

Duality of Interest or Conflict of Interest

Dear Colleagues:

Each year, all faculty members and non-academic employees are expected to fill out and update their Duality of Interest or Conflict of Interest form that is available, along with the pertinent policy, on the following links:

<http://www.aub.edu.lb/pnp/generaluniversitypolicies/Documents/ConflictInterestPolicy/ConflictInterest.pdf>

<http://www.aub.edu.lb/pnp/fillableforms/Documents/DisclosureForm.pdf>

The purpose of this email is to elaborate on this sensitive and important matter by listing specific cases and situations that might constitute a conflict of interest, and where faculty and staff are expected to report to the administration as soon as they occur. In reviewing submissions of earlier years, I noted the lack of reporting by faculty on many industry sponsored educational activities and sponsored research work.

In order to shed light on particular matters related to faculty members at FM/AUBMC, the administration has developed specific guidelines that covers clinical areas and regulate ethical standards for interaction between faculty, resident, nurses and staff in one hand, and the pharmaceutical industry and health care products/ services and suppliers on the other hand.

The Spectrum of Relationships Covered by this policy are listed below:

1. Gifts or inducements to faculty/ residents /administrative staff, including every type of items from minor gift such as a pen or to a paid vacation at a resort.
2. Sponsorship of continuing professional development activities.
3. Publication of a research performed by industry-sponsored researchers.
4. Sponsoring of any academic activity or research work at the University
5. Sponsorships of medical conferences, and other events.
6. Visits by medical representatives.
7. Advertising in the media.

1- Preliminary guidelines

The medical, nursing and administrative staff should:

- a. Recognize the potential for bias based on accepting gifts.
- b. Be aware of the marketing costs associated with gifts.
- c. Ensure the distribution of peer-reviewed published literature rather than industry generated literature or brochures.
- d. If educational grants are accepted, ensure that bias is not introduced during the educational function.
- e. Make sure that the acceptance of gifts does not lead to inappropriate involvement in other activities (i.e. inappropriate publications, consultations).
- f. Be willing to have the acceptance of gifts or other relationships with the pharmaceutical and health care industries, generally disclosed to administration.

2- Gifts to faculty /nursing/residents and administrative staff

- a. Cash payments should not be accepted under any circumstances.
- b. A faculty/nursing/resident or administrative staff should not accept any gift unless it primarily entails an educational or patient care benefits. The later should be declared.
- c. No gifts should be accepted, if they are conditional or intended, to influence the decision making, of the faculty/nursing/residents or administrative staff member.

Examples of the unacceptable gifts include those given:

- a. In relation to prescribing practices.
- b. In relation to the inclusion of drugs in the medical center formulary.
- c. In relation to the use of a test, procedure, or any other health care product or service.
- d. For participating in a lobbying activity that may advance the interest of a pharmaceutical company or a health care products or services supplier.

3 - Continuing Medical Education Events

- a. Faculty/ nursing/resident and administrative staff members may accept unrestricted educational grants, made without stipulation, regarding the content of teaching sessions.
- b. When pharmaceutical companies sponsor all, or part of conferences, meetings or Professional functions or events, faculty /nursing/resident or administrative staff members, who wish to participate as speakers, or as attendees, are advised before

participating in that the activity, to ensure that it has scientific and professional merit. Such invitation should be declared on the leave request.

- c. Preference should be given to educational, and academic functions, organized by an independent academic, or professional body. Financial support by a sponsor for such activities or functions should be unconditional.

- d. Faculty/nursing/residents and administrative staff should be conscious of the track-record of the sponsors of educational functions. They should avoid functions whose sponsors have attempted to intimidate, manipulate, or coerce members of the health care community in the past.
- e. Pharmaceutical companies and health care products and services suppliers may sponsor travel to an accredited educational meeting, conditional on prior written approval by:
 - i. Chairperson of the faculty/nursing/residents and the Dean of FM or his/her surrogate.
 - ii. By AUBMC director for the administrative staff.

Thank you for your observing this policy and abiding by it. Any change of status or terms in the course of the year should be immediately reported to the Faculty Affairs Office, attention Ms. Noor Nakib.

Thank you.

Dr. Ghazi Zaatari

Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs