

Industry Sponsorship and Support Policy (RCPI-Pol-041)

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1. Background

Financial support from the healthcare industry can allow the hosting of high standard events with recognised educational value. It can also allow RCPI to offer awards and fellowships that contribute to the delivery of high-quality care to patients.

Trainees, learners, members and fellows of RCPI often attend external events, both national and international, with financial support from industry. These events allow physicians to keep their professional knowledge up to date. Trainees, members and fellows also receive financial support for research projects which enable them to make improvements in patient care.

The pharmaceutical industry is a major contributor to financial support for healthcare professionals and organisations. Support is also received from companies in other industries, such as medical device companies. Within this document 'industry support' is understood to mean financial support from entities within the pharmaceutical industry, medical device companies and other for-profit companies. Such financial support benefits the healthcare system, and ultimately can improve patient care. Continued financial support from industry is recognised as important for future improvements and innovation in healthcare.

While there is an absolute need for doctors to remain up to date regarding international best practice, and to pursue research, there is potential for conflict of interest where financial and in-kind support is received from industry. Doctors must avoid being unduly influenced by industry in the care they provide to patients. They must retain the confidence of patients and they must always act ethically and in the best interests of their patients. The same principles apply for healthcare organisations including those involved in education and continuing professional development of healthcare professionals.

The guidelines described in this policy aim to ensure transparency and ethical conduct in all interactions with industry (including but not limited to pharmaceutical industry), for RCPI as a healthcare organisation and for its individual learners, trainees, members and fellows.

2. Organisational Guidelines for RCPI

The guidelines are based on the principle that collaboration between industry and RCPI has the potential to deliver significant benefits and that industry plays a valid and important role in the provision of medical education. However, this relationship needs to be based on clear ethical principles and should be transparent. These guidelines are relevant for RCPI's engagement as an organisation with industry.

2.1 General principles

- 2.1.1 RCPI and its Faculties and Institutes may receive support from industry. This support may be solicited by staff members, or via organizing committees or steering groups.
- 2.1.2 If support received is from the pharmaceutical industry, the company should be a member of IPHA.
- 2.1.3 Support should be untied, transparent and declared.
- 2.1.4 All financial support received from industry must be in the form of an unrestricted educational grant.
- 2.1.5 Financial support from organisations or individuals may be refused where there is conflict with the mission or reputation of RCPI such as that relating to the tobacco or alcohol industry. Where there is doubt, the decision should be referred for a final decision by the RCPI executive.
- 2.1.6 A register of all funding received must be maintained.

2.2 Events

- 2.2.1 RCPI and its Faculties and Institutes may solicit appropriate support from industry either through staff members or via the organising committee of an event.
- 2.2.2 Support received should not in any way influence the content of the event. The selection of speakers, chairs of sessions and topics must at all times remain under the control of the organising committee.
- 2.2.3 Speakers from the sponsoring company, Pharmaceutical or industry representatives should not speak or present at educational events/ during the educational component of an event (Brief introductions/close only permitted).
- 2.2.4 Any sponsorship accepted must be approved by the organising committee, Faculty/Institute Board, or Executive, depending on the purpose and event. In some cases, a sponsor may require signed agreement of terms and conditions/contract from the organizer. The organising committee must review and approve or reject these terms and they must be in alignment with RCPI guidelines.
- 2.2.5 Hospitality must be secondary to the main purpose of any meeting or event organised by RCPI with industry support.

2.2.6 Where a commercial company sponsors or organises a satellite event, or event run in tandem with an RCPI educational event, it should be made clear that this is a separate event funded by the company, and not by RCPI.

2.3 Awards, Bursaries or Fellowships

2.3.1 Financial support for awards, bursaries and fellowships may be made to RCPI on the understanding that RCPI has full autonomy and decision-making in respect of the award. This applies, for example to the RCPI Pfizer Rheumatology Fellowship.

2.3.2 For awards, bursaries and fellowships receiving financial support, joint press statements and photo calls are considered appropriate.

2.4 Support for Training

2.4.1 Support for training programmes is allowed provided the support is provided in the form of an unrestricted educational grant.

2.4.2 Development and design of the programme and selection of candidates for the training programme bursaries will be done independently, without input from those providing financial support.

2.5 Support for CPD

2.5.1 Meetings supported by industry funds and branded as 'continuing education' should be held to the same standards as other kinds of meetings and events.

2.5.2 The content of all CPD materials, including online content, developed or hosted by RCPI must be independent of the pharmaceutical company which has provided funding. In practice this means that:

2.5.3 Any funding should be provided by means of an unrestricted educational grant

2.5.4 CPD content/materials should, where practicable, be developed independently by RCPI.

2.5.5 Where RCPI uses materials from a CPD provider or other source, RCPI should audit the content to satisfy itself that there is no industry influence over the educational material.

RCPI has published guidance on its website in relation to CPD approval for sponsored events. RCPI also adheres to guidance from the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education, which includes criteria relating to industry sponsorship.

2.6 Where RCPI is not the main organiser

2.6.1 For events or initiatives where RCPI are collaborators but may not be the main organisers (for example Clinical Programmes collaboration with the HSE), RCPI should make the collaborators aware of these guidelines and in particular the overarching premise that any funds received should be unrestricted and that funders should not be in conflict with the mission or reputation of RCPI.

