



### **The European Accreditation Council for CME (EACCME)**

Under the impulse of a growing shift from voluntary to mandatory CME/CPD in Europe (For a comprehensive overview of CME/CPD in Europe, see document UEMS 2006 / 21 – European CME/CPD – Developments and Structure in European Member States), the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) set up the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME) in October 1999.

The EACCME started its activities in January 2000 with the aim of harmonising and improving the quality of specialist medical care in Europe by structuring and facilitating the mutual recognition of accreditation of CME/CPD activities through the awarding of European CME credits (ECMECs) to individual medical specialists throughout Europe. The EACCME set itself as the central link between the National Accreditation Authorities (NAAs), the UEMS Specialist Sections and Boards and/or European Specialty Accreditation Boards (ESABs), and the providers of CME activities by allowing the recognition and exchange of CME credits between all European countries.

### **What is CME?**

Continuing medical education (CME) can be defined as educational activities which serve to maintain, develop or increase the knowledge, skills and professional performance and relationships that a physician uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession.

Therefore all continuing educational activities which assist physicians in carrying out their professional responsibilities more effectively and efficiently are considered as falling into the scope of this definition.

### **What is CPD?**

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is defined as the educative means of updating, developing and enhancing how doctors apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes required in their working lives (UEMS Basel declaration on CPD 2001).

### **Which added value?**

The added value of EACCME lies in its central link and “bridging” role.

From the point of view of the providers of events, the accreditation process is less time-consuming and easier since they do not have to apply to every National Accreditation Authority to have an event recognised in the different European countries. On the basis of the EACCME statement (see below), the approval from the National Accreditation Authority of the country where the event takes place will be automatically recognised in all the other European countries and is hence sufficient.



Consequently, the added value sits in the international dimension that is given to an event. More participants from other countries and also from the USA (see below) would be interested in participating in their meetings.

The CME accreditation granted by the EACCME gives also a guarantee to participants from all over the world that the content of the CME provided is of a high quality and, for European doctors, that this quality will be recognised in their home country.

#### **The EACCME and the American Medical Association (AMA)**

In 2000 the EACCME and the AMA signed an agreement of mutual recognition of CME credits between Europe and the USA whereby

- European physicians attending an event in the USA had their credits recognised in Europe and
- American physicians attending an event in Europe had their credits recognised in the USA.

The EACCME remains the central body for accrediting events in Europe and the AMA in the USA.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006 this agreement was renewed for another period of 4 years.

#### **European / International CME activities**

The CME/CPD activity or event needs to have an international dimension in order to be considered by the EACCME. This international character can be interpreted by the presence in the audience, and/or in the faculty, of participants from different European Member States.

Consequently every CME/CPD event or activity targeting European medical doctors organised in Europe or worldwide (with exception of the United States of America, following the agreement on mutual recognition of credits between the EACCME and the AMA – see above) is eligible for European accreditation by the EACCME.

- 1) International events held in Europe are assessed both by the National Accreditation Authority of the country where the event takes place and the relevant UEMS Specialist Section or European Specialty Accreditation Board (ESAB) of the specialty involved.
- 2) For international events taking place outside of Europe, the EACCME relies solely on the expertise of the UEMS Specialist Sections and Boards and/or European Specialty Accreditation Boards (ESABs) for granting European accreditation.
- 3) As a matter of fact purely national activities do not qualify for European accreditation and have to be evaluated by the National Accreditation Authority only.



### **Approval of sponsored satellite symposia**

Sponsored satellite symposia take place generally in association with major meetings of International, European or National Specialist Societies. Unlike many other educational events, they are generally sponsored by one single commercial company. There is therefore a risk that the educational content of these symposia may be biased in favour of the commercial interests of the sponsor.

“Satellite symposia which form part of a congress which has been approved for CME do not get separate approval for CME credits by EACCME. They are considered part of the whole meeting programme and are therefore covered by the congress CME. There is no specific allocation of hours to them.”

### **Continuous accreditation of providers vs. accreditation of single activities**

European accreditation is granted for single CME activities only. Presently the mandate of the EACCME does not extend to a continuous provider accreditation. Providers who offer CME activities on a regular basis have to apply for accreditation on a case by case basis.

#### **Accreditation process**

The EACCME accreditation is a mark of quality.

In order to guarantee an independent assessment of the content of the CME programme, CME activities are evaluated by EACCME in accordance with the UEMS' International criteria for CME (UEMS 1999/08). EACCME accreditation assures the medical community and the public that such activities provide physicians with independent quality information that can assist them in maintaining or improving their medical practice.

The following diagram describes how the accreditation process is carried out as well as how the decision-making is organised.

