

**EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON
CHIROPRACTIC EDUCATION**

Self-Evaluation Report

February 2010

**External Review for Full Membership
of the European Association for
Quality Assurance in Higher Education**



Self-Evaluation

February 2010

INTRODUCTION

The European Council on Chiropractic Education (ECCE) is a quality assurance agency for the education and training of chiropractors in Europe. Chiropractors are primary contact healthcare practitioners concerned with the diagnosis and management of a range of musculoskeletal disorders, particularly back pain, neck pain and headache. Although patients are managed using a diversity of treatment approaches, including advice about self-help, exercise, diet and lifestyle, there is an emphasis on manual treatments including manipulation of the spine. As primary contact practitioners, chiropractors must be proficient in the diagnosis of commonly presenting conditions, and safe and competent in treating those conditions amenable to chiropractic care. Chiropractic is a statutory regulated profession in some, but not all, countries in Europe.

Chiropractic education and training occurs throughout the world, and in Europe there are a growing number of educational institutions providing undergraduate chiropractic education and training. Some of these institutions are private, but an increasing number are part of the higher education (university) sector in their respective countries. The ECCE is an autonomous agency, established in 1986 and supported by the chiropractic profession and educational institutions, with its core purpose centred on assuring the excellence of chiropractic education and training in Europe. ECCE accreditation assures a standard of chiropractic education and training that produces graduates that are safe and competent practitioners.

The ECCE seeks full membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in order to confirm that it is operating in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) (3rd edition 2009). As an external quality assurance agency in a specialist area of higher education and training operating in Europe, the ECCE wishes to align itself with recognised standards of quality assurance in higher education (ESG) and to share best practice with other agencies undertaking similar roles and responsibilities. In seeking full membership of ENQA, the ECCE has consulted with its principal stakeholders (the European Chiropractic Union (ECU) and chiropractic educational institutions in Europe) and received unanimous support. The ECCE has opted to submit to a 'type A' review as defined in the ENQA Guidelines for External Reviews of Quality Assurance Agencies in the European Higher Education Area and, as such, is centred on compliance with the ENQA membership criteria and ESG. In 2007, the ECCE applied to ENQA for membership and was granted candidate membership on the basis of compliance with the membership criteria. This self-evaluation for full membership is therefore constructed to demonstrate ECCE's compliance with ESG.

Timothy Raven

ECCE President

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES.....	VI
ABBREVIATIONS.....	VII
1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CHIROPRACTIC....	1
1.1 THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF THE SYSTEM	1
1.2 STRUCTURE OF PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS	2
1.3 ACCREDITATION	2
2 STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF THE ECCE.....	4
2.1 ECCE IN A WORLD-WIDE CONTEXT	4
2.2 STATUS OF ECCE	5
2.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF ECCE	5
2.4 MISSION AND PURPOSE	5
2.5 INITIATION OF EVALUATIONS	6
2.6 FINANCES	7
2.7 MEMBERSHIP OF ECCE	7
2.8 EXECUTIVE OF ECCE	8
2.9 STANDING COMMITTEES OF ECCE	9
2.10 ACTIVITIES OF ECCE	10
3 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE UNDERTAKEN BY ECCE.....	11
3.1 EXTERNAL REVIEW	11
4 EVALUATION PROCEDURES USED BY ECCE.....	12
4.1 INITIAL CONTACT	12
4.2 ECCE STANDARDS	13
4.3 EVALUATION METHOD	14
4.4 EVALUATION TEAM	14
4.5 EVALUATION VISIT	15
4.6 EVALUATION REPORT	16
4.7 DECISIONS ON ACCREDITATION	17

5 COMPLIANCE WITH ESG..... 18

 5.1 PART 2. EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE EXTERNAL QUALITY
 ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION 18

 5.2 PART 3. EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY
 ASSURANCE AGENCIES 23

6 APPLICATION FOR ENQA MEMBERSHIP (OCTOBER 2007)..... 33

7 FINAL REFLECTIONS..... 38

FIGURE 1 STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF ECCE..... 40

FIGURE 2 ACCREDITATION AND RE-ACCREDITATION RPOCEDURES..... 41

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I ECCE CONSTITUTION
(Version 2.2 November 2009)

