

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS/INQUIRIES REGARDING ACCREDITED SPONSORS

The following outline is a guide for handling complaints/inquiries received by the ISMA Subcommittee on Accreditation & Commission on Medical Education which indicate that an accredited sponsor may not be in compliance with the Essentials and Standards or may not follow established accreditation policies with regard to one or more of its activities.

- I. To receive formal consideration, all complaints shall be submitted in writing and signed. Complaints which are received by phone will be accepted if the complainant provides his or her name; ISMA staff shall produce a memorandum for the file.
- II. The ISMA CME Steering Committee will review the complaint/inquiry to determine whether it relates to the manner in which the sponsor complies with the Essentials and Standards or follows established accreditation policies.
 - A. If the complaint/inquiry is judged not to relate to compliance with the Essentials and Standards or to established accreditation policies, the person initiating the complaint shall be notified to that effect by the ISMA staff.
 - B. If the complaint/inquiry is judged to be related to compliance with the Essentials and Standards or to established accreditation policies, the following shall be observed:
 1. The confidentiality of the complaining/inquiring party shall be protected.
 2. The ISMA staff shall provide the complaining/inquiring party with a copy of the ISMA letter of inquiry to the accredited sponsor.
 3. The ISMA staff shall notify the individual indicated by the accredited sponsor as its contact person of the nature of the complaint/inquiry and shall request an investigation and report on the findings. The report will be due 30 days from receipt of the ISMA letter of inquiry.
 4. The ISMA may request information from the complaining / inquiring party, the sponsor, or other relevant sources as is warranted by its investigation.

- III. Upon receipt of the sponsor's response, the ISMA Steering Committee shall determine whether additional information is necessary and may request such information from the sponsor. Should the committee determine that the information submitted is adequate, the following will be observed:

The complaint/inquiry will be considered by the ISMA CME Steering Committee under the following procedures:

1. The complaint/inquiry materials shall be sent to members of the ISMA Steering Committee. Those members will review the materials and communicate their recommendations individually and in writing to the ISMA Staff.

a. If there is consensus, the results will be communicated to the Subcommittee on Accreditation and Commission on Medical Education committees.

b. If there is no consensus, a conference will be held among the ISMA CME Steering Committee. Additional materials may be requested from the sponsor, if it is determined that the materials are insufficient to allow them to render an opinion. If no consensus can be achieved, the full committees (Subcommittee on Accreditation and Commission on Medical Education) shall review the materials.

2. The Commission shall make the final determination; the following are the possible results:

a. Accept.

b. Receive and file.

c. Letter of warning/reprimand.

d. Letter of reprimand with on-site resurvey (immediate or at time of next resurvey).

IV. The ISMA Subcommittee on Accreditation and Commission on Medical Education will intervene by affecting the accreditation status of a sponsor only when it believes practices and conditions indicate that a sponsor may not be in compliance with the Essentials and Standards or with established accreditation policies.

V. Requests by the sponsor for an appeal must be written and received by the Commission within 30 days of the decision (see attached ISMA Appeals Process, Guidebook for Accreditation).

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