

Policy on Conflicts of Interest, Disclosure, and Mitigation

Supersedes: none

Lead Writer: Eleftherios Soleas

Effective Date: September 13, 2021

I. Purpose

These guidelines have been issued to provide staff and faculty with a framework which they can use with respect to conflicts of interest, their disclosure, and their mitigation by planning committees, speakers themselves, and the officers of Queen's University. The guidelines are intended to be complimentary with Queen's University's [Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy](#) and the [National Standard for Support of Accredited CPD Activities](#). Speakers, planning committee members, attendees, and support staff should also study the [Code of Ethical Practices from Innovative Medicines Canada](#) as relevant.

II. Background

Conflicts of Interest are perceived and actual occurrences when an individual has or has the appearance of having commitments to organizations, worldviews, practices, or relationships with divergent or seemingly divergent goals. They are common and they are mitigatable. Unmitigated conflicts of interest are a source of infiltration of bias into continuing education of all kinds and can have deleterious effects on the practice of professionals of all kinds. By mitigating them we can eliminate and reduce the infiltration of bias and make programs, offerings, and courses more trustworthy, effective, and evidence based.

III. Policies

It is the expectation of the Office of Professional Development and Educational Scholarship (OPDES), and that of Queen's University as a whole that speakers, planning committee members, and support staff will fulsomely and comprehensively disclose their for-profit and not-for-profit potential for conflicts of interests when requested by planning committees, regulatory bodies, or their audiences. This should ideally be in writing and spoken word whenever possible

during presentations, but also in program introductory and marketing materials as necessary.

IV. Procedures and Processes

Planning committees and organizing bodies will request invited speakers and the members of committees to complete the requisite Conflict of Interest Disclosure form. This form is available on the Accreditation and Certification section of the OPDES Website. The planning committee or organizing body will review the disclosures and create a mitigation and prevention plan which can include items such as the below:

1. All programs begin with a needs assessment and the disclosures are obtained before learning objectives are set from the needs assessment
2. Planning committees are made up of members of the healthcare or audience community exclusively; no industry personnel are on any planning committees
3. Planning committees meet and discuss how to proceed with bias mitigation after collection of the COI Disclosures
4. Presenters are required to disclose any/all relationships with industry in their presentations in multiple-modalities
5. Presenters disclose their off-label use recommendations and planning committees must endorse their inclusion based on evidence and expertise
6. In the case of a breach of the disclosure principles, incidental or intentional infiltration of bias, or the serious potential for bias, the planning committee chair, the program chair, accreditor of record, or agent of Queen's will either wait for an opportunity to remedy the infiltration at the end of the presentation (e.g., asking the speaker to list generic versions of the drug, if they happened to state a brand name) or will send out a written email retracting and replacing the offending statement.

Approved by Faculty Board Executive: March 7, 2022