

ACOE (The Accreditation Council for Oncology in Europe)



Introduction

The Accreditation Council of Oncology in Europe was set up in 1999, with the support of the Federation of European Cancer Societies, as an independent multidisciplinary body of educational experts supervising the European CME accreditation system in oncology. The Council is nominated and voluntary, which means that it operates without commercial gain. It represents the complete spectrum of oncology health carers from all over Europe. Every councillor is a

full time specialist practising in the field of oncology and recognised for his/her experience in education and expertise in his/her field.

The primary function of ACOE is to assess multidisciplinary educational events in oncology from both a scientific and didactic point of view, thereby providing organisers of educational events with a quality stamp. ACOE only considers events addressed to an international audience. Where awarded, the stamp indicates the willingness of the organiser to abide by a set of universally supported standards for the organisation and management of educational events, which results in unbiased and high quality education. Physicians and allied health professionals attending events accredited by ACOE are provided with a certificate of attendance reflecting their participation in such accredited events.

ACOE defines CME as “those educational activities which serve to maintain, develop or increase the knowledge, skills and professional performance and relationships that physicians and allied health professionals use to provide services for patients, the public or the profession”.

ACOE works in conjunction with the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME) operating under the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS). Once the quality of an event has been acknowledged by ACOE, the EACCME ensures that the credit points granted to the educational event are recognised in the different European countries who adhere to the system, as well as in the USA thanks to a mutual agreement with the American Medical Association.

The following guidelines are applied to all educational events accredited by ACOE.

Guideline 1: Statement of intent

The organiser should have a written statement of purpose or intent relating to the CME event. It is the responsibility of the organiser to obtain the endorsement of their most relevant governing body for this statement. The statement should:

- Describe the goals of the educational event.
- Outline the characteristics of the potential participants.
- Summarise the educational activities.
- Explain how the educational activities meet a clear educational need.

Guideline 2: Provision of information to prospective participants

The organiser should ensure that likely participants are informed about the content, nature and target audience for each educational event before the event commences. Within the programme information, the organiser should

- State the most important planned learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and skills.
- Indicate the optimum target group for the educational activity.
- State what teaching methods will be used.

ACOE believes that interactive CME events increase the knowledge and problem solving abilities of the participants to a much higher extent than pure speaker's presentations.

Guideline 3: Evaluation of the educational event

The organiser must have procedures to assess the effectiveness of the educational event, including the educational content, the speakers and the venue. The organiser should provide evidence that their evaluations assess:

- The extent to which desired learning outcomes are being fulfilled. Each stated planned learning outcome must be evaluated on the evaluation form.
- The quality of the teaching.
- The participants' opinions on how they have benefited by attending the educational event.

The organiser should state whether a knowledge/skill

- Test will take place at the start of the event.
- Test will take place at the end of the event.

ACOE recommends the use of testing processes as a way to help determining the educational needs and the achievements of the event. However, this is not compulsory to obtain accreditation.

The organisers should have evidence that they audit the evaluation forms and make use of the resulting information when planning future educational events.

ACOE recommends that the evaluation form should be completed by the participant, who wants to obtain the certificate of attendance.

Guideline 4: Management of the educational event

The organiser should be able to provide evidence that it has a clearly defined management procedure governing the organisation of any educational event. The organiser should identify and record:

- An organisational structure which manages an educational event.
- The individual responsible for the event and his/her authority.
- A procedure for identifying competent faculty and an appropriate venue.
- A budget for the event.
- A mechanism to record and verify the participation of individuals in the event.

Guideline 5: Sponsorship

Educational activities in which industry is involved can only be considered for accreditation by ACOE if the preparation and execution of its educational activities is governed by one of the organisations listed in 1–2 below (who will be deemed to be the organiser for the event). The organiser must guarantee that the CME event meets the criteria for quality in the guidelines issued by ACOE. Financial support for an educational activity by a commercial organisation does not negatively affect its eligibility for accreditation approval by ACOE providing that there is no single commercial organisation sponsoring more than 50% of the event. The organiser must be able to prove that the standards in the ACOE guidelines have been applied to each educational activity.

Organisers shall be considered to include:

- (1) European, national and local societies and organisations involved in the research treatment and care of cancer.
- (2) Other non-profit educational institutes and professional organisations of health professionals (e.g. those organisations with an educational infrastructure including, universities, medical schools, teaching hospitals, health care faculties).

Further information regarding ACOE and the CME accreditation system in oncology can be obtained from Ms Carine Lecoq at Tel: + 32 (2) 775 29 31, Fax: + 32 (2) 775 02 00, email: accreditation@acoe.be