APPENDIX II ECCE ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES and STANDARDS
(Version 3 November 2009)

APPENDIX III APPLICATION for MEMBERSHIP of ENQA
(OCTOBER 2007)

APPENDIX IV ECCE FINANCIAL POLICY
(Version 4.0 November 2009)

APPENDIX V ECCE AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2006, 2007, 2008

APPENDIX VI ECCE EVALUATION TEAM MANUAL
(Version 2.1 November 2009)

APPENDIX VII EVALUATION REPORT INCLUDING TIMETABLE
(DURBAN UNIVERSITY of TECHNOLOGY November 2009)

APPENDIX VIII LETTER GRANTING CANDIDATE MEMBERSHIP of ENQA
(DATED 25 January 2008)

ABBREVIATIONS

AECC	Anglo-European College of Chiropractic
AMoR	Annual Monitoring Report
CCE	Council on Chiropractic Education
CCEI	Council on Chiropractic Education International
CHE	Council for Higher Education
COA	Commission on Accreditation
DC	Doctor of Chiropractic
DUT	Durban University of Technology
ECCE	European Council on Chiropractic Education
ECU	European Chiropractors Union
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ESG	Standards & Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
EU	European Union
GCC	General Chiropractic Council
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
HEI	Higher Education Institute
IFEC	Institute Franco-Européen de Chiropratique
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QAC	Quality Assurance Committee
WFC	World Federation of Chiropractic
WIOC	Welsh Institute of Chiropractic



1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CHIROPRACTIC

1.1 THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF THE SYSTEM

1.1.1 The first higher education institution (HEI) for the education and training of chiropractors in Europe (Anglo-European College of Chiropractic (AECC)) was established in Bournemouth, UK in 1965 and currently offers an integrated undergraduate Masters degree (MChiro) validated by Bournemouth University. Those students from the European Union (EU) who are eligible to receive direct funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) do so. Other students such as those from Norway, who are not eligible to receive HEFCE funding, receive direct funding from their own government to attend the AECC. The AECC has undergone an institutional review by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (2002) and in addition to being accredited by the ECCE, is also accredited by the General Chiropractic Council (GCC)¹ in line with UK national legislation.

1.1.2 In addition to the AECC, there are two other HEIs in the UK delivering chiropractic education and training. These are the Welsh Institute of Chiropractic (WIOC), operating as a Division within the Faculty of Health (University of Glamorgan), and where students receive public funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), and McTimoney College of Chiropractic, which is a private college in Oxford, UK. WIOC and McTimoney College both deliver an integrated Masters degree, albeit with different delivery models, validated by the universities of Glamorgan and Wales respectively. WIOC and McTimoney College are accredited by the GCC, and WIOC is also accredited by the ECCE.

1.1.3 Outside of the UK, chiropractic colleges are established in France (Institute Franco-Européen de Chiropratique) (IFEC Ivry-sur-Seine and IFEC Toulouse), Denmark (Syddansk Universitet Odense), Sweden ((Skandinaviska) Scandinavian College of Chiropractic), Spain (Real Centro Universitario Escorial-Maria Christina and Barcelona College of Chiropractic) and Switzerland

¹ www.gcc-uk.org

(University of Zurich). There are developments in other European countries to establish chiropractic education including Norway (University of Stavanger), Italy and the Netherlands.

1.1.4 Reflecting the growing popularity of complementary healthcare alongside orthodox medicine, and government regulation of chiropractic in countries such as the UK, Norway and Switzerland, chiropractic education and training in Europe is likely to grow exponentially in the future.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS

1.2.1 Current chiropractic education institutions include both private colleges and departments within established universities. Even where the institutions are private, there may be close associations with the university sector, as is the case with the AECC, and/or the programmes are validated by a university. For new chiropractic institutions it is obviously advisable to establish these within the university sector to facilitate and promote chiropractic education and training at the same level as other professional and vocational university degrees.

1.2.2 Irrespective of the status of an individual chiropractic institution, each will act autonomously and independently within the context of its setting and national legislation. There is no common and uniform curriculum in chiropractic and each institution has the intellectual and academic freedom to design and develop a curriculum that ensures a graduate is safe and competent to practise as a chiropractor.

