

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EAACI QUALITY CENTRES

These instructions provide information about the process of EAACI Quality Centres.

Article 1. Aim

EAACI is committed to enhancing the quality of healthcare, research, and education in the field of allergy and clinical immunology. To support this mission, we are establishing a network of “EAACI Quality Centres.” These centres are designated as Centres of Excellence, EAACI Advanced Research Centres, EAACI Certified Clinical Centre and EAACI Certified Clinical and Research. The primary goal is to elevate standards in patient care, research, education, and collaboration across Europe within the field of allergy and clinical immunology.

Article 2. Terms and Definitions

Centres engaged in allergy and clinical immunology may demonstrate excellence in various specialized areas. To reflect this multidisciplinary and high-performing profile, EAACI has established distinct types of centres, each with specific criteria and objectives:

- **Centre:** Refers to departments, divisions, or clinics of Allergy and Immunology within hospitals (public, university, state, or private), research institutions, or multidisciplinary units. These typically include allergy and immunology specialists alongside other relevant professionals such as pulmonologists, ENT physicians, and dermatologists.
- **EAACI Quality Centre:** An umbrella term encompassing centres recognized by EAACI for operating under defined quality standards in allergy and immunology.
- **EAACI Centre of Excellence (ECE):** Designation for centres demonstrating outstanding performance across research, patient care, and education in the field of allergy and immunology.
- **EAACI Advanced Research Centre:** Centres that meet EAACI’s research standards in allergy and immunology. These centres aim to strengthen scientific output and foster collaborative research across Europe.
- **EAACI Certified Clinical Centre (ECCC):** Centres that meet essential quality standards for delivering specialized, high-quality patient care in a specific domain of allergy and immunology—e.g., *EAACI Certified Clinical Centre on Asthma*. Initial focus areas include asthma, severe asthma, drug allergy, food allergy, immunotherapy, and rhinology. Additional topics will be introduced progressively.
- **EAACI Certified Clinical and Research Centre:** Centres that meet both clinical and research excellence criteria within a specific domain—e.g., *EAACI Certified Clinical and Research Centre on Asthma*. These centres combine best-in-class patient care with significant contributions to research and education.

Article 3. Standards

EAACI ensures that all processes related to the Quality Centres adhere to established quality standards by following the principles of “Planning, Doing, Checking, and Revising.” Accordingly, all centre standards have been developed in alignment with this quality framework.

Each centre category is evaluated based on two types of standards:

- **Basic (Essential) Standards:** These are mandatory for all centre categories. Applicant centres must meet all essential criteria, which are designed to ensure the provision of standardized, evidence-based care within the relevant field. Certification is granted only to centres that comply fully with these fundamental requirements.
- **Areas for Improvement:** These standards are not required at the time of the initial application. However, centres must report on their progress toward these criteria during the second or third-year evaluation. Centres applying for recertification after five years will be expected to fulfil both the essential standards and the identified areas for improvement. The aim of these standards is to broaden the centre’s impact and promote scientific, educational, and collaborative engagement across Europe.

Article 4. Benefits

Establishing centres that operate in a qualified and standardized manner will significantly contribute to advancing healthcare, allergy research, and professional training in allergy and clinical immunology. These centres will play a key role in implementing clinical guidelines, practice parameters, and task force recommendations.

Improved healthcare quality will also have positive economic implications for participating countries. Standardized care and consistent data recording will facilitate multicentre studies and the establishment of registries, leading to more reliable epidemiological and disease-specific data across Europe.

Moreover, uniform care protocols and structured follow-up will enhance the training of fellows, medical students, and related healthcare professionals. Patients will benefit from more consistent, high-quality care, resulting in better health outcomes and increased satisfaction.

Benefits for Centres

For EAACI Centres of Excellence (ECE) and Advanced Research Centres (E-ARC):

1. Priority access to EAACI mentorship programmes
2. Priority consideration for EAACI fellowship programmes
3. Priority in task force participation
4. Two complimentary registrations for the EAACI Annual Congress or a Focus Meeting
5. Eligibility for travel grants

For EAACI Certified Clinical Centres and Certified Clinical and Research Centres:

1. Priority participation in multicentre research studies
2. One complimentary registration for the EAACI Annual Congress or a Focus Meeting
3. Priority access to EAACI mentorship programmes

Article 5. Administration of EAACI Quality Centres

1. Oversight and Management

The EAACI President and Secretary General provide overall oversight for the Quality Centre programmes. The operational management is delegated to the Quality Committee (QC).

