

Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling Conflict of Interest Policy

Volunteers and consultants of the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) are expected to have the Mission of the ACGC as their primary interest when contributing to the work of the organization.

The ACGC Mission: The Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) advances quality in genetic counseling education by developing standards, and by evaluating and accrediting programs.

This policy applies to members of the ACGC Committees, Task Forces, Work Groups, and other volunteer activities; hereafter referred to as 'ACGC volunteers'. Any individual contributing to the work of the ACGC has an obligation to disclose any conflicting or potentially conflicting personal, professional, or business interest he/she may have, real or perceived, with the scope of work being completed.

A conflict of interest may arise when, due to an outside interest, an ACGC volunteer has the opportunity to influence the ACGC's organizational activities or use confidential information in ways that could lead to, or appear to lead to, personal or institutional gain or advantage, and/or undermine the work of or reputation of the ACGC. This policy is intended to maintain the integrity of the ACGC and, thereby, maintain the confidence of the genetic counseling profession and the public in the ACGC standards and judgments. It includes guidelines to identify and manage conflicts of interests that arise.

A potential conflict of interest exists whenever personal, professional, commercial, or financial interests or activities outside of the organization have the possibility (either in actuality or in appearance) of (1) compromising an ACGC volunteer's judgment; (2) biasing the nature or direction of organizational programs and services; (3) influencing an ACGC volunteer's decision or behavior with respect to setting organizational policies or programs and services (4) resulting in a personal or family member's financial or professional gain or advancement at the expense of the organization.

To help insure full disclosure of any actual or potential COI, all participants in ACGC-related activities must comply with the ACGC COI policy and (at a minimum) annually sign and submit a COI Disclosure Form. In addition, in the event an ACGC volunteer determines he/she has a conflict of interest related to a particular activity, he/she shall immediately disclose the conflict to the ACGC Executive Director and to the other committee members, as applicable.

Financial Conflict of Interest Policy

It is the responsibility of each individual ACGC volunteer to identify potential and actual sources of financial conflict of interest described below and to comply with established policy. In engaging in any activities on behalf of or in the name of the ACGC, no individuals subject to this policy shall base their actions or decisions on their personal or professional financial interests at the expense of the ACGC's interest.

Rationale

Two principal criteria are employed to evaluate the severity of financial conflicts of interest to the work of the ACGC: 1) the likelihood that professional judgment would be influenced by bias introduced by the financial conflicts of interest, and 2) the seriousness of both the direct and indirect potential harm caused by such bias. Likelihood increases when the value of the gain to the individual is large – particularly relative to income – and when there is long-term dependence on the outside relationship.

Financial conflict of interests may result from employment, consulting, advising (e.g. to pharmaceutical and other medical or health care companies), personal investments in medical health care companies, and other affiliations or relationships (e.g. trustee, officer, or director), among others. This is not an inclusive list.

Policy

All individuals engaging in activities on behalf of the ACGC will be required to disclose whether they or their spouses or dependent children have the following interests annually, or at the time of the re-appointment:

1. Direct holdings (whether in the form of equity, debt, or any other type of investment) in pharmaceutical, biotechnologic, or medical service companies in excess of \$10,000 per company;

2. Compensation from ongoing consulting arrangements or honoraria from a single institution in excess of \$5,000 per year;
3. Direct grant support as the principal investigator from a pharmaceutical company, or other granting organization in excess of \$5,000 per year;
4. Affiliations with other medical organizations as a trustee, officer, a director or in another capacity; or
5. Employment by companies in the health care industry such as pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and medical instrument companies, or health maintenance organizations.

Professional or Academic Conflict of Interest

It is the responsibility of each ACGC volunteer to identify potential and actual sources of professional or academic conflict of interest described below and to comply with established policy.

