

EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR ACCREDITATION IN HEMATOLOGY (ECAH)

Standards and Guidelines for CME Accreditation

Introduction:

In recent years, many medical disciplines have become aware of the need to establish a system for the accreditation and quality control of CME (continuing medical education) to encourage the individual medical practitioner to maintain and develop his/her level of professional knowledge and skills.

Accreditation systems have been designed and implemented within some of these medical disciplines to ensure the quality of the activities and self-learning tools proposed to the individual practitioner.

It is foreseeable that in the near future CME and CME accreditation will be demanded not only by the individual hematologist, but also by his/her employer and patients.

These are the reasons that motivated EHA to develop a European system for the accreditation and quality control of continuing education for hematologists. This project has been developed in partnership with ESH, EBMT and national hematology societies in Europe. It is supported by grant EUR/2002/C/TH/84902 of the European Commission's Leonardo da Vinci program.

Definitions:

CME Activities:

CME consists of activities which contribute to develop and maintain the knowledge and/or skills of the hematologist in his/her professional setting. CME is organized for the benefit of the healthcare professional and for his/her patients. Here, it is directed to all hematologists. It addresses both the clinical and laboratory settings.

CME Self-Learning Tools:

CME self-learning tools are enduring materials which can be used for CME purposes at a time and place of the user's choice.

ECAH

ECAH was initiated to promote continuing education in hematology, to accredit CME activities and to ensure that they are conducted according to pre-established standards.

1. STRUCTURE AND ROLE OF ECAH:

This document concerns all continuing educational activities in hematology developed in Europe for an international audience.

1.1. Structure

ECAH is directed by the EHA Education, the EHA Executive Committees, and the ECAH Advisory Board

Prominent hematologists are appointed by partner hematology organizations with representation on its Advisory Board. The role of the Advisory Board is to inform and advise EHA on all matters concerning CME and CME accreditation, at the national, European and international levels, in hematology and in all other disciplines relevant to hematologists.

1.2. Role

It is the role of ECAH to:

- Develop, adapt and promote guidelines for CME in hematology in Europe so that they encourage the organization of CME activities and are able to effectively measure their quality and efficacy.
- Elicit and process requests for accreditation of CME activities and to designate credit points to those that are in keeping with its established standards.
- Ensure quality control of accredited activities.
- Liaise with other CME accreditation bodies and authorities at the national, European and international levels.

2. GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZERS OF CME ACTIVITIES/EVENTS:

The guidelines of other pioneer accreditation systems have inspired those that follow.

These guidelines aim to ensure that accredited CME activities effectively contribute to maintain or increase the standard of knowledge of professionals working in the field of hematology and so impact favorably on the quality of clinical care.

2.1. Guidelines for the Organizer of CME Activities, Meetings, and Events

This section pertains to the organization of meetings, conferences, symposia, workshops and the educational programs of congresses organized at the European, national, or regional levels. **Locally organized activities are not eligible for accreditation.**

One credit point equals one full hour of CME activity.

Organizers are invited to access on-line accreditation instructions and forms at www.ehaweb.org. Applications and attachments must be completed in English. Only complete applications will be eligible for peer review.

Standard 1: Need(s)

The Organizer must demonstrate that the CME activity corresponds to the needs of hematologists and their patients.

Standard 2: Scope

The Organizer must present:

- The scientific program.
- The names and profiles of the faculty members (including full contact information).

Standard 3: Methods

The Organizer must:

- Describe any innovative educational methods.

Standard 4: Circulation of Information

The Organizer must:

- Inform potential participants of the number of designated CME credit points to be earned through participation in the accredited CME activity.

Standard 5: Teaching Document

The Organizer must:

- Distribute a document (e.g. book of abstracts, educational booklet) summarizing the activity's scientific content and providing references for further reading to the participants of the accredited activity. The document must be kept on record for a period of five years and conveyed upon request to the ECAH offices.

