

## DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR EAACI QUALITY CENTERS

These instructions provide information about the process of EAACI Centre of Excellence (ECE) and other certification programs.

### Article 1. Aim

EAACI aims to improve quality of health care, research and education in the area of allergy and clinical immunology. Targeting this aim, as one of its activities, EAACI aims to organise "EAACI Quality Centers". These centers are categorized under the terms of "Centre of Excellence" (ECE), EAACI Advanced Research Center; and EAACI Certified Clinic (plus Research) in certain fields of Allergy and Immunology. The primary aim is to increase the quality standards of patient care, research and education and collaborations of the centres in the field of Allergy and Immunology in Europe.

### Article 2. Terms and Definitions

The centres working on allergy and immunology fields may have distinguished and outstanding studies in certain areas and fields. So, to reflect this multifunctional profile of the centres, EAACI established different types of centers.

- **Centre:** The centre defines the departments/divisions/clinics of Allergy and Immunology in a hospital (public, university, state; private) or research institution or multidisciplinary units which includes allergy immunology specialists and other relevant specialists (like pulmonologists, ENT physicians, dermatologists).
- **EAACI Quality Center** defines all the centers of EAACI working in quality standards.
- **EAACI Centre of Excellence (ECE)** defines only the centers with high output in Research and Patient care and Education in the field of Allergy and Immunology.
- **EAACI Advanced Research Centre** defines the centres which fulfill the standards for research in the field of Allergy and Immunology. These centres are organised for improving research in Europe and research collaborations between centres.
- **EAACI Certified Clinical Centre** defines the centers that fulfill the essential standards for delivering high-quality patient care in a specific area of Allergy and Immunology, for example "EAACI Certified Clinical Center on Asthma". These centers are organized for providing standardized patient care on that certain topic. The initial topics for ECCC are Asthma, Severe Asthma, Drug allergy, Food allergy, Immunotherapy and Rhinology. Other topics will be covered in the years ahead.
- **EAACI Certified Clinical and Research Centre** defines the centres meeting both clinical and research requirements on a certain area of allergy and immunology, for example "EAACI Certified Clinic and Research Center on Asthma". These centers provide outstanding patient care as well as conducting impactful research and education on a specific area.

### Article 3. Standards

#### 1) EAACI CENTER OF EXCELLENCE "ECE"

##### A) EAACI Involvement

At least two of the physicians/staff should be current EAACI members **AND fulfilling at least 2 of the following criteria:**

- 1) Participation in EAACI guidelines and position papers within the last five years.
- 2) Active involvement in EAACI ExCom, Committees, Interest Groups (IGs), Working Groups (WGs), or Sections.

- 3) Organization of EAACI-endorsed scientific events, workshops, or training programs.
- 4) Hosting of EAACI mentorship programs for early-career researchers and fellows.
- 5) Recognition through EAACI or other scientific awards.
- 6) Existence of junior members (JMs).

#### **B) Multidisciplinary center**

1. The center should be a multidisciplinary facility, with faculty members from allergy & immunology and at least two other relevant specialties or PhD programs. These could include, but are not limited to, immunology, pulmonology, dermatology, ENT, pediatrics, or clinical nutrition, ensuring a collaborative environment that facilitates comprehensive patient care, research, and education across disciplines.
2. The center should employ staff with MsD or PhD degrees in relevant fields.

#### **C) High Research Performance**

1. At least one member of the unit should have a H-index  $\geq 30$  (Web of Science)
2. Having at least 10 research articles published in peer reviewed journals in the last 5 years, at least 4 of them being translational studies.

#### **AND fulfilling at least 3 of the following criteria:**

1. Having a budget for research exceeding 200.000 € (grants from university, national institutes, european foundations etc) in the last 5 years.
2. Currently having at least 2 active research projects funded by national or international grants, excluding regional or private foundations.
3. Participation in clinical trials or registries (at least 3 in the last 5 years).
4. Having a patent in the last 10 years.
5. Presenting at least 15 abstracts in allergy and immunology congresses in the last 5 years: 10 of them in national congresses and 5 in EAACI or other international congresses.
6. Offering or being affiliated with MsD or PhD programs in allergy and immunology or associated fields.

