

European Board for Accreditation in Hematology (EBAH)

Code of Conduct for Corporate Sponsors

Introduction

The purpose of this agreement is to secure:

1. evidence for the EHA, for its members, and for non-member claimants of EBAH CME credits that the provision of an unrestricted educational grant for a CME activity by a commercial entity is governed by a contract which guarantees absence of commercial influence or bias,
2. evidence for medical and scientific regulatory authorities that CME activities supported in this way are so governed;
3. evidence for commercial entities that provide such support that they are not using CME activities for the promotion of their goods or services.

The agreement will define a code of conduct which will govern the commercial entities' sponsorship of CME activities organized by (representatives of) academic and scientific organizations. This should be read in conjunction with the EBAH Standards & Guidelines which govern the provision of these CME activities.

The code of conduct is intended to strengthen the already mutually beneficial relationship between commercial entities and the medical and scientific professions in Hematology and related fields and to protect both parties to the contract from actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

The Activities and the Grants

This agreement is to cover all donations of unrestricted educational grants made by the corporate partner (hereinafter “the donor”) to academic and scientific organizations to support CME activity over a three year period from the date on which the corporate partner agreement has been signed by the donor. These donations must be made purely for educational purposes and not for the purpose of promoting any goods or products. The individual CME activities will be governed by EBAH Standards & Guidelines (q.v.).

Restrictions Governing Donor’s Involvement in Activity

Content development

The donor agrees that only academic or scientific organizations are eligible to apply for unrestricted educational grants to support CME activity for which EBAH CME accreditation is sought. Only a trained specialist in hematology or related field is eligible to apply for such support and accreditation on behalf of the academic or scientific organization.

The organizer of an EBAH CME approved activity will ensure that the educational and scientific program of the activity is neither influenced nor biased by commercial interests. CME activities that benefit any commercial interest are not eligible for EBAH CME accreditation. The donor will play no part in the selection of the topic or content of the CME activity or in the development of the educational materials all of which will be dealt with independently by the organizer and speakers.

The use of commercial product names is not allowed. Generic names will be used for all materials and during all presentations. Only where no generic name is available the trade name may be used (e.g. Thalidomide).

At the specific request of the organizer and the faculty the donor may provide research data relevant to a product marketed by the donor. The donor may assist the organizer and the faculty in the preparation of material to be presented but logos, symbols, colors, etc. that refer explicitly or implicitly to the donor of the educational grant or any other commercial entity are not allowed in the CME material presented. The donor will ensure that all presenters are aware of any relevant restrictions on these data.

Selection of faculty

The donor will not be involved in the selection of the faculty and speakers unless in response to a direct request from the organizer in which case the scientific referent of the donor will suggest in writing more than one name, will provide the qualifications of the speakers, and will disclose any financial or other relationship between the potential speakers and the donor.

Logistical support

The donor may assist the organizer in finding suitable facilities for the activity but this assistance will not include the use of any of the donor's staff in the conduct of the activity, additional funding outside the unrestricted educational grant to fund the use of facilities or the transport of faculty to and from the meeting place. This assistance will not involve, or be designed in any way to influence, the content of the activity.

Organizational activities may be subcontracted to commercial entities, provided that they have had no financial relationship with the donor(s) of the educational grant(s) for at least two years prior to the start of the CME activity. A statement declaring such will be sent by the organizer of the activity to the EBAH at least eight weeks prior to the start of the CME activity.

Other activities of donor

The CME activity will be clearly distinguished from commercially organized activities (e.g. 'satellite symposia'). These and accompanying social events will not compete with, nor take priority over, the accredited CME sessions. Educational sessions will be held apart from commercially organized activities or sessions.

The contribution to CME activities by donors is allowed only by way of an unrestricted educational financial grant to the organizer of the CME activity. Contributions to CME activities other than financial contributions (e.g. organizational contributions) are not permitted.

Promotion of the CME activity

The donor will not be involved in the development of the promotional materials of the CME activity. Any materials promoting the CME activity distributed by the donor of the unrestricted educational grant will be reviewed beforehand by the organizer. Any written reference to the donor must be prefixed by: '**supported by an unrestricted educational grant from [name of commercial entity].**' Only when preceded by this statement and only once, a discrete logo of the donor may be included.

Distribution of enduring materials

The donor accepts that all requests for information and material resulting from the activity will be directed to the organizer, whose representative will retain full control of the rights and responsibilities to distribute these. The donor agrees not to use these in any way to promote their goods or products.

Regulatory requirements

The donation of an unrestricted educational grant will be governed by the relevant national and EU guidelines and legislation governing the activities of the donor of the unrestricted educational grant.

Audit of commercially sponsored CME activity

The donor of the unrestricted educational grants agrees to the EBAH conducting random audits of compliance with both this agreement and with the EBAH Standards & Guidelines governing provision of the activity. These audits will be conducted by selected hematologists and EBAH staff.

Obligations on the Recipient of the Grant in Organising Activities

These obligations lie outside this agreement and are covered by the EBAH Standards & Guidelines governing the conduct of provision of CME activities.

Donors of unrestricted study grants for CME activities agree to familiarize themselves with these standards and guidelines and agree further not to compromise in any way the organizers' compliance with them.

General Provisions and Representations Governing Use of Grant Funds

Purpose

The donor agrees that only CME activities that exclusively benefit hematologists and their patients are eligible for funding with an unrestricted educational grant and that poster sessions, corporately sponsored symposia, courses in CME application, recreational activities, social program activities and sessions and events not organized by the organizer are excluded from such funding and this agreement.

Additional funding

The donor agrees that no additional funds will be provided by the donor for the proposed activity other than those covered by the unrestricted educational grant intended to support the CME activity and that no separate payments will be made to the organizer, the faculty or others involved in the activity. The donor agrees not to approve or support any requests for funding to conduct additional programs or provide enduring material resulting from any proposed CME activity supported by a specific unrestricted educational grant.

Independence

The donor agrees that donations have no relation to or bearing on volume or value of any referrals, financial relationships or other business arrangements otherwise existing with the organizers of any CME activity.

Professional standards

The educational or scientific organization and its representative ('the organizer') are fully responsible for adherence to the EBAH Standards & Guidelines. The donor will not compromise observance and execution of these responsibilities.

Grant amounts and reconciliation

The donor will retain the discretion to determine the total amount of support provided in an unrestricted educational grant but agrees to limit this total to a sum which is reasonable for the provision of the CME activity in proportion to the duration and content of the activity and to the size of the faculty and the number of anticipated delegates.

The donor agrees to inform the EBAH of the total amount granted to each organizer for each specific CME activity.

The donor agrees to make payments only to the organizers' institutions and retains the right to determine whether the payment is made in installments, including withholding a proportion of the grant until the satisfactory completion of the activity.

Accountability

The donor has the right to inspect the books of accounts and other financial records and other accompanying documents concerning the expenditure of the grant in connection with the CME activity.

Disposition of funds

Where the organizer fails to undertake the intended CME activity or where the expenditure falls short of the grant, the donor will be entitled to the return of either the entire grant or of all unspent funds.