Standard 6: Feedback Evaluation

The Organizer must:

- Provide the accredited activity's participants with an ECAH approved evaluation form which should be designed to allow the participants to share their appreciation of the CME activity's scientific content and organization.
- Keep the evaluation results on record **for 5 years** and convey to ECAH upon request.
- Take these results and feedback into consideration when planning future CME activities.

Standard 7: Validation

The Organizer must:

- Provide the participant with an ECAH approved certificate of attendance.

2.2. *Guidelines for Editors of Self-Learning Tools*

In the future, it will be possible to apply for CME accreditation of self-learning tools. The corresponding guidelines and standards are currently under development.

2.3. *Processing applications*

- Only complete on-line applications written in English will be eligible.
- Applications will be processed within 8 weeks after receipt.

2.4. *Quality Control*

- All applications will be submitted to scientific peer review.
- Organizers will be required to submit to eventual on-site quality control.

2.5. *Sanctions*

Organizers will be held fully responsible for the scientific quality of the CME activities they organize. Failure to respect the standards and guidelines of the European Hematology CME System will lead to ineligibility for accreditation of future meetings.

3. PARTICIPANTS

3.1 *Validation*

Hematologists participating in ECAH accredited CME events are invited to open an on-line CME credit point account to keep record of their CME credit points. A password ensures confidential access to each credit point account.

Hematologists are invited to contact cme@ehaweb.org to open their credit point account and receive a password.

Each holder of a CME credit point account will be able to follow the accumulation of his/her CME credit points on-line. Each account holder will also automatically receive electronically periodic reports on the status of his/her credit point account.

ECAH recommends that each hematologist should follow 250 hours of CME activity over a 5 year period (50 credit points/year).

3.2. *Sanctions*

It is considered that European hematologists are generally highly motivated to up-date their knowledge and skills. For this reason, the European Hematology CME System will not sanction individual hematologists.

4. UNRESTRICTED EDUCATIONAL GRANTS

Only academics and academic organizations/institutions are eligible to apply for CME accreditation. However, educational grants provided by commercial sponsors are often necessary for the development of CME activities. The following rules aim to ensure that scientific objectivity and balance of CME are maintained in this setting.

4.1. *Scientific Objectivity*

a) Benefit

CME activities must be organized to benefit hematologists and their patients, and not the organizing institution, the faculty or the commercial partners involved.

b) Scientific impartiality

The CME program must be objective with all views presented in a balanced manner.

c) Absence of commercial bias

The CME program must be free of commercial bias. Commercial products must be mentioned only if necessary. Generic names should be used rather than trade names. Data relative to any unlicensed, investigational commercial product must be presented as such. Information must be of scientific peer review journal standard.

d) Scientific independence

The Organizer must develop the scientific content and materials of the CME event independently, without input from the provider of the unrestricted educational grant. The selection of speakers and course materials is the sole responsibility of the Organizer and must not be subject to review by the

provider of the educational grant. All scientific slides and handouts must be prepared by the scientists involved in the program and must not include logos, symbols, colors etc. that refer explicitly or implicitly to the provider of the unrestricted educational grant or its commercial products.

e) Disclosures

Any affiliation or significant relation between a member of the faculty and the commercial sponsor, and any other eventual affiliation potentially able to introduce a bias must be disclosed to the CME participants in writing.

f) Acknowledgment

Each time the support of the commercial partner is acknowledged in writing it must be prefixed by the phrase 'supported by an unrestricted educational grant from...'

4.2. Promotional Activities

- a) The Organizer must develop the promotional materials of the CME event independently, without input from the provider of the unrestricted educational grant. The Organizer will be held fully responsible for the content and presentation of all promotional materials. These materials must not include logos, symbols, colors etc. that refer explicitly or implicitly to the provider of the unrestricted educational grant or its commercial products. Any material promoting the event distributed by the provider of the unrestricted educational grant must be previously reviewed by the Organizer according to these guidelines.
- b) Organizers of CME activities should not allow providers of unrestricted educational grants to distribute commercial materials within the conference room nor at the immediate entrance to the conference room.

4.3. Social Events

Social events supported by the commercial partner(s) must not interfere with or take precedence over the CME program.

Last revised May 9, 2005