

INDUSTRY SPONSORSHIP POLICY

Policy number	2.08	Version	2024 V1
Responsible Person	Chief Executive Officer	Approval date	October 2024

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out ASHM's policy in relation to sponsorship of ASHM activities and projects by commercial entities. In funding ASHM activities, an industry sponsor agrees to adhere to the conditions contained in this policy.

This document should be read in conjunction with the ASHM Conflict of Interest Policy, the ASHM Gifts and Benefits Policy, the ASHM Ethical Fundraising Policy, the ASHM Child Protection Policy and the ASHM Staff Code of Conduct.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The CEO is responsible for the development and review of this policy and aligned procedure. This policy, and any subsequent amendment, must be approved by a resolution of the Board.
- All staff, Board members, and volunteers must make themselves aware of and adhere to this policy.

RATIONALE

ASHM's mission is to provide leadership in the field of HIV, viral hepatitis, other BBVs and sexual and reproductive health through collaboration, facilitation, direct action, and workforce capacity building. To fulfil this mission, ASHM receives funding and in-kind support from a variety of sources including, subject to this policy, from commercial entities in the pharmaceutical and broader health care sector.

ASHM strives to be an independent, accountable and transparent Organisation that prioritises the interests of its members, the health workforce and people living with and affected by HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections. Accordingly, a clear policy framework is needed to ensure ASHM can deliver high quality programs, resources and activities which are reliably independent of undue commercial influence, with an overarching commitment to appropriate accountability.

ASHM acknowledges the considerable contribution of the pharmaceutical and health products industry to medical research and clinical practice – a contribution that has improved the lives of countless people. As an Organisation we actively seek ethically appropriate partnerships with industry to support the health workforce and improve clinical outcomes. At the same time, we acknowledge that the strategic objectives of commercial entities can differ from our own, and at times will be incompatible with ASHM's mission. The purpose of this policy is to create an appropriately balanced framework to proactively avoid any conflict of interest.

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DEFINITIONS

In this policy, unless a contrary intention is clear, the following definitions apply:

Sponsorship: Sponsorship is the provision of funds for an activity or project where the sponsor derives clearly documented benefits as part of the exchange. All benefits provided are in accordance with the policy.

Conflict of interest: A situation where the interest of an individual or commercial entity comes into conflict with or opposition to those of another.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

At all times, ASHM staff and board will strive for the highest level of probity in assessing any proposed sponsorship agreement, whether formal or informal. Any staff member, Director or other person involved in assessing or approving any sponsorship agreement must make a clear and early disclosure of any interest they have in the prospective sponsor(s) or the agreement and recuse themselves from any discussion or decision-making role if any material or perceived conflict of interest exists.

ASHM will not enter into any sponsorship agreement that substantively influences its independence and/or brings ASHM into disrepute. Activities and relationships that may undermine independence including:

- Activities or relationships that provide revenue or benefit to ASHM such that ongoing dependence on the revenue or benefit impedes independence.
- Activities and relationships that create a product or service that is seen to be associated with ASHM but over which ASHM does not have final control, or veto, or the capacity to extricate itself.

ASHM will not enter into any sponsorship agreement with commercial entities whose products or services are incompatible with ASHM's mission and values. This includes, but is not limited to, harmful, unhealthy, or socially controversial products including alcohol, tobacco, and gambling and entities whose business aims and objectives are repugnant or offensive to the communities ASHM serves.

Sponsorship cannot influence ASHM's independence. In no circumstances should sponsorship arrangements be presented as influencing, or be allowed to influence, ASHM's organisational independence.

Sponsoring entities are not granted the right to use the ASHM logo, except according to the sponsorship terms, and must not hold out the sponsorship agreement as express or implied endorsement by ASHM of any product or service.

Sponsors are entitled to reasonable and appropriate recognition of their contribution in line with the degree of support given, however such acknowledgement must be limited to publication or display of the sponsor's name and logo and appropriate neutral words of acknowledgement. In no circumstances should such acknowledgement be presented in such a way that it could be construed

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as endorsement of a particular brand, product, or service. Examples of appropriate wording are provided at the end of this document.

