



European Board for Accreditation in Cardiology

EBAC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CME PROVIDERS

INTRODUCTION

Guidance

The principal responsibility of EBAC is assuring the quality of international CME in cardiology, as well as facilitating and stimulating participation of individual physicians in CME activities. By defining its Recommendations for CME Providers EBAC intends to present its requirements in a clear and explicit way. EBAC Policies, Procedures and Standard Documents and Texts comply with international and European standards in CME accreditation, with special regard to the requirements of EACCME.

Introduction/Background

Physicians have different CME needs and interests, individual learning patterns/ styles, as well as clinical practice environments. The availability of given diagnostic procedures and treatment depend significantly on national healthcare system regulations, the country's economy, cultural patterns and many other factors.

EBAC therefore encourages CME providers to consider the CME needs and learning habits of physicians while preparing the CME activity. Definitions of learning objectives, targeting the audience, and assuring objectively presented scientific content are among the key features that will be considered by EBAC when accrediting a programme.

I. EBAC

What is EBAC?

The European Board for Accreditation in Cardiology is responsible for Accreditation of international CME programmes in cardiology for the European medical community. Both the competence and legitimacy of the Board are assured by its two parent organisations, the ESC and the UEMS. EBAC works in conjunction with the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME).

EBAC mission and activities

The mission of EBAC is the assurance of quality of international CME and CPD programmes in cardiology in Europe. Accreditation, which means the approval of the scientific and didactic value of the programme, is awarded to those who comply with the quality requirements stipulated by EBAC. Every CME programme submitted to EBAC for accreditation is reviewed and assessed separately.

Independence and transparency

EBAC is an independent entity and its decisions are not influenced by any specific medical, scientific or professional institution or society. EBAC does not depend on sponsorship from the health industry.

The Internet – EBAC's main communication tool

EBAC promotes the use of New Communication and Information Technologies (NCIT) and strongly believes in its impact on the quality of CME programmes and their accessibility/delivery. The EBAC website offers the necessary information on EBAC and its activities and is the access point for EBAC accreditation services, open to all registered CME Providers.

II. EBAC ACCREDITATION

What is accreditation?

Accreditation means the decision by EBAC that a CME provider has fulfilled the EBAC quality requirements for a CME programme. A CME activity will be accredited by EBAC if it has high quality scientific content, if it is free of commercial bias (see EBAC quality policy) and has an appropriate didactic approach.

Accreditation as a service to the medical community

At present, an important number of scientific programmes, symposia and conferences are organised in the field of cardiology. EBAC accreditation is a kind of “quality seal” that indicates to doctors those programmes with both high quality scientific and also didactic value.

Advantages of EBAC accreditation

There are several reasons for applying for EBAC accreditation. The two main ones are that:

- ▶ more and more European countries are running CME systems for physicians, some being mandatory. Doctors therefore prefer to attend accredited meetings earning CME credits that will be recognised by their National Accreditation Authorities;
- ▶ The accredited CME activity distinguishes itself from other potential educational activities by the fact that its quality has been confirmed by an impartial Board of specialists widely recognised in the field of cardiology.

Who can apply for EBAC accreditation?

EBAC will accredit meetings, which are the responsibility of International and National Medical/ Cardiac Societies, Universities and their associated working groups or affiliated societies. Accreditation of CME Programmes presented by professional health education organisations can be entertained.

To be eligible for EBAC accreditation, other organisers, individual cardiologists or groups of cardiologists, working in conjunction with commercial organisations, should work in cooperation with, or within the structure of those scientifically recognised organisms.

Recognition of EBAC accreditation

The EBAC accreditation system and procedures are based on the EACCME Charter on CME and other relevant documents. EACCME is an institution of the UEMS, which formally represents European countries, and its credits should thus be recognised by National Accreditation Authorities. As EBAC accreditation concerns only international CME programmes in cardiology, it is not competitive, but rather complementary to the competence and activities of National Accreditation Authorities.

Accreditation of different types of CME activities

At present, EBAC is accrediting CME events; in the near future it plans to accredit CME programmes in cardiology provided at distance.

III. ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

In brief

The accreditation procedure defined by EBAC is meant to be user/ provider friendly. EBAC accreditation is awarded to organisers/ CME providers that apply for accreditation through the special service developed and accessible only through the EBAC website. The Provider has to register and complete an Application Form (AF) that consists of questions concerning the scientific content of the programme, the faculty, the didactic approach and information on commercial support to the programme. The completed AF is reviewed by EBAC and accreditation is granted, or rejected. Requests for complementary information should be rare, as an AF completed correctly should provide the necessary information to judge the programme's quality. After the accreditation and the number of CME credits are awarded to the CME programme, the provider receives the Accreditation Certificate, EBAC Recommendations for CME Providers

which is the formal basis on which Attendance Certificates with the indicated number of CME credits can be delivered to participants. A fee is requested by EBAC for the accreditation service.

How to apply for EBAC accreditation?

The application for EBAC accreditation can be submitted on-line only (via the Internet). To apply please go to the section "CME Providers" on the EBAC website homepage, and follow the instructions. It is extremely important to carefully complete data such as e-mails, telephone, and fax numbers, and to update them regularly! Internet is the main communication tool of EBAC, so incorrect data might cause delay in the accreditation process.

Registering as a CME Provider

It is necessary to register as a CME Provider in order to have full access to EBAC accreditation services. Registration is completed in the "CME Provider" section of the EBAC website.

The Application Form (AF) and Glossary

The Application Form is the main document on the basis of which the quality of the CME programme is assessed, and accreditation awarded. The AF contains questions concerning the programme, scientific committee, faculty, language, didactic approach and commercial support.

In order to facilitate the task of completing the AF, a special glossary has been prepared that precisely defines the information EBAC is asking for.

EBAC requirements towards the Provider of the accredited CME event

Besides completing the Application Form, the CME Provider is expected to fulfil several other requirements concerning the CME programme.

Most of them belong to normal procedures and are widely used, nevertheless a complete list of what EBAC expects from the provider is given below.

EBAC expects the Provider to:

1. Place on the promotional materials/brochures concerning the CME programme information on:

- a. the learning objectives of the programmes,
- b. the targeted audience
- c. possible/disclosed conflicts of interest (CME faculty or provider relationships with commercial supporters of the CME event should be disclosed to participants prior to educational activities and briefly indicated in course materials such as brochures, syllabi, exhibits, poster-sessions and also in post-meeting publications.
- d. Source(s) of commercial funding
- e. Information that satellite symposia (if any) are excluded from EBAC accreditation.

2. Prepare the event's programme in such a way that the possible accompanying satellite sessions and/or commercially sponsored social events would not interfere, nor compete with, the accredited CME event.

3. Attendance Certificate

Deliver Attendance Certificates to participants at the end of the programme.

Those certificates should contain the standard text proposed by EBAC, in compliance with the EACCME requirements.

The text is available from EBAC as are other important documents.

4. Evaluation of CME activity by participants

At the end of every activity participants should complete Evaluation Forms. The use of the EBAC Standard Evaluation Form is recommended, as it is an easy-to-use one-page document, and its subsequent processing is simple. The results have to be transmitted to EBAC in the Report after the accredited CME activity.

5. Disclosure Form and compliance to the EBAC Disclosure Policy

Every member of the Faculty and Scientific Committee must complete and sign the EBAC Disclosure Form. Signature of this document discloses the **existence of any financial interest or other relationship a person, or the provider has with the supporting company or any commercial products discussed during the CME course.**

Additionally, potential relationships of faculty members or Provider with commercial supporters of the CME event should be disclosed to participants prior to educational activities and briefly

indicated in course materials such as brochures, syllabi, exhibits, poster-sessions and also in post-meeting publications (see Disclosure Text).
In case of existing conflicts of interest, they should be indicated to the audience before the activity and/or in the above mentioned materials.

6. EBAC Monitor – visiting the accredited CME event

Occasionally EBAC will be represented, at certain CME events, by a Monitor. The CME Provider is expected to provide the Monitor with accommodation and other facilities, according to the standard service offered to participants. Transport costs will be at the charge of the CME Provider, that will be informed of the Monitor's presence in advance.

7. Report

EBAC requires the Provider of the accredited CME activity to prepare and send to EBAC a report concerning the activity. The content of the report is pre-defined, and possible to download from the EBAC website.

