



**MEDICAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES
ON ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT
IN ACCEPTANCE OR OTHERWISE OF NON-EXCHEQUER FUNDING
IN RELATION TO BASIC AND SPECIALIST
MEDICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

1) PURPOSE OF GUIDELINES

These guidelines are produced in fulfilment of the Council's duty under 88 (8) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 (MPA 2007) to prepare and publish guidelines on ethical considerations to be taken into account in respect of the acceptance or otherwise of any non-Exchequer funding offered or provided in relation to medical education and training for basic and specialist medical qualifications.

2) SCOPE OF GUIDELINES

These guidelines apply to education and training activities provided by or under the auspices of:

- i. Bodies and programmes approved by the Medical Council under 88 (2) and 88 (6) of the MPA 2007
- ii. Bodies and programmes approved by the Medical Council under 89 (3) and 89 (7) of the MPA 2007
- iii. Specialties recognised by the Medical Council under 89 (1), 89 (5) and 89 (7) of the MPA 2007.

3) GENERAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE GUIDELINES

- i. Medical education and training that is independent of funding or support from sources with financial interests in doctors' recommendations promotes confidence in the integrity and independence of medical education and training
- ii. Choices about the acceptance or otherwise of non-Exchequer funding should be based on ethical decision-making; i.e. a diligent and conscientious effort to reflect appropriate values and objectives and inspire public confidence
- iii. The acceptance and use of non-Exchequer funding should be congruent with the recipient's defined educational needs and priorities, mission, values and goals
- iv. Funding recipients should be transparent about their policies and processes, and about the source (s) and nature of their non-Exchequer funding
- v. Funding recipients should have policies and procedures in place to maintain the independence and integrity of educational activities.



4) ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN ACCEPTANCE OR OTHERWISE OF NON-EXCHEQUER FUNDING

Ethical considerations should be taken into account by the funding recipient prior to acceptance or otherwise of funding where that funding may derive in whole or in part from a source or activity that:

- i. Is illegal
- ii. Is from a source or activity that is linked to the alcohol, tobacco or armaments industry
- iii. May violate international conventions that bear on human rights
- iv. May seek to limit freedom of enquiry
- v. May compromise the funding recipient's independence
- vi. Conflicts with the stated values and aims of the funding recipient
- vii. Is offered with the expectation of a financial or other incentive or reward accruing to the funder
- viii. Conflicts with the underlying intention of the MPA 2007 to protect and inform the public and to better ensure the education and training of medical practitioners
- ix. Is otherwise incompatible with these Guidelines.

5) NON-EXCHEQUER FUNDING AND AVOIDANCE OF UNDUE INFLUENCE

Ethical considerations should be taken into account by the funding recipient prior to acceptance or otherwise of funding where that funding may:

- i. Seek to dictate the contents of an academic programme, the recruitment or deployment of staff, the recipient of a scholarship or prize, the award of a tender, or may otherwise impact upon executive decisions about the disbursement of the funding
- ii. Compromise the funding recipient's mission, management decisions, integrity or autonomy
- iii. Be contingent upon specific requirements or arrangements for exhibits or advertisements as a condition of funding
- iv. Promote commercial products *via* the provision of educational materials or facilities.



6) FUNDING RECIPIENTS' POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- i. All bodies, programmes and specialities approved or recognised by the Medical Council under the MPA 2007 should have internal policies and procedures in place for the receipt and disbursement of non-Exchequer funding
- ii. These internal policies and procedures should take account of and be congruent with these Guidelines
- iii. These internal policies and procedures should include a formal mechanism for prospectively evaluating potential non-Exchequer funding and for determining whether or not it should be accepted
- iv. This evaluation mechanism should include provision to seek advice where necessary from external advisers unconnected to the funding recipient
- v. Funding recipients should ensure that the relevant staff are familiar with the appropriate guidelines, policies and procedures, including these Guidelines
- vi. Policies and procedures should be kept under review by potential funding recipients and adjusted as necessary.

7) STUDENTS AND TRAINEES AND NON-EXCHEQUER FUNDING

- i. All bodies, programmes and specialities approved or recognised by the Medical Council should encourage and facilitate students and trainees to understand the ethical considerations set out in these Guidelines, and to exercise their critical faculties on these issues. Bodies, programmes and specialties should emphasise the primacy of evidence-based decision-making in medical practice and in a practitioner's choice of therapeutic options
- ii. All bodies, programmes and specialities approved or recognised by the Medical Council should enable students and trainees to be justifiably confident that policies and procedures are in place within the body, programme or speciality that maintain the independence and integrity of educational activities in relation to the acceptance or otherwise of non-Exchequer funding.