adhere to the Tricouncil Policy Statement (TCPS) governing the ethical conduct of research, and will also adhere to policies promulgated by the University, the Faculty of Medicine and/or individual teaching hospitals. The goal of this provision is the protection of human subjects, investigator autonomy and academic freedom.

Additional Considerations

Issues not specifically addressed in this document which departments/programs or hospitals may wish to address include among others the presence of industry representatives and/or promotional material at presentations, the sponsorship by industry of retreats for health professionals/trainees, and the monitoring by departments of issues related to the interaction with industry on an ongoing basis. As best practices at the departmental and program level emerge, this document will be revised.

This document addresses internal activities. For activities outside the University of Toronto, such as continuing education events, all professional guidelines about fees/payments/gifts from commercial interests should be observed. See <http://www.cme.utoronto.ca/directors/commercial.asp> and <http://www.cme.utoronto.ca/pdf/declaration.pdf> for additional guidance.