The European Council of Optometry and Optics

Guidelines for the accreditation of qualifications which meet the standards of the European Diploma in Optometry

Part VI: Financial Aspects of Accreditation

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1. Introduction

The Accreditation scheme was adopted by the General Assembly in April 2012 at the Dublin ECOO meeting. This followed a successful pilot project at four training institutions across Europe. In this pilot project the costs of the visitors' travel and accommodation were paid by the applicant institution. Other incidental costs such as preliminary meetings and administrative work by ECOO were paid from central ECOO funds. The ECOO visitors received no payment for the visits or for their time spent before, during and after the visits.

With the Accreditation Scheme gaining formal status and the prospect of increasing numbers of accreditations, additional visitors were recruited. In view of ECOO's potentially open-ended commitment the scheme's financial status was reviewed and it was decided that it should be self-funding with all costs covered by the applicant institutions. It was also decided that a daily fee of €300 should be paid to Visitors to cover their time commitment and an honorarium would be paid to the Chair of the Accreditation Panel. Student visitors would have a daily fee of €150.

Students graduating with the European Diploma would also be required to pay a small fee to cover the award of the Diploma certificate.

The applicant institution will be liable for charges that depend on the extent to which it engages with the Accreditation Scheme. The purpose of this document is to list these charges and make it clear to applicant institutions the extent of their potential costs.

All costs will be reviewed periodically and updated versions of this document will be available on the ECOO website.

2.The Accreditation process and estimates of the related costs

Parts I to IV of the Accreditation Scheme describe the various stages of the process in chronological order and should be consulted in conjunction with this document.

The Accreditation Scheme allows for either a full accreditation process or benchmarking for those schools which do not want to undertake the full accreditation scheme but want to find out how their course aligns with the Diploma. The fees for both are set out below.

It is not possible to estimate the costs of travel and accommodation which will vary depending on the location of the school being accredited. As a guide, the preliminary visit will involve travel, overnight accommodation and meals for two Visitors. The panel meeting, which follows the receipt and analysis of the self-assessment form, will involve travel for 3-4 Visitors plus a student visitor to an easily accessible venue. The full Visit will involve travel, accommodation for three nights and meals for Visitors.

The timescale for completing the process is dependent on how long the applicant takes to complete the Self-assessment form and to respond to requests for further information. If there are no delays it should be possible to complete each stage in

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three months with a total time to final approval by ECOO within 12 months from the initial expression of interest.

3. Fees for Full Accreditation and Benchmarking

Fees for Full Accreditation*

Stages at which the fees are payable

Preliminary Visit**	€ 1,700
Review of Self-Assessment Form + associated documentation	€ 3,000
Visit	€ 5,700
Final Report	€ 1,700
Total	**€ 12,100**

Fees for Benchmarking*

Preliminary Visit**	€ 1,700
Review of Self-Assessment Form + associated documentation	€ 3,000
Final Report	€ 1,700
Total	**€ 6,400**

**Includes all preliminary work and support up to the submission of the Self-Assessment form.
*Does not include costs for travel and accommodation which will be charged at cost

Subsequent visits to approve progress from partial to full accreditation.

Visit fee per day for each Visitor plus travel and accommodation	€450

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4. Diplomate Registration

Each graduate awarded the European Diploma by Accreditation will be required to pay a one-off registration fee of €150. These fees are to be collected by the accredited institution and transferred to the ECOO. Once ECOO is informed of the final number of diplomates, the Secretariat will issue an invoice to the accredited institution.

5. Re-Accreditation after the initial accreditation period has passed

Accreditation will normally be given for five years but may be for a shorter period.

It has been agreed that, in order to maintain the standards and credibility of the Diploma, a robust process of re-accreditation is needed. At the same time, it is recognised that accreditation procedures are both time consuming and expensive for Training institutions.

A re-accreditation visit will be over a period of two days and involve three visitors plus a student visitor. This should include the reviews of the facilities, teaching and interviews with staff and students but to a tighter time scale than in the initial visit. Ahead of the visit, the panel will meet to discuss documentation and establish any issues that need clarification.

The time available would be 8.5 hours on day 1, including coffee breaks and lunch. 6 hours on day 2 for interviews and observation plus 2 – 2 ½ hours for final discussion and statement of outcome.

The Executive Committee has agreed that costs should be kept to a minimum and no overheads should be included. Based on this the costs look like:

- Initial assessment of documentation by teleconference: ½ day for three Visitors + student : € 525
- Review of Self-assessment document + associated documentation € 900
- Portfolio assessment: 1 day for three people € 900
- Visit for 2 days for 3 Visitors + 1 student visitor: € 2,100
- Writing report – 1½ days for one person: € 450

Total **€ 4,875**

plus travel and accommodation

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