#### **D) High Clinical Performance\*:**

1. The center should be recognized as a reference center for at least one specific area (e.g., asthma, severe asthma, drug allergy, food allergy, eosinophilic esophagitis, rhinology, allergen immunotherapy, etc.), providing specialized care and research in that field.
2. The center should have dedicated outpatient and inpatient facilities for the diagnosis, treatment, and long-term management of allergic and immunologic diseases.
3. The center should be equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic and therapeutic facilities,

\*(please see the standards for ECE for details)

## **2. EAACI ADVANCED RESEARCH CENTER (E-ARC)**

### **1. EAACI involvement :**

At least two of the physicians/staff should be current EAACI members **AND fulfilling at least 2 of the following criteria:**

1. Participation in EAACI guidelines and position papers within the last five years.
2. Active involvement in EAACI ExCom, Committees, Interest Groups (IGs), Working Groups (WGs), or Sections.
3. Organization of EAACI-endorsed scientific events, workshops, or training programs.
4. Hosting of EAACI mentorship programs for early-career researchers and fellows.
5. Recognition through EAACI or other scientific awards.
6. Existence of junior members (JMs).

## **2. High Research Performance**

1. At least one member of the unit should have a H-index  $\geq 30$  (Web of Science)
2. Having at least 10 research articles published in peer reviewed journals in the last 5 years.
3. Having a budget for research exceeding 200.000 € (grants from university, national institutes, european foundations etc) in the last 5 years.

### **AND fulfilling at least 2 of the following criteria:**

1. Currently having at least 2 active research projects funded by national or international grants, excluding regional or private foundations.
2. Having a patent in the last 10 years.
3. Presenting at least 10 abstracts in allergy and immunology congresses in the last 5 years: 5 of them in national congresses and 5 in EAACI or other international congresses
4. Offering or being affiliated with MsD or PhD programs in allergy and immunology or associated fields.
5. Having a multidisciplinary facility, with faculty members from allergy & immunology and at least two other relevant areas which could include, but are not limited to, biologists, biochemists, bioinformaticians, biotechnology, pharmacy, immunology, pulmonology, dermatology, ENT, pediatrics, or clinical nutrition, ensuring a collaborative environment that facilitates comprehensive research, and education across disciplines or PhD programs.

## **3. EAACI CERTIFIED CLINICAL CENTER (ECCC)\***

1. The application should be based on existing/announced certification programs of EAACI (For 2025; existing programs are asthma, severe asthma, drug allergy, food allergy, immunotherapy; and rhinology).
2. At least two members of the center should hold EAACI memberships, and demonstrate additional involvement (participation to guidelines, position papers, participation in ExCom, Committees, IGs, WGs, sections, organizations of EAACI events, hosting mentorship programs, awards, existence of junior members).
3. The center should operate a working outpatient clinic on that topic which is approved by hospital administration.
4. The center should have dedicated infrastructure and settings necessary for patient diagnosis and treatment.
5. The center should have dedicated experts as well as working staff in the clinic.
6. The center should follow standardized patient care practices based on national or international guidelines.
7. Diagnostic tests and treatments should be performed using standardized procedures.
8. A patient-centered approach should be prioritised.
9. The center should have regular educational activities on the relevant topic.
10. The center must archive patients' data (electronically or physically).
11. The center should follow the outcomes of the outpatient clinic.
12. The center should evaluate and revise the program annually.

*\*PLEASE SEE INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS FOR FURTHER DETAILS.*

## **4. EAACI CERTIFIED CLINICAL AND RESEARCH CENTER (E\_CCRC)\***

- The center should fulfill all the criteria necessary for ECCC on that topic (Please see above).
- In addition to these criteria; the center should also fulfill the criteria below:

**In addition to basic standards for being a EAACI Certified Clinic Center ,**

The centers having advanced research and educational activity in a certain area are candidates for EAACI Clinic and Research Center.

*\*PLEASE SEE INDIVIDUAL STANDARDS FOR FURTHER DETAILS.*

**5. ECE- Accreditation Support Program for Fellow Training**

This program aims to support the accreditation process of the centers. This activity goes parallel with UEMS.

**Article 4. Benefits**

Having centers acting in a qualified and standardized way will help to improve the health care and allergy research as well as allergy training of all parts. In addition to this, these centers will help the implementation of the guidelines, practise parameters and task forces. The improvement in the healthcare quality will benefit the economies of the countries. The standard health care and standard recording will help perform both multicentered studies and registries. This will lead to better epidemiologic and disease data in the field of allergy and immunology. Standard care and follow up will improve the training of the fellows, medical students and all relevant partners. The patients will be more under control and care better and in a standardized way and will be expected to be healthier and happy.

**Benefits for the centers**

Benefits and priorities of **EAACI CENTER OF EXCELLENCE (ECE) and Advanced Research Center (E-ARC)**:

1. Priority in mentorship program
2. Priority in EAACI fellowship programs
3. Priority in task force applications
4. 2 free registrations for an annual congress or focus meeting
5. Travel grants

Benefits and priorities of the **Certified Clinical Centers & Certified Clinical and Research Centers**

1. Priorities in the involvement to multi centered study
2. 1 free registrations for an annual congress or focus meeting
3. Priority in mentorship program

**Article 5. Administration of EAACI Quality Centers**

1. The EAACI President and Secretary General oversee these programmes, which are managed by the Quality Committee (QC).
2. The co-chairs of the QC in collaboration with QC members process the management on the behalf of EAACI President and Secretary General.
3. QC will also collaborate with EAACI BoO, Chairs of Sections, Interest groups and Representatives of Sections, Interest Groups and Working Groups, Chairs of Committees, National Allergy and Immunology Society Representatives, and Patients' Organisation Representatives.

