

Council on Education for Public Health

Conflicts of Interest in the Accreditation Process

The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) is committed to an accreditation process that is characterized by fairness and impartiality. An organizational and personal duty to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest is central to assuring that the procedural aspects of the Council's operations are fair to all participants. CEPH and its constituencies assume that Council members will perform their duties in good faith, recognize their fiduciary duty to CEPH and take the care that an ordinarily prudent person in similar circumstances would exercise. The potential for a conflict of interest arises when one's duty to make decisions in the public's interest is compromised by competing interests of a professional, personal or private nature, including, but not limited to, financial interests.

The duty to avoid conflicts of interest applies to all participants in the accreditation process, including members of the governing body, individuals who are selected as on-site evaluators, individuals who are selected to constitute an appeals panel, staff members, consultants, advisory groups, committee members and any other individual who acts on behalf of CEPH. All individuals in these roles receive training pursuant to this policy. The obligation of the individual with a conflict of interest that in any way might bias the deliberations and decisions before the Council, include

- disclosure of the relationship(s) that constitute(s) or may be perceived as constituting a conflict;
- refusal to accept the assignment; and
- abstention from all aspects of decision making, including voting.

This policy is not intended to exclude all individuals who have ever had a relationship of any nature with an institution subject to accreditation, only those that would potentially bias an accreditation decision in one way or another. Numerous relationships might constitute a conflict of interest and the extent to which they do or do not constitute a conflict must be determined on an individual basis.

Typical conflicts of interest, provided here *as examples only*, would include

- current or recent affiliation as a student, faculty member, staff member or consultant with a school or program being reviewed;
- an immediate family member with an affiliation with an institution (as described above);
- affiliation as a faculty member with an institution in the same university system;
- current or recent financial interest in the institution or its activities;
- alumni status at a school or program; or
- other business, political or professional relationships that may conflict with the interests of CEPH.

In all cases, two important safeguards are observed by the Council: a) an institution has the right to challenge any participant in the accreditation process based on a conflict of interest and b) the governing body of the Council is the arbiter in determining whether a conflict of interest does or does not exist.

The Council does not exclude individuals, regardless of relationships or personal or professional perspectives, from other areas of decision making, such as policy development and standard setting. Council members may experience a conflict of interest when they serve on another

board or committee in a related organization. Therefore, Council members serving on other boards or committees in organizations with interests relating to accreditation must be attentive to instances of possible conflict of interest due to dual service. If any such conflicts exist, the Council members should disclose them and are expected to conduct themselves in such a way that would not adversely impact CEPH and its mission and goals.

Approved: May 15, 1992
Revised: February 19, 2006
Revised: July 13, 2009
Revised: October 22, 2009
Revised: August 25, 2015