8. Participants List – European Accreditation Database

CME Providers of EBAC Accredited CME Activities **will provide EBAC with a list of participants to their programme in excel format.** The list should contain the following information: EBAC Application Form ID, ESCID, Date of Birth, Family Name, First Name, Number of CME Credits granted, Date of EBAC CME Certificate issued.

A template of the requested excel file is available to download from the EBAC online Documents Library. **The information will be fed into the “European Accreditation database” and will enable doctors to keep track of their CME Activity online.**

Use of EBAC logo and name

The circumstances in which a CME Provider can use the EBAC logo are defined in a separate document. **The Provider is allowed to place the information on EBAC accreditation, as well as the EBAC logo on his promotional materials, only after accreditation has been granted and the Certificate of Accreditation issued.**

Abuse of the EBAC name and logo will provide a basis for legal proceedings.

IV. ASSURING THE QUALITY OF ACCREDITED CME PROGRAMMES

1. EBAC POLICIES

Disclosure Policy (Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest)

EBAC Policy on Quality

Careful planning, professional organization and subsequent evaluation are key features of a successfully conducted CME activity.

The evaluation of the accredited event has four main parts:

- ▶ The planning and content will be evaluated on the basis of the submitted application form;
- ▶ Participants evaluate the event by completing the Evaluation Form;
- ▶ The CME provider has to participate in this process also, completing the Report sent to EBAC after the event has taken place;
- ▶ An EBAC Monitor will evaluate some of the EBAC accredited events.

EBAC Guidelines on Commercial Support

Financial support from commercial companies to organize CME activities is very widespread. EBAC encourages CME providers to establish a form of cooperation that will enhance the quality and accessibility of a CME activity.

EBAC has defined in its Guidelines on Commercial Support the rules that must be respected by both the CME provider and supporting company or institution.

In any case, the supporting company cannot influence nor control the scientific content of the CME programme, nor make any kind of pressure on the Provider.

An unrestricted educational grant is regarded as the recommended form of support.

2. QUALITY OF THE DIDACTIC APPROACH

Working language, course materials

For international programmes English is the working language which is recommended. However, for meetings with a different official working language, availability of the course materials in English is encouraged.

Interactivity and use of multimedia

For the scientifically valuable content of a course, the presentation is a very important factor. Its form and level of interactivity will have an influence on how the participants assimilate this new information.

In education, "multimedia" means the integrated use of digitised text, audio, graphics, animation, and video to present the course content. A mixture of these technologies will always produce better results than any single technology.

Teaching methods

The classical teaching model in medicine, mostly based on passive knowledge acquisition, are less effective than the more modern methods. Recent adult learning theories point to clinical practice and problem solving as key areas of interest. Therefore, incorporation in CME programmes of problem-based learning, interactivity and stimulating self-learning are highly recommended .

3. COMPLYING TO EBAC REQUIREMENTS

Professional honesty

The role of EBAC is to stimulate, coordinate and evaluate international CME in cardiology. Its vocation is not to control. EBAC does not wish to set up complex and cumbersome control mechanisms, and has trust in the good faith and professionalism of CME Providers.

Transparency and simplicity - the same rules for all

The requirements settled and described above are seen as the minimum requirement and must be fulfilled. All CME providers, regardless of the size and importance of their institution are submitted to the same rules, procedures, and have to comply with EBAC Policies, Procedures and Requirements.

Control

EBAC reserves the audit compliance with its requirements.

When irregularities are noticed, the Provider will be awarded "negative points" that will accumulate over time. In case of serious and /or intentional disregard of EBAC regulations, EBAC has the right to refuse accreditation for future events.

V. COMMUNICATION WITH EBAC

EBAC website

Please use the website to communicate with EBAC. Accreditation services are accessible through the "CME Provider" section and are designed in such a way that eliminate the necessity of using other communication tools.

All matters concerning accreditation should be communicated to EBAC via e-mail only.

Payments and EBAC services

EBAC offers several payment possibilities. Payment with a credit card is recommended as it assures the most prompt treatment of the application.

Applications will be reviewed only after reception of the administrative fees.

An invoice will be provided on request.

Questions and comments

EBAC has an open-door communication policy. All comments, suggestions, and criticisms are welcome. They should be addressed via e-mail to the EBAC office.