



## 2009 EBAP GUIDELINES FOR CME PROVIDERS

### Introduction:

CME accreditation is justified if it satisfies three criteria.

- a) It should encourage and stimulate providers of CME to improve the quality of their products.
- b) It should promote learning by participants such that their clinical practice will be changed to produce better clinical outcomes.
- c) It should reassure learners that educational products are free from commercial bias.

### Section 1: Assessment of educational needs

- a) Accreditation of CME must depend on demonstration that a need exists for education in the topic concerned. Providers can obtain this information when learners apply for their credit certificates for a previous event. They should be required to indicate their future needs in relation to gaps in their knowledge and competence when they complete the EBAP evaluation forms which may be downloaded from the [document library](#).
- b) Providers must include this information in applications for accreditation of subsequent events. For new events and other educational products, providers may carry out needs assessment by issuing questionnaires to a sample population of potential participants. The data from needs assessment will allow providers to identify the target learners who will be suitable for the educational product.

### Section 2: Eligibility of educational products and application for accreditation

#### a) General

- i. The provider must state the educational objectives in the context of the previously determined needs assessment. This requirement applies not only to live events, but also to distance learning products.
- ii. The material should be presented in a stimulating, user-friendly way using simple English and designed primarily to influence the learner's clinical practice.
- iii. EBAP is concerned only with European or international CME accreditation. Therefore the objectives of the educational activity must be designed for international participants.
- iv. The target learners should be described in terms of type, sub-specialty and seniority.
- v. The provider must supply the name and affiliations of a medical practitioner or scientist who will take responsibility for the product and with whom EBAP can discuss any points which arise during assessment.

## **b) Live events**

- i. To qualify for CME accreditation for live events, more than 20 - 30% of participants must not come from the host country. The language must be English, although speakers from the host country may speak in their own language if there is simultaneous translation to English. Events with more than 80% of participants from the host country should be solely accredited by the National Accreditation Authority of the country. Similarly international events should have 20 – 30% of speakers who do not come from the host country. The provider must supply details of the chairman and all speakers including names and affiliations. Applications for accreditation of an event should be submitted at least 3 months before the event takes place.
- ii. Live event accreditation requests must be submitted through EBAP's online accreditation application form which can be accessed through the [Live Event Accreditation](#) page of EBAP's website.

## **c) Distance learning**

- i. This includes e-learning comprising HTML courses, live online webcourses, pre-recorded webcasts, CD-Roms and also journal articles and book chapters with CME questions for learners. Again the language must be English. Since EACCME does not yet accredit distance learning, application must be made via EBAP's online accreditation forms.
- ii. The provider must supply details of the production of the material including names and affiliations of all involved. The funding source or sources must be stated including links with the pharmaceutical industry. The likely duration of the learning experience should be stated. The provider must affirm that learner privacy and confidentiality will be respected in relation to online interactive material. The material should include a comprehensive bibliography to confirm its evidence base.

[Article accreditation request](#)  
[E-Learning accreditation request](#)

## **Section 3: Requirements for different educational products**

### **a) Live events**

In order to promote learning rather than entertainment, live events should be as interactive as possible. Not less than 15% of the session should involve audience participation with questions to the presenter and if financial resources allow, questions from the presenter with electronic responses from the audience. Providers should be encouraged to use other modalities of proven benefit such as pro and con debates, meet the professor seminars and Q and A sessions with expert panels. They should develop multi media rather than single media presentations. Providers should be free to decide how they will achieve audience participation and should include details of the type of audience participation on the event programme. They must emphasise to session chairs that it is their responsibility to ensure that sufficient time is left for interactive discussion.

### **b) E-learning**

Modules of HTML courses and conference webcasts should incorporate questions relating to the previous section which must be answered correctly before the programme continues. A programme of 30 – 40 minutes should contain 4 – 5 multiple choice questions. Comments should be provided after each question is answered indicating if it is correct or why it is not. Supporting references should be added when

appropriate. Similarly learners who use educational CD-Roms should be tested with 4 – 5 questions relating to each 30 minute section. The answers can be transmitted online to the providers. Learners must not be able to go back to the question to correct the answer.

### **c) Journal articles and book chapters**

CME articles and book chapters should include 4 – 5 questions for each section of 3500 – 4500 words to test the learner. Providers should encourage authors to use illustrations and pictures and to aim for an attractive format.

## **Section 4: Provider credentials**

The provider may be an educational institution such as a university, post-graduate college or scientific society. There are an increasing number of commercial CME providers who are employed by educational institutions or the industry. For enduring materials, the provider may be a publisher operating either independently or in association with an educational institution. In submissions for accreditation, providers must supply full details of the organisation and must specify sources of funding particularly in relation to the pharmaceutical industry.

