Policy on Eligible and Ineligible Companies and Accredited Continuing Education

As an accredited provider of continuing education, STO is committed to ensuring that its accredited continuing education: 1) presents learners with only accurate, balanced, scientifically justified recommendations, and 2) protects learners from promotion, marketing, and commercial bias. To that end, the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education (Standards) has established the following guidance, which STO adheres to, on the types of organizations that that are eligible and ineligible to be involved in the development, delivery and evaluation of accredited continuing education.

According to the Standards, eligible organizations are those whose mission and function are: (1) providing clinical services directly to patients; or (2) the education of healthcare professionals; or (3) serving as fiduciary to patients, the public, or population health; and other organizations that are not otherwise ineligible.

Examples of such organizations include:

- Ambulatory procedure centers
- Blood banks
- Diagnostic labs that do not sell proprietary products
- Electronic health records companies
- Government or military agencies
- Group medical practices
- Health law firms
- Health profession membership organizations
- Hospitals or healthcare delivery systems
- Infusion centers
- Insurance or managed care companies
- Nursing homes

- Pharmacies that do not manufacture proprietary compounds
- Publishing or education companies
- Rehabilitation centers
- Schools of medicine or health science universities
- Software or game developers

The Standards define ineligible companies as, “are those whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.”

Examples of ineligible organizations include:

- Advertising, marketing, or communication firms whose clients are ineligible companies
- Bio-medical startups that have begun a governmental regulatory approval process
- Compounding pharmacies that manufacture proprietary compounds
- Device manufacturers or distributors
- Diagnostic labs that sell proprietary products
- Growers, distributors, manufacturers or sellers of medical foods and dietary supplements
- Manufacturers of health-related wearable products
- Pharmaceutical companies or distributors
- Pharmacy benefit managers
- Reagent manufacturers or sellers