

GUIDELINES FOR OVERSIGHT OF USCAP COMPANION SOCIETIES

2020-2021

CONNECTING USCAP
TO THE WORLD



Introduction and Background

Historically the purpose of the Companion Society (CS) Meetings is to provide opportunities at USCAP's Annual Meeting for subspecialty pathology societies to meet, and to provide learners with an educational program, typically featuring the latest in research and practice in the specific subspecialty areas. Companion Societies are intended to supplement and enhance the Annual Meeting, but in no way to compete with or duplicate USCAP programs. USCAP supports and recognizes the importance of the Companion Society meetings, as they represent a valued adjunct component of the Annual Meeting and a magnet to attract and engage many learners and potential members.

Although in the past, the majority of Companion Societies have been subspecialty-based, geographically focused or non-subspecialty-based applicants can be accepted if criteria are met and the Education Committee (EC) and the Board deem the relationship beneficial to USCAP.

In addition to their scientific sessions, Companion Societies may hold a business meeting and/or a reception associated with their educational meeting, but these additional activities do not qualify for educational credit hours and are not financially supported by the Academy.

Logistics and Support

Companion Society meetings must meet the criteria and conditions for Continuing Medical Education (CME) as defined by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME). <https://www.accme.org/accreditation-rules>. As the accredited provider, USCAP will work with Companion Societies to ensure all activities are compliant. If a Companion Society would like to seek commercial support for their educational symposia presented at the USCAP Annual Meeting, prior approval must be given by USCAP. Any funds received without authorization will not be allowed.

Companion Society meetings are scheduled for three hours and receive logistical and administrative support from USCAP. USCAP staff schedules the time, location, coffee breaks, AV support, and registration arrangements. The registration fee is built into the overall cost structure of the Annual Meeting, and it reflects dual options: an additional fee coupled with the Annual Meeting registration fee, or a standalone fee to access to Companion Society sessions only. USCAP organizes the educational programs but individual Companion Societies provide program titles, moderators, speakers and course materials. USCAP publishes the Companion Society educational programs and speakers in their promotional and meeting materials.

In July, a representative of each Companion Society must submit the name and contact information for the next year's educational session moderator; a list of the officers; and any changes to the bylaws.

The USCAP educational office establishes an annual deadline for submission of materials and Conflict of Interest (COI) disclosures. The date varies commensurate with the opening date of the Annual Meeting. The moderator of the session is responsible for ensuring timely submission of all materials. If disclosures and content are not submitted by the designated deadline, the delinquent Companion Society may lose the ability to receive CME credits. Where conflicts of interest are identified, members of the Education Committee or Continuing Medical Education (CME) subcommittee will review submitted materials prior to the session to ensure it is evidence-based and does not contain bias. The Education Committee reserves the right to request changes to ensure that presentations are ACCME compliant.

Standard audio-visual support provided by USCAP includes:

- One (1) screen
- LCD projector in 16:9
- Laptop
- Podium with microphone
- One (1) wireless handheld microphone

USCAP does not arrange for Companion Society receptions, nor does it provide food and beverages for receptions. In addition, USCAP does not facilitate or permit live streaming of any Companion Society symposium or forum.

Eligibility Criteria for Companion Society Applicants

Applicants for Companion Society status are required to provide evidence of their identity as a medical society by submitting their Bylaws, current list of officers, and society census count.

There is no numerical membership requirement for a new Companion Society, but attendance at Companion Society meetings will be monitored and sparse attendance could eventuate in change to a smaller venue, an altered schedule or probation.

As noted above, Companion Societies have historically been sub-specialty based but geographically based applicants can be accepted if eligibility criteria are met and the relationship is deemed beneficial to USCAP (educational value, revenue, members at meeting).

Although there is no established limit to the number of Companion Societies that may be approved for a given subspecialty, the Education Committee and Board of Directors reserve the right to:

- cap the number of Companion Societies accommodated at an Annual Meeting based on space limitations
- request program collaboration by Companion Societies within the same subspecialty
- designate a rotational requirement for Companion Societies within the same subspecialty
- cap the total number of Companion Societies that may exist determined by future space limitations
- impose a provisional/probationary status

Application Process

The application information for Companion Society status is available on the USCAP website <https://www.uscap.org/companion-society-application/>. Along with the application, a current copy of the applicant Companion Society's Bylaws, list of officers, and membership census must be submitted to USCAP at the time of application. A sample or proposed educational/scientific program should be submitted with the application. Applications and supporting materials will be reviewed by the Education Committee annually at their Interim Meeting, and if approved, applications will be forwarded to the Board of Directors for review, discussion and decision at this Interim Meeting. If approved, the Companion Society will be notified by the Executive Vice President and can expect to inaugurate its meeting at the subsequent USCAP Annual Meeting, space permitting.

If the Board of Directors does not approve a Companion Society application that the Education Committee had approved, feedback will be provided by the Executive Vice President to the Education Committee as to why. The Executive Vice President will communicate the decision to the applicant society.

Sustainability Criteria for Companion Societies

Every Companion Society is required to provide annually updated lists of officers and the number of society members, accompanied by current Bylaws.

Deadlines for the submission of required data and course materials must be met.

To sustain qualification for CME the Companion Society meetings must meet the criteria and conditions as defined by the ACCME. If a Companion Society would like to seek commercial support for their educational symposia presented at the USCAP Annual Meeting, prior approval must be given by USCAP. Any funds received without authorization will not be allowed.

Oversight by USCAP

The USCAP Education Committee and CME subcommittee will oversee the educational content of Companion Societies, as well as the adherence to ACCME compliance regulations.

Companion Society Bylaws and non-profit status will be reviewed by executive USCAP Staff leadership annually.

The Chair of the Education Committee (or designee) will review the Companion Society education proposals each year to ensure ACCME compliance and content that is acceptable to USCAP. Faculty should not be invited until the educational program is approved. Following the Annual Meeting, Companion Society evaluations will be reviewed by the Chair of the Education Committee and/or by the Companion Society Evaluation Coordinator. Evaluations will also be transmitted to the Moderator and to Companion Society leadership/designated current point person. If there are issues with a Companion Society's educational program that are identified from the evaluations, these will be communicated to the Moderator and Companion Society leadership/designated point person by the Chair of the Education Committee.

Conditions for Probation and/or Severance

USCAP reserves the right to confer Companion Society status or to sever its relationship with any Companion Society for any reason, which USCAP, in its sole discretion, determines to be sufficient cause for termination of the relationship. Specific conditions leading to probation and/or severance may include, but are not limited to:

1. Failure to comply with ACCME regulatory guidelines
2. Failure to provide Bylaws, list of officers, and membership census annually for 2 consecutive years
3. Failure to meet the USCAP Education Staff's deadlines for 2 consecutive years
4. Poor reviews of the educational program from either learners or from the Education Committee, for 2 consecutive years
5. Sparse attendance for two consecutive years (the definition of sparse may vary with the census and character of individual Companion Societies)
6. Behavior by Companion Society leadership that is damaging to USCAP or that does not align with the USCAP mission; USCAP will not get involved in internal disputes or grievances of Companion Societies unrelated to the Academy, and will take action if those disputes affect the USCAP Annual Meeting

If the Education Committee, CME subcommittee, or USCAP Staff determine that such conditions have occurred without rectification, they may request that the Board of Directors imposes probation, typically for a period of 2 years. Failure to remedy the conditions of probation may lead to severance of the relationship.

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