2.7 Transparency and declarations of Financial Support

2.7.1 RCPI and its Faculties and Institute will publish details in their annual reports of all donations, grants and sponsorship received, with an indication of the educational value associated with that support.

2.7.2 RCPI will comply with the IPHA code and will require Council Members, Executive Board members and Faculty/Institute Board members to comply and will encourage all trainees, learners, members and fellows to comply.

2.7.3 All Council, Executive board and Faculty and Institute board members are requested to declare any support received from industry and to provide any other relevant information regarding their dealings with industry.

2.7.4 All speakers making substantive contributions at events hosted by RCPI must include a slide on declaration of financial support received in the previous 12 months related/relevant to the topic of the event.

2.8 College recognition of industry support

2.8.1 Sponsors of events may be given space for exhibition stands, in an area separate from where the main presentations take place. Promotional material and logos can be displayed in this area. The organising committee of an event is free to adopt stricter rules in this regard and may decide not to allow the any presence of any sponsor material at the event.

2.8.2 Sponsorship received for an educational event may be recognised by inclusion of a slide at the start or the end of the event, and distinct from the educational presentation material of that event, listing the sponsors along with their logos. The remainder of the educational material presented should be free from any form of advertising including sponsor names or logos. This is a European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME) requirement.

2.8.3 Meeting materials for sponsored meetings, such as the programme of events, may carry logos and the branding of sponsors under a list of sponsors on the final page of a meeting booklet or equivalent.

- 2.8.4 Event marketing materials, including online materials may also carry logos and branding of sponsors, subject to certain conditions. In line with instructions from EACCME, logos and branding however may not appear on the home page or on the pages with scientific/educational information, and ideally should be placed under a separate tab dedicated to sponsors.
- 2.8.5 Where sponsors are recognised, it should be explicitly stated that the sponsorship has been provided by means of an unrestricted educational grant.
- 2.8.6 The sponsor may send representatives to the event and/or reception/dinner associated with the event.

2.9 Maintaining integrity of RCPI brand and logo

- 2.9.1 RCPI's name and/or logo may be used by external partners only with express prior permission and for the precise purposes requested.

3. Guideline for Trainees, Learners, Members and Fellows

The following guidelines apply to all those who are trainees, learners, members or fellows of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. They are intended to support, trainees, learners, members and fellows in making decisions to maintain their professional independence in relation to financial support received from industry, and to ensure transparency in these relationships.

- 3.1 Trainees, learners, members and fellows should adhere to the Medical Council guidance on professional conduct and ethics in relation to their interaction with industry for educational or for research purposes and should comply with the IPHA code of practice.
- 3.2 All trainees, learners, members and fellows receiving Transfers of Value (ToVs) from pharmaceutical companies should consent to allowing this information to be published in accordance with the IPHA code of practice.
- 3.3 Gifts from industry should not be accepted.
- 3.4 Where an individual receives payment from industry for a service provided or work undertaken (for example research projects), they should satisfy themselves that they are able to present an un-biased professional view, without influence from the sponsoring company.
- 3.5 Medical professionals should not engage in endorsement of specific products or in advertisements, i.e. promotion of commercial interests under the guise of editorial comment.
- 3.6 Trainees, learners, members and fellows must satisfy themselves that any industry - sponsored meeting they attend has an entirely educational rather than promotional purpose.

- 3.7** Hospitality accepted must be secondary to the main purpose of any industry- sponsored meeting attended.
- 3.8** Sponsorship received to cover costs associated with attendance of an educational meeting must be untied and fully disclosed.
- 3.9** Industry-covered travel and subsistence costs associated with attendance of an educational meeting should be appropriate. Recipients should exercise good judgement on this when accepting sponsorship for attendance of such meetings.
- 3.10** It is only acceptable to receive an honorarium for an educational event where the individual makes a substantive contribution to the event, for example as a speaker. The speaker is expected to exercise good judgement in relation to the amount of this honorarium, and to accept an amount not more than the industry norm. The speaker should satisfy him/herself that:
- the event is educational rather than promotional
 - the information they impart at the event represents their own independent, professional opinion and is not influenced directly or indirectly as a result of honorarium received
 - the honorarium received is declared
- 3.11** In public presentations, journal articles and equivalent, trainees, learners, members and fellows must declare potential conflicts of interest and any industry funding received.

4. Non-RCPI Events at No.6

These guidelines apply to non-RCPI events that take place at the conference venue of No.6 Kildare Street. The aim of these guidelines is to ensure that events held reflect RCPI values and support its core mission.

- 4.1** Bookings for alcohol industry or tobacco industry supported events will be refused.
- 4.2** A booking for an event may be refused where it is not aligned with RCPI's values or in conflict with RCPI's core mission.
- 4.3** In the practical operation of any events taking place at No, 6, health and wellbeing priorities should be reflected as follows:
- In line with principles of a smoke-free campus, smoking will not be allowed in the vicinity of any of RCPI's buildings, particularly No.6.
 - RCPI advocates the consumption of alcohol within healthy limits and any alcohol served at College events must reflect this.
 - Food choices for RCPI events must reflect a healthy eating ethos and healthy options should be available.
- 4.4** Bookings from Pharma and Medical Device companies will be declared in the College register.

5. Sample Template

Declaration of Industry Support for Council Members, Executive Board and Faculty / Institute Board Members.

Company	Registration Fees	Travel and Accommodation	Fees	Related Expenses	Other Relevant Information