

Evaluation of e-learning

EACCME letter

October 2008 UEMS Council adopted following document:

"The Accreditation of e-learning Materials by EACCME – UEMS 2008/20 rev"

To Start 6th April 2009!!!

EACCME letter

Since its establishment by the UEMS in January 2000, the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME) has provided the means for accrediting CME events, thereby providing for international harmonisation, and encouraging improvement in the quality of continuing medical education.

EACCME letter

In its policy paper from 2001, the Basel Declaration on Continuing Professional Development (CPD), the UEMS defines CPD as:

“the educative means of updating, developing and enhancing how doctors apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes required in their working lives”.

EACCME letter

The UEMS recognises that CPD incorporates and goes beyond CME, but acknowledges the need for CME credits as a simple means of confirming involvement in CME/CPD, and as a common “CME currency”.

The UEMS has therefore harmonised its CME accreditation around the European CME Credit (ECMEC) that can be used throughout Europe and, via a mutual recognition agreement with the American Medical Association, also in North America.

EACCME letter

In this paper, these new media are referred to as “e-Learning”, and should be taken as covering the delivery of CME/CPD by methods including:

Recorded audio, recorded visual, recorded on Compact Disc (CD), recorded on Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), available on Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), available online via an educational website, or any mixture of the preceding.

This list should not be considered as complete.

While other terms used for these new media include “distance-learning” and “enduring materials”, these terms are not used in this paper.

Definitions

The paper states what criteria will be applied for the accreditation of e-Learning materials, (henceforth referred to as “Materials”),

and how the e-CME or e-CPD Provider (henceforth referred to as “Provider”) should apply for EACCME accreditation of these Materials.

Demands to the Provider

1. Must state that the Material has been prepared in order to fulfill stated educational needs, and indicate how this will be achieved. This confirmation must demonstrate that a “needs assessment” process has been performed, that these educational needs have been defined, and will be fulfilled.
2. Must state the expected educational outcome(s) of the Materials. These must be explained in terms of the knowledge, skills, attitudinal or behavioural, or ethical lessons that can be learned, and whether these are clinical or non-clinical.
3. Must clearly define, and state the “target audience” for whom the Materials are most likely to be suitable. This must be explained in terms of the speciality/ies and seniority of doctor (henceforth referred to as the “Learner”) most likely to benefit.
4. Must clearly explain in a brief summary, the content of the Material.

Demands to the Provider

5. Must respect and confirm the privacy and confidentiality of the Learner, and confirm that any information provided by the Learner will only be utilised for the specific purposes of completing the Material. This is particularly relevant in the case of interactive Material (such as online websites). The only permitted exception to this will be with the valid consent of the Learner.
6. Must clearly state the likely duration that the Learner will need to engage with the Material in order to fulfil the educational objective(s). This must be a minimum of one hour, with each hour of educational time expected to count as one ECMEC.

Demands to the Provider

7. Must clearly state compliance of the Materials with all relevant ethical, medico-legal and legal requirements.
8. Must clearly state the date of preparation of the Material, any substantial revisions to its content, and expiry date.
9. Must clearly state the required format for use of the Material, (eg. Windows/MacOS; DVD region), and must provide contact details for the provision of assistance.

Demands to the Material

1. All content within the Material must be evidence-based, with notes on the level of evidence (where applicable), and suitable references. This must be to the standard required for a publication in a scientific journal.
2. Must encourage the Learner to employ methods of active, adult learning to achieve the educational objective(s). These may include: problem-orientated learning, task-based learning, case-based learning, reflective learning, and performance improvement CME.
3. Must include a means of confirming Learner engagement, and achievement of the educational objective(s). This must be of quality, duration and content appropriate to the Material and the educational objective(s), and it must be integral to the Material. It may be based on multiple-choice questionnaire or other self-assessment methodologies, but must have clearly stated assessment criteria (eg. pass mark). This should be set by the provider of the educational content (as distinct from the provider of the product).

Demands to the Material

4. All content must be free from any commercial or other forms of bias
Where there is a valid evidence base for a specific therapy or agent, this may be stated, but must be referenced in a manner that is appropriate for a scientific journal.
5. All content must be free of any form of advertising.
6. All content should be suitable for an international audience. This refers to the use of international terminology for procedures and therapeutic agents.
7. All content should be easy to use.

Details of the Provider to present the Material

Must provide a short description of the Provider organisation. While the use of the Provider's logo(s) will be permitted, there must not be any attempt at using this description for advertisement.

The Material must state the names and qualifications of the individual(s) involved in preparing the content.

There must be a full declaration of potential conflict of interest of the individual(s) involved in preparing the content of the Material.

The source of all funding provided for the preparation of the Material must be declared and stated in a readily-accessible manner. If an educational grant or other financial support has been obtained by the developers of the Material, the source and nature of this must be declared.

Details of the Provider to present the Material

The Material must provide the name and title of a medical practitioner who will take responsibility for its content. This doctor must be registered with a Medical Regulatory Authority, and his/her registration details must be provided.

The Material should provide “hot-links” to further relevant information, but these links must not be to commercial sites.

Quality Assurance by the Provider

The Provider must provide confirmation that it has had the Material quality-assured prior to application to the EACCME for accreditation.

This quality assurance must involve the confirmation, by at least one authoritative independent assessor, of the validity of the Material. The name(s), qualifications and contact details of this/these assessor(s) must be provided to the EACCME, as must all their comments on the Material.

