

NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL SUPPORT OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Northwest Association for Biomedical Research (NWABR) is dedicated to promoting public understanding of the implications and applications of the process of biomedical research. NWABR offers events and activities for education and professional development to its members and the community at large. It is the responsibility of NWABR to assure that these activities are designed primarily for the fulfillment of this mission. Many of NWABR's programs receive financial and other support from commercial organizations. Such support can contribute significantly to the quality of these programs. The purpose of these Standards is to describe appropriate behavior for NWABR in planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating activities for which commercial support is received.

1. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF NWABR

NWABR is responsible for the content, quality and scientific integrity of all education and professional development activities it sponsors. Identification of educational needs, determination of educational objectives, and selection of content, faculty, educational methods and materials is the responsibility of NWABR. Similarly, evaluation must be designed and performed by NWABR.

a. Basic Design Requirements for NWABR Activities

In designing educational activities, NWABR must assure that the activities have the following characteristics: They must be free of commercial bias for or against any product or service. If the activities are concerned with commercial products and/or services, they must present objective information about those products and services, based on scientific methods generally accepted in the biomedical community.

b. Independence of NWABR

The design and production of educational activities shall be the ultimate responsibility of NWABR. Commercial supporters of such activities shall not control the planning, content or execution of the activity. To assure compliance with this standard, the following requirements must be adhered to.

(1) Assistance with Preparation of Educational Materials

The content of slides and reference materials must remain the ultimate responsibility of the faculty selected by NWABR. A commercial supporter may be asked to help with the preparation of conference related educational

materials, but these materials shall not, by their content or format, advance the specific proprietary interests of the commercial supporter; nor may the commercial supporter edit or supplement the content of the educational materials.

(2) Assistance with Educational Planning

NWABR may obtain information that will assist in planning and producing an educational activity from any outside source whether commercial or not. However, acceptance by NWABR of advice or services concerning speakers, invitees or other educational matters, including content, shall not be among the conditions for accepting support from a commercial organization.

(3) Marketing of NWABR Sponsored Activities

Only NWABR may authorize a commercial supporter to disseminate information about an NWABR sponsored activity to the community. However, the content of such information is the responsibility of NWABR, and any such information must identify the educational activity as produced by NWABR.

(4) Activities Repeated Many Times

With all commercially supported educational activities that repeat essentially the same information each time they are given, NWABR must demonstrate that all iterations of that activity meet the Standards for Commercial Support.

(5) Educational Activities or Materials Prepared by Proprietary Entities

When NWABR offers educational activities consisting of concepts or materials prepared by proprietary entities, such activities must adhere to the Standards for Commercial Support in all respects, especially with regard to the provisions concerning the independence of NWABR in planning, designing, delivering, and evaluating such activities.

2. ENDURING MATERIALS

NWABR is responsible for the quality, content, and use of enduring materials.

3. REPORTING ON RESEARCH

It is desirable that direct reports of objective, rigorous, scientific research be communicated to NWABR's constituents. An offer by a commercial entity to provide a presentation reporting the results of scientific research shall be accompanied by a detailed outline of the presentation, which shall be used by NWABR to confirm the scientific objectivity of the presentation. This research must conform to the generally accepted standards of experimental design, data collection and analysis.

4. EXHIBITS AND OTHER COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

a. Exhibits

When commercial exhibits are part of the overall program, arrangements for these shall not influence planning or interfere with the presentation activities. Exhibit placement shall not be a condition of support for any NWABR sponsored activity.

b. Commercial Activities During Educational Activities

No commercial promotional materials shall be displayed or distributed in the same room immediately before, during, or immediately after an educational activity sponsored by NWABR.

c. Commercial Supporters at Educational Activities

Representatives of commercial supporters may attend an educational activity, may identify themselves by their company name but may not engage in sales activities while in the room where the activity takes place.