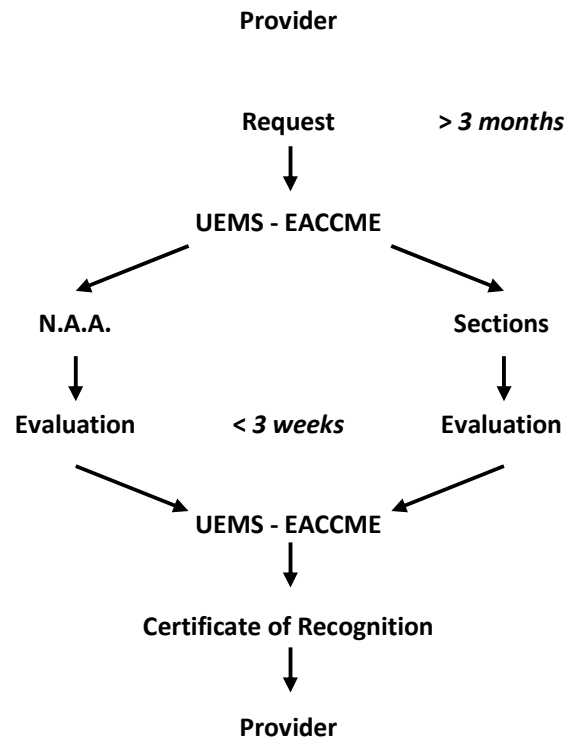




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If after reading this information you have any questions regarding the accreditation process please email us at [uems@skynet.be](mailto:uems@skynet.be).

**The process in practice:**

The provider of an event completes the online application form with all the relevant and required information and documents. The EACCME requires applications to be submitted n later than 2 to 3 months before the start of the event.

The online application form is immediately distributed to the two partners:

- a) The relevant National Accreditation Authority of the country where the event takes place
- b) The relevant UEMS Specialist Section and/or Accreditation Board which assesses the scientific value of the CME activity. This evaluation strictly follows UEMS Quality criteria defined in the document UEMS 1999/08.



Both partners are requested to give, in a well determined time scale (3 weeks), an approval or a refusal for accreditation plus the suggested number of credits to be applied.

As the different National Accreditation Authorities apply different credit systems, the European CME Credits ("ECMEC") were introduced in order to harmonise the number of credits on the following basis :

- 1 ECMEC per hour;
- 3 ECMEC for half-day; and
- 6 ECMEC for a full-day event.

National authorities can then convert these credits into national units, following their own national credit system.

When both partners approve an event, the provider receives a letter confirming the approval of European Accreditation.

This letter contains three sections:

- the confirmation of the approval and the partners involved in the evaluation and decision.

"The < name of institution > (or) < title of the CME activity > is accredited by the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME) to provide the following CME activity for medical specialists. The EACCME is an institution of the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS), [www.uems.be](http://www.uems.be)"

- the number of ECMEC's granted to the event by the EACCME (and eventually the number of National Credits granted following the rules of the National Accreditation Authority of the country where the event takes place).

"The < title of the CME activity > is designated for a maximum of (or "for up to") < number of hours > hours of European external CME credits. Each medical specialist should claim only those hours of credit that he/she actually spent in the educational activity."

- General information relating to the mutual recognition of credits between the EACCME and AMA PRA Class 1 credits.

"EACCME credits are recognised by the American Medical Association toward the Physician's Recognition Award (PRA). To convert EACCME credit to AMA PRA category 1 credit, contact the AMA."

The accreditation statement thus identifies which CME event is in compliance with all the EACCME requirements for European accreditation. The accreditation statement must appear on all CME activity materials and brochures distributed by providers of an EACCME accredited event.



Together with the letter of accreditation, the provider will be issued with an invoice for administrative expenses. This fee is based on a sliding scale determined by the number of participants.

| Number        | Total fee |
|---------------|-----------|
| Up till 250   | 300 €     |
| 251 – 500     | 600 €     |
| 501 – 1.000   | 900 €     |
| 1.001 – 2.000 | 1.200 €   |
| 2.001 – 5.000 | 1.500 €   |
| > 5.000       | 3.000 €   |

Please note that an additional processing fee of 50 € will be requested as operational cost when submitting your application.

All providers of approved events are required:

- To keep an attendance record of their meetings. The provider is free to choose whatever registration method works best for its own organization and attendees. It is not necessary to send this record to the EACCME.
- To hand out attendance certificates to participants in order for them to have their credits recognised in their home country (each doctor should only be granted those hours of credit that he/she actually spent in the educational activity). Certificates of attendance will be provided by the EACCME upon completion of the accreditation process.
- To provide evaluation forms to the delegates, a means by which they can easily record their rating of the relevance, quality and effectiveness of the event.
- To provide the EACCME with a feedback report of the event.

### Logo

The UEMS – EACCME logo is a service mark of the European Union of Medical Specialists – European Accreditation Council for CME. This service mark may be used publicly only with the permission of the UEMS – EACCME.

The logo may only be used in conjunction with, and in proximity to, the EACCME accreditation statement.

The logo cannot be used in notices, advertising, or promotion of activities other than in association with the EACCME accreditation statement.



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#### **Database of EACCME accredited events**

All EACCME accredited events are listed on the EACCME homepage.

For the providers of CME activities this is a way to advertise their event through the recognition of its quality at the international level.

At the same time it allows National Accreditation Authorities to check which event has received European accreditation when recognising a participant's credits at national level.