Rationale

ACGC volunteers who contribute to the process of accreditation must be cognizant of the potential to provide unfair advantage by participating in professional activities that provide or appear to provide programs an unfair advantage. Application of the following guidelines will protect the integrity of the ACGC's accreditation processes and avoid the perception of and opportunity for unfair advantage. Individuals who are uncertain about these policies should seek the advice of the President of the Board. These conflict of interest guidelines remain in effect for two years following ACGC activity related to development of the policies and procedures related to accreditation or review of programs.

Policy

All individuals engaging in activities on behalf of the ACGC will be required to disclose the following types of academic conflict of interest related to their work on behalf of the ACGC:

- Current employee/appointee/consultant of a program or institution accredited by or under review by the ACGC. Having a relative who is an employee/appointee/consultant of a program or institution accredited by or being reviewed by the ACGC.
- Graduate of a program accredited by or under review by the ACGC.
- Involved with, or have been involved with, supervising clinical rotations or teaching students from a program accredited by or under review by the ACGC.
- Have close personal or professional ties with members of program leadership or core faculty accredited by or under review by the ACGC.
- Is a program leader or core faculty of a program that shares clinical sites, courses, and/or teaching modules with the program accredited by or under review by the ACGC?
- Allowing use of their ACGC affiliation for the advertising of non-ACGC educational programs or publications.



ACGC Conflict of Interest Declaration & Confidentiality Form

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when loyalty to one interest would impel a course of action different from that impelled by another interest. It is the duty of ACGC volunteers acting for or on behalf of the ACGC to be aware of the possibility of a conflict of interest between their responsibilities to the ACGC and to another entity. All ACGC volunteers have a fundamental responsibility to refrain from participating in ACGC work when a competing interest precludes or inhibits the exercise of the ACGC volunteer's independent professional judgment on behalf of the ACGC, or when the nature of the competing interest is such that the ACGC volunteer's continued participation would unreasonably jeopardize the integrity of the process.

Examples of Potential Conflicts

The actions listed below are not an exhaustive list of the potential conflicts an ACGC volunteer might have, but rather a representative sample. Actions, activities or interests that any ACGC volunteer feel might be in conflict should be listed on this form and submitted to the Executive Director for review.

- Participating in the preparation of non-ACGC program consultation
- Serving as a board or committee member for another related organization (e.g., ABGC, NSGC)
- Participating as a site visitor for programs the individual is affiliated with (e.g., faculty member, clinical supervisor)
- Allowing use of their ACGC affiliation for the advertising of non-ACGC educational programs or publications

Confidentiality

ACGC volunteers understand and hereby agree that, in connection with the undersigned's service to the ACGC, the undersigned may be exposed to highly confidential information related to the ACGC's activities such as membership lists; contracts; program application materials, financial information, site visit reports, data specific to accredited programs; and internal memoranda, reports, and other materials or records of a confidential nature (the "Confidential Information").

In order to protect the Confidential Information, the undersigned hereby promises not to make copies of, disclose, remove from a review site, remove from any office of the ACGC, or assist or permit others to copy, disclose, remove from a review site, or remove from any office of the ACGC any Confidential Information unless specifically authorized to do so by the Executive Committee or the President, and not to use Confidential Information for any purpose whatsoever except directly in connection with the undersigned's service to the ACGC. Further, the above promise of confidentiality shall be in effect during the tenure of the undersigned's service to the ACGC and at all times thereafter.

Further, if the undersigned is a member of the Program Review Committee or serves as a site visitor, or is involved in any other manner with, or has access to, the program application materials, the undersigned understands and expressly agrees not to, either directly or indirectly, conduct or assist or participate in consulting with a program under review or applying for accreditation during and for one year following the undersigned's tenure of service to the ACGC.

Please list any conflicts of interest, perceived or real, below and submit this to the Executive Office:

If you are a genetic counselor please list which program you graduated from: _____

If you are a genetic counselor please list programs you are associated with or employed by and the nature of the relationship:

Signed: _____ Date: _____