2. Operational Leadership

The Co-Chairs of the Quality Committee, in coordination with QC members, are responsible for executing and managing programme activities on behalf of the EAACI President and Secretary General.

3. Collaborative Engagement

The Quality Committee collaborates closely with the EAACI Board of Officers (BoO), Chairs and Representatives of Sections, Interest Groups, and Working Groups, as well as with other EAACI Committees. Engagement also includes representatives from National Allergy and Immunology Societies, Junior Members, and Patient Organisations.

4. Partnership with National Societies

EAACI places strong emphasis on collaboration with National Societies in the development and implementation of its Certification Program. In this context, the Chair of the National Allergy and Immunology Societies (NAIS) and their representatives work in partnership with the Quality Committee to ensure effective alignment and execution.

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. **Reviewer:** Reviews the application, checks the eligibility of the centre according to the requirements, prepares a report on each application
4. **On site Auditor:** Visits the centre, reviews the centre's report on site and meets with staff, visits the outpatient clinic, laboratories and prepares an audit report

Article 7. Application

1. Except for the introduction of the program in April 2025; the calls are opened twice yearly for all centre categories.
2. Candidate centres can apply between these dates.
 - a. The first call is between 1 September and 30 October
 - b. The second call is between 15 January and 15 March

3. Information related to the application and the procedure; regulations, requirements, application form and contact information are available on the web page
4. The centres can check the relevant documents/requirements to see their centres eligibility for application
5. Once the centre is confident to fulfil 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. Evaluation Process

The application process consists of several structured stages designed to ensure transparency, consistency, and compliance with EAACI standards:

1. Electronic Submission Preparation

Candidate centres must prepare an electronic submission file containing:

- Responses to the specific requirements outlined for the relevant centre type
- Supporting documentation that evidences compliance with each requirement
- A completed application form (in English). Original documents may be submitted in the native language
- All referenced materials must be scanned, electronically organized, and clearly labelled for ease of review.

The application requirements and checklist will be available on the EAACI website. Centres are expected to consult the relevant documentation before submitting their application.

2. Online Review

Once the application is received, the EAACI Quality Committee assigns a review panel consisting of:

- Two official reviewers
- One Junior Member
- One representative from the applicant's national society (to assist with documents in the native language)

The review panel evaluates whether the submission fulfills the required standards. Reviewers may request additional information or evidence if clarification is needed.

3. Online Audit

If the documentation is deemed sufficient, an online audit is scheduled. This includes:

- A virtual meeting where the centre presents its report as a slide presentation

- A video walkthrough of its facilities (e.g., clinics, laboratories, staff areas)
- A live Q&A session during which reviewers may request clarification or further information

The minimum duration of the online audit is 1.5 hours.

4. On-Site Audit (Randomized)

A random selection of centres will undergo an on-site audit. Key elements include:

- At least one auditor visiting the centre
- A pre-sent audit programme detailing planned interviews with leadership (e.g., Chair, faculty, fellows, nurses) and visits to clinical and laboratory areas
- During the visit, the auditor follows the structured program to assess compliance

After the visit, the auditor prepares a detailed report assessing the centre's fulfillment of the required criteria.

5. Final Decision

Based on the compiled audit findings, the Quality Committee convenes to make a formal recommendation. This recommendation is then submitted to the EAACI Executive Committee (ExCom) for final approval.

Article 9. Certificate Notification

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

Article 10. Monitoring the Quality Centres

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 11. Re-Certification

1. **Validity Period**

EAACI-certified centres are required to undergo re-certification every five years.

2. **Application Procedure**

The re-certification process follows the same steps as the initial application and evaluation, as outlined on the EAACI website.

3. **Updated Standards**

Re-applications will be assessed according to the most current version of the certification requirements.

4. **Fulfilment of Improvement Areas**

In addition to meeting all updated essential standards, re-applying centres must demonstrate full compliance with all previously identified "Areas for Improvement" as outlined in their initial evaluation.