

Process for Accreditation of Training Programmes and Centres

Important as it is to accredit the “product” (trainee) it is equally or even more important to accredit the system producing this “product” (training centre). An initial report and review of the documents is followed by an onsite visit and inspection of all the activities of the applying centre along with interviews of all stake holders. The most important criterion for this appraisal for accreditation of the Training Centre and its Programme, is the activity of the applying centre (clinical and academic) and the trainees and how this translates finally into professional development and **maintenance of standards**.

The purpose of the accreditation process is improvement, assurance and assessment of the quality of training in the training center. To achieve this, the level of training is compared with criteria that are adopted by the particular Specialty in its ETR and the national professional Authority, in charge of the assurance of quality of training in the particular EU Member State. The outcome of the accreditation process can be used in a national certification and recertification program of training centres, dependent on existing rules.

To have any real meaning the Accreditation needs to be Specialty-specific in an initial phase. The sum total of the Specialty Training Programmes, in addition to an overview, is what should determine the overall Accreditation of the Centre itself. It is not just simply counting the number of ETRs ‘accepted’ by the Training Centre. The main point is the **Standard achievable in the Training Centre in the various Specialties**. Being in essence Specialty-specific, this appraisal should be done by the Section, Division, Working Group or MJC which designed the corresponding ETR for the UEMS to ratify. These are the bodies which have the expertise and competence to accredit a Training Centre for the particular Specialty. The visiting committee reports and advises the European Board in the specialty concerned and the responsibility lies with this UEMS body.

UEMS policy on Visitation and Certification of Training Centres – Main points:

1. There is no UEMS central Body that governs Visitation and Certification of Training Centres, but only a Charter that sets out the rules
2. It is standard practice for each Division or Working Group to organise Certification, particular to Training in that specific specialty, which really reflects the requirements for ETRs. They follow the rules of the Charter.

UEMS Charter for Visitation of Training Centres (Reviewed a few years ago)

- 12 Articles (1 – 12)
- 5 Annexes (A – E0)

Thus, there are two different and distinct processes:

1. Accreditation of training centres – Assessing the mechanism (Training Centre and Programme)
2. Examinations assess the product, i.e. The Candidate’s competence.

The two are linked by the Specialty-specific ETRs, with **all** their components.

The EU Directive 2005/36/EC established the mechanism of automatic mutual recognition of qualifications for medical doctors according to training requirements within all Member States; this is based on the length of training in the Specialty and the title of qualification. This was a positive breakthrough, but in fact does not provide the necessary safeguards to **assure standards** in the interest of patient safety.

Given the long-standing experience of UEMS Specialist Sections and European Boards on the one hand and the European legal framework enabling Medical Specialists and Trainees to move from one country to another on the other hand, the UEMS is uniquely in position to provide specialty-based recommendations.

The ETRs for any specialty should be based on the most recent update of the previous Chapter 6 of the Training Charter and The Working document Guidelines. It defines specialist competencies and procedures as well as how to document and assess them. European Training Requirements (ETRs) are essential because of:

- Harmonization
- Professional mobility with safeguards
- **Maintenance of standards**
- Quality Assurance and Improvement
- Equity and ultimately:
- Patient safety

Maintenance of **Standards** is the clue term in this respect. That is essentially what needs to be assessed in the accreditation process. It clearly should not be limited to counting the number of ETRs formally accepted by the Training Centre. This could prove to be very misleading.