

RCPE Ethical sponsorship policy

Context and objective of policy

The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (“the College”) exists for its Fellows and Members. It generates income to fulfil its statutory obligations and charitable aims. However, the financial operating environment for many Medical Royal Colleges is challenging, as it is for the majority of educational institutions and charities. As the College expands and develops many of its offerings, for example the increase in podcasts, it is increasingly considering charitable activities (as well as ambitions) that have only been used in a very limited way before. This includes, but is not limited to, corporate partnerships and sponsorship arrangements.

The College has a duty and desire to be sensitive to the general concerns of its Fellows and Members regarding ethical issues of fundraising. It recognises the need to conduct its fundraising responsibly, mitigating potential reputational, financial, or actual risk that may result from accepting gifts or sponsorship. This document outlines the College’s policy for accepting gifts and sponsorship, and managing associated risks. The policy applies to gifts and sponsorship in cash and in kind, but not to gifts of works of art to the Library collection, except for if the value of an item is over £100 in value amount.

Parameters of the policy

This policy has been devised to ensure clarity and openness to all our stakeholders, primarily our Fellows and Members. It is designed to address sponsorship and cause-related marketing.

'Sponsorship' means payment by a private sector organisation – or individual – in return for public association with an activity, project, event or asset. This could be in cash or in kind.

The College’s Trustees must, under general principles of charity law, take decisions as to whether to accept or refuse gifts or sponsorship, in the best interest of the College. Trustees must not allow individual or collective views on political or ethical issues, not directly related to the interests of the College, to affect their judgement when making these decisions. The College’s management, Council and trustees, therefore, must not allow their personal political or moral beliefs to influence their judgements about gifts or sponsorships and whether the College should reject them.

The institution limits its judgments to the potential harm caused to the College by unethical sources of funding, but also considers the potential harm done to society by alleged illegal or unethical activities of companies and individuals. Therefore, it is vital that we maintain our independence and do not allow external partnerships to bring the name of *The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* into disrepute. The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh therefore seeks, so far as is practical and within the constraints of UK/Scots law:

- Initiatives that do not compromise the independent status of The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh;
- To ensure that the activities of organisations we work with are consistent with our organisational values;

- That The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh name is not used in a manner that would express or imply The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh's endorsement of the company/organisation or its policies.

Council members, committee chairpersons, symposia/conference chairs and speakers must complete declaration of interest forms as follows:

- Council members and committee chairpersons must make a full declaration of financial support from and/or investments held by them and their partners;
- Organising committee members, speakers, chairpersons, and panel members participating in College events must make a declaration of support from and investment in commercial companies relevant to the topic of the event during the previous 12 months.

Key definitions (all definitions from Cambridge Dictionary)

The policy subscribes to the following definitions, for avoidance of doubt:

- **Sponsorship:** Money that is given, usually by a company, to support a person, organisation or activity.
- **Partnership:** An agreement between organisations, people, etc. to work together.
- **Exhibitor:** A person or company that shows their work or products at an exhibition [or in RCPE's case, an event].
- **Gifts:** To give something in an official or formal way.
- **Bequests:** The money or property that someone, after death, gives to someone else.

Avoidance criteria

Partnerships, sponsorship, exhibitors, bequests or gifts from companies or individuals (including speakers) involved in any of the following activities will be avoided:

- Tobacco or e-cigarette manufacture, design or marketing;
- Alcohol manufacture, design or marketing;
- Manufacture, design or marketing of food and/or drink high in salt, sugar or fat content;
- Disregard for the environmental impact of its activities, practices and/or policies, and/or failure to engage in environmental reporting;
- Any weapons systems manufacture, design or marketing;
- Nondisclosure of data (need for all trials data), shortcomings in the design and conduct of clinical trials, failures of drug regulation and marketing; failing to meet ABPI member standards;
- Dishonesty, bribery and/or corruption;
- Tax avoidance and/or failures in financial reporting;
- Abuse of workers' rights;
- Abuse of human rights;
- Any other activity which may be considered illegal.

Gifts and donations

Fellows, Members and staff of the College will not give or receive any from the following list of gifts and donations, on behalf of or in relation to the activity of the College:

- Cash, cheque or bank transfer considered to be bribery, tax avoidance and/or failures in financial reporting (this excludes payment for activity relating to the work of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh such as remuneration for paid work; or expenses for activity relating to the work of the College such as travel, accommodation or food);
- Any products manufactured, designed or marketed by alcohol companies;
- Any products manufactured, designed or marketed by companies which make tobacco products or e-cigarettes;
- Any food and/or drink high in salt, sugar or fat content;
- Products manufactured by companies without regard for the environmental impact of their activities, practices and/or policies, and/or failure to engage in environmental reporting;
- Any products manufactured, designed or marketed by companies which abuse workers' rights and/or human rights; or any other activity which may be considered illegal.

Anonymous Donations

The College is not able to accept genuinely anonymous donations, because such donations prohibit a proper risk assessment. The identity of donors who prefer to give anonymously must be known to the Board of Trustees.

Cause-related marketing, affinity marketing and product endorsements

The College does not endorse or approve products or companies, and a statement to this effect will be included alongside any branding or promotion associated with products.

The College will not promote any products unless published research has shown direct benefit to our beneficiaries. Only the College and its subsidiaries will have direct access to our databases.

Copyright, advertisement and database

The College's name and/or crests may be used by external partners only with the express prior permission of the College and for the purposes requested. The College retains editorial control over all published uses of its name, logo, crests and other copyright protected information.

The College reserves the right to refuse any proposed new advertisement or loose insert that they deem is in conflict of interest with our guiding principles or on subjective grounds of taste or content.

The College database of Fellows and Members will remain confidential to sponsors, partners and advertisers.