

NEWS FROM THE ECOO ACCREDITATION AGENCY

October 2026

FIRST EDO AWARDED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

On Friday 18 September 2026, the University of Latvia in Riga held a graduation ceremony at which its first graduate received the European Diploma in Optometry (EDO). The University was granted full EDO accreditation at the joint EAOO/ECOO meetings in Riga in May 2026.

Prof Brendan Barrett, ECOO Accreditation Agency Co-Chair, attended on behalf of ECOO and presented the EDO certificate to Baiba Balode, the University's first EDO holder. He also presented the accreditation certificate to the University's Vice-Rector.



ECOO Accreditation Agency Co-Chair Brendan Barrett and the first graduate with the European Diploma in Optometry from the University of Latvia, Baiba Balode.

FIVE NEW EDUCATION VISITORS JOIN THE AGENCY

Following the information session for prospective visitors in June, the Agency received 16 applications to become ECOO Education Visitors. In July 2026, Prof Julie-Anne Little and Prof Brendan Barrett, Co-Chairs of the ECOO Accreditation Agency,

reviewed the applications and appointed five new visitors:

- Valldeflors Vinuela Navarro
- Hema Radhakrishnan
- Ana Trillo
- Jesus Vera Vilchez
- Mirjam van Tilborg

The standard of applications was very high, and the Agency warmly thanks everyone who applied. The new visitors will attend induction sessions in November 2026, where existing visitors will share their experience of the role. They join a team of 11 Education Visitors from across Europe.

CONTINUED PROGRESS ACROSS EUROPE

In spring 2026, an ECOO visitor panel carried out an accreditation visit to Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Chisinau, Moldova. ECOO continues to work with the University on the various criteria of the EDO accreditation process.

In addition to our accredited institutions, we have a number of programmes that are currently working towards full accreditation in Spain, France, Finland and Israel.

Interest in the EDO keeps growing. Poznan University and Warsaw University are close to starting the accreditation process, which could see a Polish university seek EDO accreditation for the first time. Institutions in Denmark and Spain

have also signalled their intention to begin the process.

WORKING TOWARDS FULL ENQA MEMBERSHIP

ECOO has been an affiliate member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since 2025 and is now preparing for full membership. This requires ECOO to show full compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), which are currently being revised. Full membership would independently validate ECOO's accreditation practices.

As part of this work, Prof Brendan Barrett attended ENQA's one-day symposium "The European Dimension" in Brussels on 10 September 2026 and will attend ENQA's annual congress in Gran Canaria later in October. These events help ECOO learn how ENQA reviews are run and connect with other agencies, especially subject-specific ones, that have recently been through the process.

ANNUAL MONITORING AND UPCOMING VISITS

As every autumn, the Agency has sent annual monitoring forms to all universities that are fully accredited or working towards full accreditation, so that they can report significant changes to their programmes. Forms are due by Friday 30 October 2026.

In 2027, the Agency will carry out re-accreditation visits to the University of South-Eastern Norway (USN) in Kongsberg, Norway; Berliner Hochschule für Technik, Germany; University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, the Netherlands; Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden; Metropolia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, Finland; and Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Finland.

ABOUT THE ECOO ACCREDITATION AGENCY

ECOO has developed the European Diploma in Optometry (EDO) and European Qualification in Optics (EQO) as a syllabi and competency frameworks, and operates an accreditation scheme for institutions to benchmark against this framework. The Accreditation Agency has been set up to run this accreditation work.

To find out more about this work visit:

<https://ecoo.info/ecoo-accreditation-agency/>