Policy on Conflicts of Interest

BACKGROUND

Individuals who support the American Board of Emergency Medicine’s (ABEM) activities may be asked to participate in an activity that would present a conflict of interest with their ABEM activities. The following policy is intended to guide current directors, all ABEM-appointed representatives to subspecialty or Focused Practice subboards or examination committees, written examination item writers, and oral examiners when faced with decisions about participating in other activities.

POLICY

It is the policy of ABEM that current directors, ABEM-appointed subspecialty or Focused Practice designation representatives, item writers, and oral examiners shall avoid all conflicts of interest. A ‘conflict of interest’ is a direct or indirect financial, personal, or other interest, which would or could reasonably be perceived as limiting the individual’s ability to serve the best interest of the Board without discrimination or favoritism. Indirect interests include the individual’s relatives and institutions, associations, businesses, or other organizations, whether or not for-profit, that employ or hold some other claim to the individual’s primary loyalty.

Each individual has the personal responsibility of identifying when a conflict of interest exists or appears to exist, and for taking appropriate action to eliminate the conflict or the appearance of the conflict. If the individual is unsure whether a conflict exists, all relevant information should be disclosed to the ABEM staff for handling.

ABEM staff is authorized to resolve potential conflicts of interest that are clearly identified by current Board policy as not being a conflict.
PROCEDURES

Individuals affected by the policies will be given a copy of all conflict of interest policies relevant to their position with the Board.

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<th>Elected Positions</th>
<th>Appointed Positions Examination-involved</th>
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<td>Panel Members</td>
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Area of Conflict

- Commercial/financial
  - Policy on Conflicts of Interest
- Organizational affiliation
  - Policy on Conflicts of Interest
- Maintenance of confidentiality
  - Confidentiality and Work-for-Hire Agreements
- Access to board examinations for purpose of certification
  - Policy on Directors’ Participation in Subspecialty and Focused Practice Designation Examinations
  - Policy on Directors’ Participation in the ABEM Continuing Certification Process
- Involvement in board preparation courses, lectures, and publications
  - Policy on Participation in Examination Preparation Activities
  - Policy on Use of Board Designation to Endorse or Promote Educational Programs and Materials
- Promotion of educational programs and materials
  - Policy on Participation in Examination Preparation Activities
  - Policy on Use of Board Designation to Endorse or Promote Educational Programs and Materials (Current and Senior Examiners and Item Writers)
- Examiner bias
  - Policy on Bias and Ethics Statement for Oral Examinations (Examiners)
- Volunteer/Staff Bias
  - Policy on Bias for Certification and Continuing Certification Participants
  - Policy on Bias for Certification and Continuing Certification Participants

Individuals will be required to sign a statement attesting that they have read and understand all relevant policies.

Individuals will be required to sign a statement attesting that they have no conflict of interest at the current time or that they have or may have an existing conflict of interest.

If they have no conflict of interest at the current time, they will be required to attest that they will notify the ABEM staff if one should develop.

If they have or may have an existing conflict of interest, they will be asked to describe the perceived conflict in writing.

All conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest will be directed to the ABEM staff.
PROCESS FOR HANDLING CONFLICTS

• All potential conflicts of interest on the basis of the Policy on Conflicts of Interest will be submitted to the ABEM staff.

• Staff will obtain all necessary related information and present the information and a recommendation to the President.

• The President will determine if a conflict exists.

• The President, with the consultation of the ABEM staff, will determine the best means of handling the situation.

• Staff will implement the president’s decision.

• The President will bring the situation to the Executive Committee for resolution under the following circumstances:
  1. The President is unclear if a conflict exists
  2. The course of action selected for handling the situation does not yield a clear resolution for the volunteer and the Board

• If it is necessary to bring the situation to the Executive Committee, the Committee will make the final decisions regarding any potential conflicts of interest.

EXCEPTION

None

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