Any sponsorship agreement must provide ASHM with reasonable value in return for the acknowledgement or recognition. Small cash contributions, discounts or in-kind contributions are better considered as gifts rather than sponsorship, unless they facilitate ASHM's delivery of the relevant activity or project. An appropriate acknowledgement in such cases would typically be a letter of thanks or certificate of appreciation.

Sponsorship agreements must be between ASHM and the company itself, not the company's product or service, to avoid the impression that ASHM endorses a particular product or service. ASHM does not allow product promotion as part of educational activities.

Opportunities to sponsor ASHM activities should be equally and reasonably available to all relevant commercial entities to the best of ASHM's knowledge without favouritism.

Any deviation from the terms of this policy requires written CEO approval.

SPONSORSHIP OF TRAINING WORKSHOPS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

For ASHM-owned events, wherever feasible multiple companies will be approached for sponsorship and joint sponsorship is the preferred mode of sponsorship. All companies approached will be given the right of acceptance or refusal up until a stated sponsorship confirmation deadline. If only one company has committed to sponsorship at that time, sole sponsorship of the event will be allowed.

ASHM may accept sponsorship funding for training workshops or other educational activities only where such events have a clear educational objective and it is clearly communicated that ASHM does not endorse or recommend any commercial product or service discussed.

While the format and scope of a sponsored educational activity may be agreed with the sponsor, ASHM shall exercise complete control over allocation of funds, program content, tone, presenters and emphasis, and selection of recipients.

Approval of naming rights or co-branding of ASHM events shall be by Board resolution only.

In training workshops and educational activities:

- Only one representative per company will be allowed to attend in the event of joint sponsorship (two if sole sponsor).
- Sponsors are allowed to engage with attendees during breaks, as well as before and after the event. Company representatives may distribute promotional materials in accordance with relevant Australian industry codes, including those set by the Medical Technology Association of Australia (MTAA) and MTANZ for New Zealand, as well as the Pathology Associations and Medicines New Zealand's Code of Practice. However, any displays must remain separate from the activity space and should not include trade materials in any take-away content associated with the event.
- Representatives from commercial entities which are not sponsoring an activity are not permitted to attend the activity.

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ASHM can accept sponsorship funding for educational activities (excluding those outlined in the dot point below), networking events and scholarships for educational activities.

- ASHM cannot accept industry sponsorship for S100 prescriber accreditation courses in HIV and hepatitis B.

SPONSORSHIP OF CONFERENCES OR PROVISION OF EVENT SERVICES

This section covers both conferences and industry-sponsored events organised by ASHM's Conference and Events Division.

For ASHM-owned conferences, wherever feasible multiple companies will be approached for sponsorship and joint / multi organisation sponsorship is the preferred mode of sponsorship. All companies approached will be given the right of acceptance or refusal up until a stated sponsorship confirmation deadline. If only one company has committed to sponsorship at that time, sole sponsorship of the event may be allowed.

For ASHM-owned conferences and events, while the format and scope of a sponsored conference or event may be agreed with the sponsor, the sponsor will have no control over allocation of funds, program content, tone, presenters and emphasis, and selection of recipients.

ASHM can accept sponsorship funding and/or management funding for:

- The suite of ASHM 'owned' conferences (subject to the Conference's own policies and procedures).
- 'Satellite' events at its conferences (subject to the payment of an appropriate fee). Such events are not 'ASHM events,' must not be promoted to be ASHM-endorsed activities and must clearly disclose, in promotional material and at the event, the names of funding entities and any associated organisation or individual.
- Event organisation services provided to commercial entities in circumstances wherein the events are not solely ASHM-branded activities. In providing these services, ASHM will do so only where the program is controlled and determined by an independent faculty.
- Event organisation services provided to non-commercial entities. Conferences managed for other non-commercial entities may be governed by those entities' own sponsorship policies.
- ASHM may accept industry sponsorship, in the form of an unrestricted grant, to assist health industry workers to attend and/or report back from conferences and meetings.

