

American College of Rheumatology

Guiding Principles for Interactions with External Entities

Preamble

The American College of Rheumatology (ACR) is the leading authority and trusted partner of rheumatology professionals and will continually advance the specialty and the future of rheumatology.

The ACR is committed to operating with integrity, transparency, and in an ethical fashion. The ACR engages with External Entities in ways that affirm and support its mission, which is *to empower rheumatology professionals to excel in their specialty*, and its core values in support of its vision and mission:

- Professionalism
- Service to members
- Vitality of the profession
- Excellence in patient care
- Transparency
- Innovation

The ACR believes:

- It has common/mutual goals with External Entities, including corporations in the pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device industries;
- Relationships with External Entities provide value when such relationships are ethically structured and managed;
- Relationships with corporations should be transparent;
- Financial and other support should have no influence on educational or scientific content; and
- Collective efforts, inclusive of corporations and other External Entities, are essential to advance the quality of patient care and improve outcomes.

Definitions

The following terms are defined for purposes of these Principles.

ACR (The): the American College of Rheumatology and all of its officers, directors, committees and subcommittees, task forces, divisions, sections, and staff. ACR includes the Association of Rheumatology Professionals.

ARP (The): Association of Rheumatology Professionals, the Interprofessional Division of the American College of Rheumatology.

College (The): includes the ACR and the Rheumatology Research Foundation (Foundation).

Commercial Entity: any for-profit entity that develops, produces, markets, re-sells, negotiates, or distributes drugs, devices, services, business support, information, therapies, or other healthcare goods and services used or intended to diagnose, treat, monitor, or manage health. This definition is not intended to include entities through which healthcare professionals provide clinical services directly to patients.

External Entity: any entity including, but not limited to, Commercial Entities, other for-profit entities, non-profit organizations, public entities and agencies, healthcare insurance companies, or individuals.

Foundation (The): the Rheumatology Research Foundation and all of its officers, directors, committees, task forces, and staff.

Gifts: cash in any amount from an External Entity that has a direct interest in physicians' treatment recommendations, including items of value for which reciprocity is expected or implied. Gifts can be accepted when the benefit will directly benefit patients and they are of minimal value.

Key College Leaders: ACR President, ACR President-Elect, Foundation President, ARP President, and ARP President-Elect.

Supporter: any External Entity that provides financial support to the College.

Representatives: Key College Leaders, ACR Board of Directors members, Standing Committee Chairs and Members, and Staff. This includes anyone acting or speaking on behalf of the College or authorized to discuss College business with an External Entity.

Core Principles

1 Independence

- 1.1 The College will develop all educational activities, scientific programs, products, services, and government advocacy positions independent of influence by External Entities and will maintain control via policies and procedures that foster independence. When the College collaborates with or receives support from an External Entity, it will apply its independent judgment to the arrangement and will not allow the External Entity to control content or project decisions.
- 1.2 The College will separate its efforts to seek financial support for its activities from its programmatic decisions.
- 1.3 The ACR will not offer exclusivity to a single Commercial Entity for activities/programs targeted at fellows and/or medical students/residents. If support from more than one Commercial Entity is not confirmed, the ACR board of directors must approve single Commercial Entity arrangements.
- 1.4 The ACR will not utilize support from Commercial Entities for the following:
 - 1.4.1 ACR Board of Directors and committee meetings
 - 1.4.2 Advocacy/government affairs activities
 - 1.4.3 Activities of the Quality of Care Committee and its subcommittees
 - 1.4.4 Development (but not dissemination) of clinical practice guidelines, criteria, and quality measures
 - 1.4.5 Development of registries
 - 1.4.6 Position statements
 - 1.4.7 ACR activities related to state and local societies
 - 1.4.8 Development (but not dissemination) of patient information activities/materials, except when support is provided as part of an independent medical education grant
 - 1.4.9 Advertisements on ACR-owned websites
 - 1.4.10 ACR press-related activities, such as press releases/conferences, newsrooms, media tours, and other press-related activations
 - 1.4.11 Attendee-wide social events such as opening receptions held at ACR meetings
 - 1.4.12 Non-CME ACR research conferences, unless ACR Board of Directors approval is obtained
- 1.5 It is not appropriate for Representatives of the College to accept Gifts from Commercial Entities. When appropriate, a representative from a Commercial Entity

may pay for modest meals for College Representatives to conduct business between the two entities they represent.

2 Transparency

The ACR is committed to acting with integrity and transparency. For example:

- 2.1 The College's conflict of interest and mitigation of financial relationship policies.
- 2.2 Key College Leaders will comply with the College's conflict of interest and mitigation of financial relationships policies.
- 2.3 The ACR will make publicly available a listing of financial support from Commercial Entities.
- 2.4 The ACR will follow a transparent, independent clinical guideline development process with no engagement or financial support from Commercial Entities.
- 2.5 If the College receives financial support from an External Entity to support the College's own research, the College will disclose the Supporter. The College will act independently in the selection of research topics and the conduct of the research itself.
- 2.6 ACR will comply with the ACCME Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education.

Furthermore, the ACR adheres to the following internal and external guidance, as applicable.

ACR Guidance

- [ACR Convergence Affiliate Events Policy](#)
- [ACR Convergence Exhibitor Prospectus](#)
- [ACR Convergence Exhibitor Rules and Regulations](#)
- [ACR Convergence Promotional Material Guidelines](#)
- [ACR Convergence Sponsorship Prospectus](#)
- [ACR Convergence Abstract Submission Guidelines](#)
- [ACR Convergence Abstract Embargo Policy](#)
- [ACR Convergence Innovation Theater Guidelines](#)
- [ACR Convergence Industry-Supported Symposia Guidelines](#)
- [ACR Convergence Press Policies and Procedures](#)
- [CME Mission Statement](#)
- [Code of Ethics](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Principles for Board of Directors, Committees, Subcommittees, Task Forces, and Special Projects](#)
- [Eligibility for Participation on ACR Standing Committees](#)
- [Expert Witness Policy and Guidelines](#)
- [Mission and Vision Statement](#)

- [Policies and Procedures for Development, Approval, and Publication of Quality of Care Committee Products](#)
- Principles Regarding External Entity Support for Rheumatology Fellowship Training
- [Procedures for Disclosure and Mitigation of Relevant Financial Relationships with Ineligible Companies Related to CME Activities](#)
- [Professional Online Community Rules](#)
- [The Rheumatologist Advertising Policy](#)
- [Website and Privacy Policies](#)
- [Website Proprietary Legend and Disclaimer](#)

Third-Party Guidance

- [Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education \(ACCME\) Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education](#)
- [Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education \(ACGME\) Principles to Guide the Relationship between Graduate Medical Education, Industry, and Other Funding Sources for Programs and Sponsoring Institutions Accredited by ACGME](#)
- [Advanced Medical Technology Association \(AdvaMed\) Code of Ethics on Interactions with U.S. Health Care Professionals](#)
- [American Medical Association \(AMA\) Gifts to Physicians from Industry](#)
- [Council of Medical Specialty Societies \(CMSS\) Code for Interactions With Companies](#)
- [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#)
- [Office of Inspector General \(OIG\) Compliance Program Guidance for Pharmaceutical Manufacturers](#)
- [Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America \(PhRMA\) Code on Interactions with Healthcare Professionals](#)

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