

Course Director Responsibilities (Primary and Co-Course Directors)

The Primary Course Director is responsible for ensuring that continuing medical education (CME) activities address the professional practice gaps of physicians, are free of commercial influence and are fiscally sound. Co-Course Directors provide support for these efforts.

Who May Serve as a Primary Course Director?

The Primary Course Director is a physician who collaborates with Stanford Center for Continuing Medical Education (SCCME) to plan, implement, and evaluate a CME activity.

For reasons of financial accountability and adherence to Stanford policies, the Primary Course Director should be at least a half-time Stanford School of Medicine physician faculty member. Community practitioners with voluntary clinical appointments, non-physicians and community health partners may participate as a Co-Course Director in concert with a Primary Course Director.

It is expected that the Primary Course Director familiarize him/herself with Stanford CME policies including: Commercial Support, Honoraria, and Identification and Resolution of Conflicts of Interest, which are all found at cme.stanford.edu. The SCCME staff and Associate Dean for Postgraduate Medical Education are available to answer any questions regarding these policies.

Specific Responsibilities:

The Primary Course Director is responsible for ensuring, and the Co-Course Director(s) supports, the following Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), American Medical Association (AMA), and Stanford Policies:

Planning a CME Activity

- Selection of a planning committee to coordinate the activity planning process, if needed. Planning committees are usually comprised of 3-5 individuals, but in most cases there should be more than one planner. If the Primary Course Director has a conflict of interest relevant to the subject matter of the activity, at least one planning committee member must be non-conflicted and a content expert. The Course Directors' and Planners' conflicts of interest must be disclosed and resolved prior to planning the activity. If the Primary Course Director is conflicted, then a non-conflicted physician planner must be responsible for identification of conflict of interest and taking the action necessary to resolve conflict(s).
- Commercial employees do not participate in the planning of CME activities. If the Course Director or planner is an employee of a commercial interest, this is considered by the ACCME a non-resolvable conflict of interest. The Course Director or planner may not plan activities related to the products and/or services of their employer.
- The activity is designed to address identified learning needs of physicians derived from professional practice gaps in knowledge, competence or performance in practice.
- Gaps are substantiated by data from the target audience, expert opinion, scientific literature, national guidelines, and/or quality improvement data.

Course Director Responsibilities

- Activity planning is documented in the CME Planning Documentation Worksheet & Application (CME Application).
- The activity is fiscally sound and honoraria payments comply with Stanford CME policies.

Content of CME Activity

- The content developed is objective, balanced, based on valid and sound scientific studies, and free of commercial bias.
- Clinical care recommendations, treatments, or manners of practicing presented in the CME activity are based on evidence that is accepted within the profession of medicine, are not known to have risks or dangers that outweigh the benefits and are not known to be ineffective in the treatment of patients.

Disclosures of Relevant Financial Relationships

- Disclosures of relevant financial relationships with any commercial interest are collected for anyone involved with development and implementation of activity content (planners, speakers, reviewers, moderators, authors, etc.) and sent to the SCCME prior to the activity.
- All relevant conflicts of interest must be resolved and documented by a non-conflicted physician Course Director/planner or designated non-conflicted physician content expert. If a conflict of interest cannot be resolved, the individual must be disqualified from participation.
- Disclosures of relevant financial relationships (or no financial relationships) with commercial interests are presented to the learners prior to the activity by inclusion in the syllabus, by slide or by posting next to the sign in sheets. Participants of enduring materials are informed of the financial relationships prior to accessing the educational content.
- If commercial influence is detected during a live activity, the Course Director(s) discuss this with the learners to ensure that a fair and balanced program is in place. Online materials are reviewed prior to launch and the Course Director(s) ensure any biased content is updated appropriately; if a learner reports commercial bias, the SCCME will follow-up with the learner and escalate to the Course Director(s) when needed to determine next steps.

Review of Presentations

- Online and Conferences and Workshops
 - All presentations are received and reviewed by the SCCME. In addition presentations of conflicted speakers are reviewed by the designated non-conflicted physician reviewer and COI is resolved prior to the activity. This requires that all presentations (may be a draft) be submitted to the SCCME in advance of the activity. For live activities, presentations should be submitted no later than 4 weeks prior to the course. This provides time for review and resolution of any conflicts of interest or HIPAA violations.
 - All issues of conflict and potential HIPAA violations are totally resolved in the final presentation and sent to the SCCME for review prior to the activity.

Course Director Responsibilities

- Regularly Scheduled Series (RSS)
 - Presentations of conflicted speakers are reviewed by the designated non-conflicted physician reviewer and COI is resolved prior to the activity. This requires that all presentations (may be a draft) be submitted to the reviewer in advance of the activity.
 - All issues of conflict and potential HIPAA violations are totally resolved in the final presentation and resolution is described in the packet of materials sent to the SCCME.

Separation of Commercial Activities from Curriculum

- Commercial Interests have no role in the planning or implementation of CME activities. Commercial employees may not participate in the planning of CME activities. Commercial employees may serve as an instructor in Stanford CME activities only under narrowly defined circumstances. An employee of a commercial entity may present on:
 - the scientific or discovery process itself,
 - the results of basic (biologic, chemical, physical) research studies relevant to the clinical problem being addressed but not those specific to a commercial product or its preclinical and clinical testing, and
 - CME topics other than those related to the products and business lines of his/her employer.
- Commercial employees may neither teach about their products nor offer recommendations regarding patient care. Permission for a commercial employee to act as instructor in a Stanford CME activity must be obtained in advance from the Associate Dean for Postgraduate Medical Education and the employee's participation must be closely monitored by course leadership.