

ACVIM Policy on Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

To appropriately inform audiences participating in ACVIM sponsored Continuing Education (CE) events, ACVIM requires that all speakers must disclose any involvement with industry that may potentially influence their presentation. Conflict of interest for an individual has two components:

- a financial relationship with a commercial interest (e.g., pharmaceutical company or medical device manufacturer); and,
- the opportunity to influence content of a CE activity relevant to products and services of a commercial interest.

In principle, the audience for any educational intervention should be aware of any potential biases that an instructor may have in the presentation of material. In many events, such as sponsored visiting lectureships or conferences underwritten by educational grants from industry, there is an explicit recognition of the nature of the sponsorship. Armed with this knowledge, an audience can properly evaluate the content of the presentations or teaching. There may, however, be undisclosed relationships with industry, which instructors quite legitimately hold, which are not as readily visible and which may yet give a perception of bias.

Examples of relationships which should be disclosed include, but are not limited to:

- any direct financial interest in a company whose interests are in the area(s) covered by the educational material
- investments held by the speaker (e.g., holding stock) in such a Company
- membership on such a Company's Advisory Board or similar committee
- current or recent participation in a clinical trial sponsored by such a Company
- assisting in the design of clinical studies concerning the use of products manufactured by such a Company
- participating in clinical studies using products produced by such a Company
- research by the speaker sponsored by the Company
- paid speaker by such a Company
- the speaker holds a patent for a product referred to in the presentation or marketed by such a Company

ACVIM has agreed to put in place safeguards to manage conflicts of interest and to prevent the insertion of commercial bias. We have added a Disclosure Declaration for speakers to fill out to provide ACVIM Forum Chairs with a place to document whether or not actual conflicts of interest exist, and in the event of actual conflict, to document what safeguards the ACVIM Forum Chairs have proactively taken to ensure that no commercial bias exists within the CE content. We have also included a slide template (PPT) which every speaker must fill out and present as the second slide in their presentation (immediately following the title slide). **Please note that permission to speak and to receive a stipend is dependent on the use of a disclosure slide.**

Acceptable ways to manage conflict may include:

- restrict involvement of the person to areas outside of the area of conflict;
- have an alternate speaker address areas that serve as a conflict for the proposed speaker;
- choose an alternative speaker, planner, or author entirely;
- change the focus of the activity to one that avoids the conflict; and/or,
- subject all information to peer review by parties without such a conflict.

Depending on the circumstance, other acceptable safeguard options may exist. Combining two or more safeguards or developing a unique mechanism may also be appropriate.

Disclosure by the instructor must be done verbally, using a slide or a handout at the beginning of a presentation. To ensure that audiences receive complete information, speakers who have no involvement with industry should inform the audience that they have nothing to disclose, i.e., cannot identify any potential conflict of interest.