4. EAACI strongly relies on collaborations with National Societies for the establishment of ECE and Certification programs. So, the chair of the NAIS and representatives of National Societies will be in collaboration with the Quality Committee.

#### Article 6. Job descriptions

1. **Quality Committee:** Plans, organizes, commits and evaluates the process and reports to the EAACI ExCom.
2. **Executive Manager:** Organizes all the relevant correspondences between centres and EAACI, manages a web page, tracks application procedures and finalization, in collaboration with relevant members of QC.
3. **Online Reviewer:** Reviews the application, checks the eligibility of the center according to the requirements, prepares a report on each application.
4. **On site Auditor:** Visits the center, reviews the center's report on site and meets with staff, visits the outpatient clinic, laboratories and prepares an audit report.

#### Article 7. Application

1. With the exception of the introduction of the program in April 2025; every year; **in June**; EAACI president informs members about the application process.
2. Each year; applications are accepted in **September**. For 2025; a different agenda will be provided.
3. All the relevant information on Quality Centers (ECE and certifications) are available on the web page of EAACI.
4. Information related to the application and the procedure; regulations, requirements, application form and contact information are available on the web page.
5. The centers can check the relevant documents/requirements to see their centers eligibility for application.
6. Once the center is confident to fulfill the requirement, then an electronic form on the web page should be filled and relevant proofs (please see the requirements) should be placed into this electronic document. The application is done via electronic platform

#### Article 8. Standards

1. **Essential (Basic) standards:** All programs ask for the existence of specific standards. The centers should fulfill all essential standards (Please see specific standards in related documents).
2. **Area for Improvement:** Standards include both basic standards but also those related to areas of improvement. These standards are not necessarily covered in the first application, but if the centers agree to apply for recertification after 5 years later, then, they should fulfill both basic requirements and areas for improvement.

#### Article 9. Evaluation Process

1. The application process involves two main domains.
2. **Preparation of electronic submission file:** The candidate center prepares an electronic file which includes the answer of the requirements necessary for application of the relevant center and the proofs of this application. The requirements and a checklist for the application process will be available on the EAACI webpage. The proposal form must be completed in English. Original submitted documents may be submitted in native language. The proof should include all related and relevant documents cited in the report (please see individual

requirements documents on web page). The documents should be scanned and electronically recorded and clearly labeled for easy reference.

5. **Online review of the application:** After receiving the applications, the Quality Committee will assign at least two reviewers to review whether the submission meets the necessary requirements. Due to multilingual characteristics of EAACI member societies, one of the reviewers will be a representative from the applicant's national society to assist in the review of documents in native language.
3. **On site audit:** If all the requirements are covered by the center, then an on-site audit will be conducted to verify compliance and evaluate operations of the center. At least one auditor visits the center. Before the visit, the auditor sends an audit program including interviews with chair, faculty, fellows, nurses, visit to the outpatient clinic related to the application and other relevant places, e.g. laboratories. During this visit, the auditor follows this program. Following the on-site visit, the auditor(s) prepares a report on meeting the requirements of the candidate center.
4. **Decision on application:** Following this report, the Quality Committee meets and makes a decision about this application and proposes their decision to EAACI Excom.

#### Article 10. Certificate Notification

1. **Certification outcome:** Approval or disapproval of the certification process is informed to the centers by the EAACI president through an email. In case of approval; a certificate is issued to the center.

#### Article 11. Monitoring the Quality Centers

1. In terms of Quality management, the centres are asked to prepare a report on their activities after 2 years. The report form can be found on the web page.
2. The centres are also asked to provide feedback.
3. The reports are being sent to QC in June every two years.
4. At the beginning of September, all reports and feedback will be discussed in the Quality Committee and relevant partners. The Quality Committee prepares an annual report about the process.
5. The reports prepared by QC are presented and discussed in the EAACI Ex-Com meeting in the fall.
6. Following comments and suggestions, revision is made in this process.

#### Article 12. Re-Certification

1. The certified centers are subject to re-certification at the end of 5 years.
2. The application and evaluation process are the same with initial admissions as indicated in the web page.
3. The re-applications will be evaluated on the updated requirements.
4. In re-applications; the centers should also fulfill all the requirements which are defined as "Area for improvement" in their previous applications.