



## **Policy on Conflicts of Interest, Confidentiality, and Bias for Resident Volunteers**

### **BACKGROUND**

Residents who volunteer for American Board of Emergency Medicine's (ABEM) activities may be asked to participate in a non-ABEM activity that would present a conflict of interest with their ABEM activities. Resident volunteers must strive to avoid all bias, and the appearance of bias, in all actions and decisions involved in ABEM volunteer activities. The following policy is intended to guide ABEM-appointed residents when faced with decisions about participating in other activities and their actions when acting as a volunteer for ABEM.

### **POLICY**

#### **Conflict of Interest**

It is the policy of ABEM that residents will avoid all conflicts of interest. A 'conflict of interest' is a direct or indirect financial, personal, or other interest that 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 use a claim to the individual's primary loyalty. Such claims include using their experience with ABEM to endorse or promote a board preparation course.

Each physician 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 a determination.

When a resident named in this policy encounters a conflict of interest, it is the policy of ABEM that if the conflict cannot be removed or resolved in collaboration with the staff and Board leadership present, the person avoids the conflict by recusing themselves from the situation that presents the conflict. Recusal means temporarily not participating in the activity where a conflict exists. This policy does not affect an individual's overall service to ABEM.

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

#### **Confidentiality**

All ABEM volunteers understand and agree that their activities with ABEM may expose them to confidential information regarding ABEM and its activities. To protect confidential information, volunteers must attest that they will not make copies of, discuss, disclose, otherwise disseminate, or assist or permit others in dissemination of any confidential information. Volunteers must also attest not to use the confidential information for any purpose whatsoever except directly in connection with their activities with ABEM. Volunteers must agree that a promise of confidentiality will be in effect during the tenure of their activities with ABEM and at all times thereafter.

**Bias**

All ABEM volunteers are expected to maintain a standard of ethics that prohibits any misuse of position. All such volunteers are expected to refrain from comments or actions that could reasonably be perceived as discriminating against any applicant or candidate based on his or her age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, sexual self-identity, country of origin, or other status unrelated to the merits of his or her application and performance.

**PROCEDURES**

Individuals will be required to sign a statement attesting that they have read and understand this policy.

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, and 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.
- Will abide by the policy's confidentiality statements.
- Will maintain a standard of ethics that prohibits any misuse of position.

**PROCESS FOR HANDLING CONFLICTS**

- All potential conflicts of interest on the basis of the Policy on Conflicts of Interest, Confidentiality, and Bias for Resident Volunteers 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. This decision cannot be appealed.

**EXCEPTION**

None.