There must be a full declaration of potential conflict of interest of the independent assessors involved in quality-assuring the content of the Material.

Quality Assurance by the Provider

The Provider must provide a reliable and effective means for the Learner to provide feedback on the Material, and must make available to the EACCME a report on this feedback and on its responses to this.

The Provider's evaluation record for previous or on-going modules or programmes must be satisfactory or, where not, reasons for unsatisfactory ratings must have been addressed.

The Provider should make available for the Learner technical support related to the Material.

Fees :

The fee for an application to the EACCME for its accreditation of e-Learning material will be: 600 €.

In dealing with the application, the EACCME will:

Provide, on its website, an EACCME application form, based on the criteria (essential and desirable) set out in this paper and ensure confidentiality regarding the Material submitted.

Confirm for the Applicant the dates, a) on which the Material was received, b) on which the application fee cleared, and c) the “starting date”

Choose, from a pool of suitably-trained specialists, two assessors who have expertise appropriate to the Material submitted

Provide, via the EACCME part of the UEMS website, a progress record that is accessible by the Applicant;

Ensure that a decision is provided to the Applicant within eight weeks of the starting date or, at seven weeks, if this cannot be achieved, provide an explanation, and an offer of a full refund of the application fee.

Criteria and Decision-Making for Accreditation

The Material and the application form will be reviewed by the two designated EACCME assessors.

For a positive decision by an individual assessor, all essential criteria, and at least one desirable criterion must be confirmed.

The assessor will also be required to confirm whether, according to their use of the Material, the stated learning objectives have been fulfilled.

For a positive EACCME decision to accredit the Material both assessors must support the application.

Appeal

- Automatic appeal – should the two designated EACCME assessors differ in their assessment, an automatic
- appeal will be triggered, and the Applicant will be informed that this has occurred. A further two weeks will be
- permitted for the processing of the application (viz. a total of ten weeks from the starting date). This automatic
- appeal will be performed at no further cost to the Applicant.

Appeal

- Appeal by the Applicant – should both designated EACCME assessors reject the application.
- The Applicant may appeal. This will require a further two weeks from the date that the appeal, and the clearance of the appeal
- fee, is confirmed as having been received by the EACCME. The appeal fee will be 1500 €.

Mechanism of appeal

The Secretary-General of the UEMS (or his/her nominee) will review the Material and the application form, and will discuss these with the two designated EACCME assessors

The three will vote on the Application, with a majority (2:1) decision being permitted to confirm accreditation. The appeal decision will be final.

EACCME

Outcomes:

Confirmation of accreditation of the Material by the EACCME will permit the Provider to use a statement to this effect (prepared by the EACCME) on and within the Material. This will be confirmed on the EACCME section of the UEMS website, and the number of ECMECs (as one ECMEC per hour of education) will be stated.

About the accreditation

EACCME accreditation of e-CME and e-CPD Materials will be time-limited for a period of two years from the date of confirmation of accreditation. This date, and the expiry date, will be displayed on the EACCME section of the UEMS website, and the confirmation of accreditation will be removed from the website after this period has elapsed.

Accreditation of this Material will not be transferable, and will only be permitted for the defined Material, in the particular format, by the specified Provider. Any breach of this rule will lead to the withdrawal of accreditation.

Check-list of criteria to be confirmed by the EACCME Assessor

- 1) Have all the essential criteria been fulfilled?
- 2) Has at least one of the desirable criteria been fulfilled?
- 3) Have the stated learning objectives been fulfilled?
- 4) Is there a risk of bias*?

*Bias is a term used to describe a tendency or preference towards a particular perspective, ideology or result, especially when the tendency interferes with the ability to be impartial, unprejudiced or objective.

Bias may be scientific, political, religious, gender-related, ethnic, racial, cultural or geographical.

Bias may occur in relation to a particular industry or commercial product such as a mechanical device or pharmaceutical agent, or in relation to a particular intellectual, political or other view, in situations where a range of products or views may be equally useful or valid.

Evaluation board: Two reviewers + (one)

1. Two reviewers to be appointed
2. They evaluate the content of the material within 8 weeks of submission
3. Third evaluator if no consensus
4. Reviewers are to be paid
5. Considered time consuming > 1 hour

Evaluation of e-learning

Demands to:

1. The Provider of the material
2. The Material
3. The Learner
4. The Reviewer

E-LEARN

The CME group
EACCME-ORL
Section and Board

Results of the questionnaire

	Slova.	U. K.		N	Portu	DK
		ENT	Aud			
1) Do you have a coordinated national programme?	no	yes	no	yes	no	no
2) Different programmes for each university department?	no	yes	some	no	no	yes
3) Is it up to each trainer to produce e-learn material?	No	yes/ koordina	no	no	no	yes

Results of the questionnaire

	Slova.	U. K.	Nor	Portu	DK
		ENT Aud			
4) Does each trainee have access to a personal computer?	yes?	yes?	Yes	yes	yes
5) Do you use virtual reality operations	no	some	no	no	no
6) Do you have computerized anatomical programmes?	yes	some	CT/MR no	no	no

GB is quite well organized

Suggestion

1. The CME group in our UEMS ORL Board and Section should evaluate e-learning programmes or
2. We choose another accreditation group designed for this purpose

It is time consuming but will be compensated for with a fee of 200 € (per hour?)