SPONSORSHIP OF ASHM PUBLICATIONS, RESOURCES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

- ASHM may accept commercial sponsorship for publications, resources, and other activities such as implementation research.
- The sponsor shall have no input or influence over the format, content, or tone of these activities. In this respect the sponsorship is equivalent to an unrestricted grant but targeted to a named activity.

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- Co-branding of publications or educational materials is not permitted. Acknowledgement of the sponsor in any associated publication should be in a modest form. The sponsor's logo may be included but must be no larger than 1/32 of the page size. Examples of appropriate wording are provided at the end of this document.
- Co-branding of activities such as implementation research is not permitted. Acknowledgement should be in words only in the project report.
- ASHM may occasionally enter into partnership agreements with commercial entities to implement projects where there is clear alignment in shared goals and the project will achieve shared impact. These projects will undergo a rigorous due diligence and risk assessment process to ensure that the project meets all relevant legislation, codes of practice, ethical and community standards, and does not influence ASHM's independence, accountability, or reputation.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Appropriately detailed records of all sponsorship agreements shall be kept by the responsible staff member.
- A written sponsorship agreement must be executed in accordance with the ASHM schedule of delegations. Such agreement should include this policy as an annexure and a clear statement that the agreement imports the policy as part of its conditions. A sample sponsorship agreement is provided at Appendix A.
- Smaller sponsorship agreements may be evidenced without a formal agreement (e.g. through an exchange of letters or emails) but the sponsoring organisation should be provided with a copy of this policy prior to any agreement being entered into.
- A sponsorship agreement should clearly state the contribution of, and benefits to, each party.
- Where sponsorship funds are provided for a designated activity, event, or project, this must be disclosed to participants and attendees, even where the sponsoring organisation does not request acknowledgement.
- This policy aligns and complies with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) requirements of a Non Government Organisation (NGO). ASHM undertakes due diligence procedures for vetting potential sponsors and runs counter terrorism checks via Lexis Nexis software.

BREACHES OF POLICY BY COMMERCIAL SPONSOR

In the instance of a breach of the terms of the policy by a company representative:

- The breach will be promptly escalated to a member of ASHM senior management for investigation.
- If required, a member of ASHM senior management will alert a senior company representative

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to the breach.

- The senior company representative will be expected to remedy the breach internally and report back to ASHM on actions taken.
- Breaches will be recorded in an internal ASHM log.

Repeated policy breaches may result in cancellation of events, return of unspent funds or restrictions in future sponsorship opportunities.

FORM OF APPROPRIATE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The following are examples of appropriate levels of acknowledgement or recognition of commercial sponsors. Any substantively different wording requested by a sponsor must be approved by the ASHM CEO in consultation with the board.

For Conference sponsorship: This event is sponsored by [SPONSOR]. Sponsorship is governed by our Sponsorship Policy and the sponsor has no control over content, tone, emphasis, allocation of funds or selection of recipients. ASHM does not endorse or promote any sponsor's product or service.

For National Policy and Education (NPED) grants: This event is supported by an unconditional education grant from [SPONSOR]. Sponsorship is governed by ASHM's Sponsorship Policy, and the sponsor has no input into the content, tone, emphasis, allocation of funds or selection of recipients. ASHM does not endorse or promote any sponsor's product or service.

For an overhead slide: This event is sponsored by:

[SPONSOR LOGOS]

In a publication: ASHM is grateful to [SPONSOR] for an unrestricted educational grant which assisted in the development of this resource. The sponsor has no control over content, tone, emphasis, allocation of funds or selection of recipients. ASHM does not endorse or promote any sponsor's product or service.

Sponsorship is provided in accordance with the ASHM's Sponsorship Policy. ASHM does not endorse or promote any sponsor's product or service.

AUTHORISATION

ASHM Board

HISTORY

Version	Approved Date	Comments/ Amendments
2018v1	10-04-2018	First version
2019v2	13-08-2019	Sections 6 and 7 were modified to satisfy new NPED and Conference needs. Section 8 was added – Sponsorship for Publications. Appendix A was deleted.
2021v3	15-04-2021	New template

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		Update wording Section 11 acknowledgment for NPED grants was added
2024 v4	October 2024	Reviewed for currency with legislation and DFAT expectations and requirements.

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