



## **Avoiding Non-Compliance with the Standards for Commercial Support: What Do I Need to Understand about Conflicts of Interest?**

Transcript of Video FAQ  
May 19, 2010

<http://education.accme.org/video/accme-video-faq/understanding-conflicts-interest>

### ***Description: What do I need to understand about conflicts of interest (COI)?***

An important step in establishing the validity or the credibility of accredited continuing medical education is to ensure that all persons with conflicts of interest know they have a conflict of interest, that the accredited provider knows that they have a conflict of interest, that the accredited provider takes steps to resolve those conflicts of interest, and that the learners know that those persons have relationships that created conflicts of interest.

Now what creates a conflict of interest in accredited continuing medical education?

Well, that has two components. One, is a person has to have an opportunity to affect the content of continuing medical education — a teacher, an author, a speaker, a planner of an educational activity, has the opportunity to determine what subjects are being taught in continuing medical education. And if that person at the same time has a financial relationship with a commercial interest that has to do with that content, that person with that financial relationship has an incentive to maintain the value of that relationship or to potentially increase the value of that relationship. And that incentive creates a conflict of interest in accredited continuing medical education. That person has, at the same time, their interests with respect to that incentive and, at the same time, has in their hands the interests of the learners and the public for the content that they're going to teach about, that they're going to frame, that they're going to present in accredited continuing medical education.

The presence of this conflict of interest does not preclude the person from participating. It does not make the content that they create false or misleading. It just creates a boundary issue. It creates a set of facts and circumstances that people need to recognize. And it's not wrong to find yourself at a boundary; it's just wrong to not know how to manage yourself at the boundary. And it's the ACCME's Standards for Commercial Support, Standard 2, the identification and resolution of conflict of interest, and Standard 6, the disclosure of relevant financial relationships, which are accredited CME's tools for the management of conflict of interest and the management of ourselves at this important boundary.

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