## **Section 5: Commercial interest**

- a) To a large extent CME depends on financial support from the pharmaceutical industry. When a single company provides funding for an educational product, such as satellite symposia at major congresses, the CME is likely to be biased and as such will not be accredited by EBAP. Nevertheless EBAP recognises the legitimate rights of pharmaceutical companies to represent their own interests. EBAP accepts that the industry may properly support an educational activity which relates to their products, but the education must be balanced and must include information which encompasses the whole range of relevant products (trade names should be avoided). This aim can best be achieved in live events when funding is provided by multiple pharmaceutical companies.
- b) In situations where a single company proposes to sponsor an educational product, EBAP requires that the company or the provider should establish an independent board to which it will devolve full responsibility for designing the programme. Employees of the company may not contribute to the programme.
- c) When satellite symposia at major congresses are included in the programme, EBAP requires that the provider shall plan the programme of the event in such a way that the satellite sessions and/or commercially sponsored social events will not compete with the accredited CME event.
- d) The supporting company or companies will be acknowledged on CME materials as having provided the sponsorship, but the companies must not use the EBAP logo or the EBAP name in any of their own promotional activities. The company's support will be acknowledged directly on the sponsored CME activity's promotional brochures, and final programme
- e) When commercial exhibits are part of the CME activity, arrangements for the commercial exhibition shall not influence planning, nor interfere with the presentation of the CME activity. No promotional activity shall be held in the CME course room. The only form of promotion permitted is the acknowledgement that the company has contributed to the educational programme by provision of a grant.
- f) Educational presenters in both live events and e-learning must disclose existing financial arrangements with any commercial company contributing to the CME product. The Disclosure Form has to be signed by the presenters and scientific committee members, be archived by the provider, and shown to EBAP monitors on

request. The Disclosure Form provided by EBAP in the [document library](#) should be used.

- g) The following forms of grants are recognised:
- i. An **unrestricted educational grant** is recommended. This grant should be paid to the provider directly without additional conditions.
  - ii. Restricted grants to reimburse expenses for: presenters (all expenses, travel only, accommodation only, honorarium, *etc.*), support for catering and other expenses (*e.g.* printed materials, equipment loan *etc.*)
  - iii. In the case of an **unrestricted educational grant**, the providers are wholly independent in their use of contributed funds. In this situation, the provider receives the funds from the commercial company and then pays all expenses, including the honoraria of the faculty.
  - iv. In the case of **restricted grants**, industry should not provide honoraria, accommodation or travel expenses directly to specific speakers.
  - v. Written agreement is mandatory between the supporting company and the provider of the CME programme stating that the activity is educational and non-promotional and that the company will play no role in the design or conduct of the programme. A provider who fails to disclose relevant information may be barred from applying for accreditation in the future.
  - vi. Transparency – the provider must be accountable and upon request, be able to report information concerning the expenditure of funds received from the supporting industry.

## Section 6: Accreditation of educational products

- a) EBAP has recruited a large number of reviewers with the help of the Forum of European Respiratory Societies (FERS). All applications for accreditation are forwarded from the EBAP Office in Lausanne to 2 reviewers. For live events, one hour's education is awarded one CME credit. Major congresses have parallel sessions which must be assessed individually and each given its own creditable value. Webcasts and HTML-based courses are also accredited on the basis of one credit for each hour's education. Journal articles are accredited on the basis of one credit for 3500 - 4500 words.
- b) UEMS/EACCME recommends that a half day meeting should not be accredited with more than 3 credits and that a whole day meeting should not be accredited with more than 6 credits. EBAP therefore will assess each individual session but will also decide on the maximum creditable value for the meeting following UEMS/EACCME guidelines.
- c) Each reviewer will forward his or her assessment to the EBAP Office. In the event of discrepancy between the 2 reviewers, the Lausanne EBAP co-ordinator asks a member of the Management Council to make a final decision.
- d) The provider will agree to have an EBAP assessor visit the accredited CME event while it is taking place. These visits will occasionally be organised on a random basis and the provider will be informed in advance. Registration fees for the assessor shall be waived. Any further costs will be covered by EBAP.

## Section 7: Awards of credits to learners

- a) Ideally for live events, an attendance check should be carried out or there should be some attempt to test whether learners have benefited from attending the session.
- b) Providers are advised that participants applying for CME credits should not receive more than the maximum number of credits awarded for the event.
- c) For distance learning, credits are awarded on the basis of 1 credit per hour of study but are dependent on satisfactory answers to the questions. EBAP considers that 75% of the questions must be answered correctly to qualify for credits. A failed test may not be repeated until after a minimum of 1 week's waiting period.
- d) Before any CME credits are awarded, the learner must answer several general questions, contained in the EBAP evaluation form, about the content of the CME. These must relate to the educational format, the quality of the presenters and presentations, logistic considerations in relation to venue, auditoria and facilities, what was best, what was worst and suggestions for future improvements. Within the 30 days following the event, the provider will send a post-event report summing up all information collected through its congress evaluation forms to the EBAP Office. EBAP retains the right to ask the provider for a full copy of all evaluation forms.

## Section 8: Fee scales

### a) EBAP fees from providers

EBAP will charge providers an administration fee of €200 for all events. For live events accreditation fees are based on the expected number of participants at a rate of €1 per person. A flat fee of €250 will be charged for accreditation of all other educational products with the exception of webcasts of previously accredited events where a charge of €50 will be made for each module.

### b) EACCME and National Accreditation Authority (NAA) fees from providers

A fee is payable which is shared equally by EACCME and the NAA of the host country on the basis of a sliding scale.

| Participants | Fee (€) |
|--------------|---------|
| 1 – 250      | 200     |
| 251 - 500    | 400     |
| 501 – 1000   | 600     |
| 1001 – 2000  | 800     |
| 2001 – 5000  | 1000    |
| Over 5000    | 2000    |

### c) Provider fees from participants

Providers should set their fees to defray the expense incurred in organising the test questions, presenting them to the participants, assessing the responses and supplying the credit certificates