5. MANAGEMENT OF FUNDS FROM COMMERCIAL SOURCES

a. Independence of NWABR for the Use of Contributed Funds

The ultimate decision regarding funding arrangements for NWABR sponsored activities must be the responsibility of NWABR. Funds from a commercial source should be in the form of an educational grant made payable to the Northwest Association for Biomedical Research for the support of programming. The terms, conditions and purposes of such grants must be documented by a signed agreement between the commercial supporter and NWABR. All support associated with an NWABR sponsored activity, whether in the form of an educational grant or not, must be given with the full knowledge and approval of NWABR. No other funds from a commercial source shall be paid to the director of the activity, faculty, or others involved with the supported activity.

b. Payments to Faculty

Payment of reasonable honoraria and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for faculty is customary and proper. NWABR shall determine the amount and distribute such payments in accordance with the Standards for Commercial Support

c. Acknowledgment of Commercial Support

Commercial support must be acknowledged in printed announcements and brochures; however, reference must not be made to specific products.

d. Accountability for Commercial Support

Upon request, NWABR shall be prepared to report to each commercial supporter, and other relevant parties, information concerning the general expenditure of funds collectively provided following the NWABR sponsored activity. Likewise, commercial supporters should report to NWABR information concerning their expenditures in support of the activity.

6. COMMERCIALY SUPPORTED SOCIAL EVENTS

Commercially supported social events at NWABR sponsored activities shall not compete with, nor take precedence over the educational events.

7. POLICY ON DISCLOSURE OF FACULTY AND PROVIDER RELATIONSHIPS

a. Disclosure Policy for All NWABR Sponsored Activities

NWABR requires disclosure of the existence of any significant financial interest or other relationship a faculty member has with the manufacturer(s) of any commercial product(s) discussed in an educational presentation. All NWABR sponsored activities shall conform to this policy.

b. Disclosure in Conference Materials

Faculty relationships with commercial supporters shall be disclosed to participants prior to educational activities in brief statements in conference materials and also in post-meeting publications.

c. Disclosure for Regularly Scheduled Activities

In the case of regularly scheduled events, the moderator of the activity shall make disclosure after consultation with the faculty member or a representative of the supporter. Written documentation that disclosure information was given to participants shall be entered in the file for that activity.

8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

a. Expenses of Non-Faculty Attendees

In connection with an educational activity offered by NWABR, funds originating from a commercial source shall not be used to pay travel, lodging, registration fees, honoraria, or personal expenses for non-faculty attendees. Subsidies for hospitality should not be provided outside of modest meals or social events that are held as part of the activity.

b. Scholarships for Students, Residents and Fellows

Scholarship or other special funding to permit students, residents, or fellows to attend selected educational conferences may be provided, as long as the selection of students, residents or fellows who will receive the funds is made either by the academic or training

institution, or by NWABR with the full concurrence of the academic or training institution.

CLARIFICATION:

1. The Standards for Commercial Support do not prohibit distribution of product specific promotional materials by commercial representatives directly to the community. However, NWABR must maintain its responsibility for the quality, content and use of the product specific promotional material in compliance with the Standards for Commercial Support.
2. Commercial Acknowledgment in Enduring Materials:
 - A. Product specific advertising of any type is prohibited in enduring materials.
 - B. Commercial support must be acknowledged in order to comply with the Standards for Commercial Support and references to a company or institution are allowed. This acknowledgment must be placed only at the beginning of the enduring material.
 - C. The institutional acknowledgment may state the name, mission, and areas of biomedical involvement of the company or institution and may include corporate logos and slogans, if they are not product promotional in nature.
 - D. No specific products may be referenced, even if they are not related to the topic of the enduring material.
3. Definition of commercial supporter
 - A. A commercial supporter is defined as any entity providing funds or resources for NWABR sponsored events and activities.
 - B. Funds from governmental entities and non-profit organizations are not considered commercial support.
4. NWABR may delegate the responsibility for receiving and disbursing funds from educational grants to an educational partner. However, the letter of agreement regarding the grant must be between NWABR and the commercial supporter and NWABR must maintain and be able to produce as documentation a full accounting of the funds.
5. If faculty members are “bona fide” faculty, in that they are listed on the agenda as facilitating or conducting a presentation/session, but they participate in the remainder of an educational event as a learner, their expenses can be reimbursed and honoraria can be paid as allowed by the Standards for Commercial Support.