

Ethical collaboration policy



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Position statement

The Royal College of Podiatry aims to promote guidelines and standards of practice that are evidence-based and ensure the safety of patients and clinical effectiveness, with a focus on outcomes. We also campaign to raise awareness among the general public and at government level that good lower-limb health is essential for population health and that podiatry is a key element of preventative medicine.

The College endeavours to influence the governments of the four countries that make up the United Kingdom, ensuring they understand the vital contribution podiatry makes to the health of the population.

As a Trade Union we endeavour to negotiate the best terms and conditions for our members and represent the podiatry workforce at national, regional and local level.

As a professional body we lead and advocate for the highest possible standards of education in clinical practice and education for podiatry in both the public and independent sectors.

In this context, the College seeks to work with a range of organisations to support all aspects of its work and, where appropriate, to generate income. Collaborations may include sponsorship agreements, joint ventures, commissions, consultancy and partnership working. All income-generating activities are conducted in direct pursuit of the College's mission statement and values. Income generation is essential to supplement the money we raise from our own assets and to allow us to continue and improve our range of activities.

We wish to develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with commercial and other health-related organisations without compromising the independence of the College.

Guiding principles

Maintenance of independence

The College is very careful when working with other organisations that its independent status is not compromised in any way. If there is a possibility that this may be placed in jeopardy, we will withdraw from any such initiative.

Mutual respect

The College's collaborations are intended to generate shared learning, as well as income. It is important that both parties respect the expertise and skills that the other brings – over and above any financial benefits.

Integrity and transparency

The College aims to be transparent in its relationships with other organisations. There must be strong grounds for believing a formal collaboration will result in benefits to the College and its work. It should always be made explicit what each party is bringing and gaining from a formal relationship. The College will also be transparent about who it is working with and the nature of the relationship and work.

Shared goals for better health

The College will seek partners whose goals, values and actions promote and/or enable good health and align with our values. Each partner will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

Conflicts of interest

The College's mission and values help to establish which collaborations are appropriate. Successful collaboration requires mutual respect and transparency of benefits. When establishing a new collaboration, both parties should endeavour to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest that cannot be safely managed.

To help ensure potential conflicts of interest are identified and managed appropriately:

- The College gives no warranty that the deliverables of a partnership will not contain any material that may be disadvantageous to its partner's business or area of work. For example, it will present research findings determined by objective analysis of available evidence regardless of whether they support a partner's work or position.
- Speaker places at College events are determined by the College entirely on merit and cannot be determined by any formal partnership arrangements.
- Sponsors will have no direct control over analysis, conclusions, positions or recommendations by the College. In the case of partnership projects or joint ventures, the rules of engagement for establishing outcomes must be agreed beforehand and should be transparent.
- The College will be open about other collaborations with organisations working in the same areas or sectors and expects the same approach from its partners.
- The College will not allow direct access to its members data and contacts by third parties, other than those generated directly by collaboration.
- The College will not allow partners to link or imply direct material benefits for their products through an association with the College.

Obligations of partners

- In the event of any matter arising which could significantly adversely affect the standing of the partner in the reasonable opinion of the partner, the partner must inform the College as soon as reasonably practical. The College also has a duty to keep the partner informed of relevant information. The College reserves the right to take appropriate action to ensure its reputation is not adversely affected in anyway because of such incidents.
- A formal collaboration is considered a business arrangement; therefore, all aspects must be clear and explicit to all parties involved. All agreements are exchanged in writing and partners are required to endorse and abide by the College's ethical partnership policy.
- The College should be consulted whenever and wherever its name is used by partners, for both internal and external communications. Approval must be sought for any copy produced



which refers to an initiative from the College that is supported/sponsored by a partner organisation.

- At no time can the College's logo be used without express written permission for every occasion it is used.
- At no time can press releases be issued that refer to the College without our prior approval.
- Staff on both sides should beware the potential for bias generated through partnerships, where this might impinge on professional judgement and impartiality.
- Being in a partnership with the College does not bring with it any influence in the College's internal decision-making processes.
- Both parties always commit to confidentiality requirements.

The Royal College of Podiatry would like to acknowledge that this policy draws on the NHS Confederation's ethical sponsorship policy.