1.2.3 Chiropractic programmes that are validated by a university (the majority) conform to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) qualifications framework. These programmes are either bachelor's degrees (three or four years' full time) or master's degrees (integrated undergraduate four years' full time or postgraduate MSc). Outside of national statutory requirements, there is no standard qualification for chiropractors in Europe, and for those programmes not validated by a university the norm is the Doctor of Chiropractic (DC).

1.3 ACCREDITATION

1.3.1 Chiropractic education and training leads to a professional qualification. In line with other professional degrees, such as medicine, chiropractic education and training is subject to accreditation by the relevant professional or statutory bodies. In the UK, for example, undergraduate chiropractic education and training is accredited by the General Chiropractic Council, which is a UK-wide statutory body established by parliament following the Chiropractors Act 1994. In contrast, the ECCE is an agency set up by the chiropractic profession in Europe for accreditation of institutions across national boundaries.

1.3.2 Given the diversity of higher education in chiropractic, including the setting of the institution, university validation of the programme and the qualification required to practise chiropractic, it is essential that there is an overriding and uniform accreditation process that ensures the quality and standard of chiropractic education and training irrespective of these differences. In some countries in Europe there is statutory accreditation, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Where programmes are validated by a university, there will be systematic internal quality assurance processes such as periodic reviews, regular monitoring cycles and external examiners, but not all chiropractic programmes are university validated. The role of the ECCE is therefore that of an external quality assurance agency in the periodic review of institutions providing chiropractic education and training across Europe. The underlying assumption is that accreditation by the ECCE gives confidence and trust to the chiropractic profession and to the public that chiropractic institutions are delivering an education and training that produces chiropractors who are safe and competent to practise in the modern healthcare environment.



2 STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF THE ECCE

2.1 ECCE IN A WORLD-WIDE CONTEXT

2.1.1 Chiropractic as a form of treating disorders of the spine originated in the USA at the end of the 19th century. The first chiropractic educational institution was established in Davenport, Iowa, and then as the practice of chiropractic proliferated throughout America, so the number of chiropractic educational institutions grew. Today, there are seventeen chiropractic colleges in the USA, accredited by the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE USA), together with chiropractic colleges in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Asia, South Africa, South America and Europe.

2.1.2 As part of this world-wide network of chiropractic education and training, chiropractic colleges are accredited by the Councils on Chiropractic Education (CCEs) depending on their geographic distribution. There are four such accrediting bodies: CCE (USA),² CCE (Canada),³ CCE (Australasia)⁴ and CCE (Europe).⁵ The latter is registered as the European Council on Chiropractic Education (ECCE) and is the (sole) subject of this self-evaluation report.

2.1.3 To ensure parity of educational standards world-wide, the Council on Chiropractic Education International (CCEI)⁶ was established in 2001. CCE (USA), CCE (Canada), CCE (Australasia) and ECCE are all member agencies of CCEI. CCEI publishes a set of 'model core standards' to which the standards set by the individual CCEs adhere. This reciprocity grants recognition to those

² <http://www.cce-usa.org/>

³ <http://www.chirofed.ca/>

⁴ <http://www.ccea.com.au/>

⁵ <http://www.cce-europe.org/>

⁶ <http://www.cceintl.org/>

chiropractors who have graduated from CCE-accredited institutions world-wide and facilitates the movement of chiropractors across national and international borders.

2.1.4 Within this international framework however, each CCE is an autonomous agency, setting its own standards, establishing its own policies and procedures, and acting independently from all other CCEs, and from the CCEI itself.

2.2 STATUS OF ECCE

2.2.1 The ECCE is an autonomous and independent, not for profit-making external quality assurance agency for (first qualification) chiropractic education and training in Europe. The agency's purpose and Constitution is registered in Aachen, Germany at the Register of Associations (*Vereinsregister 73 VR 2732*).

2.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF ECCE

2.3.1 The ECCE was established in 1981 by the General Council of the European Chiropractors Union (ECU) to oversee the accreditation of chiropractic education and training in Europe on behalf of the chiropractic profession. The ECU is the union of the majority of national chiropractic professional associations in Europe and represents a majority proportion of the chiropractic profession in Europe. In 1986, the ECCE formally separated from the ECU, and in 1991 registered under its own name and Constitution (appendix I). The first institution to receive ECCE accreditation was the AECC in 1992.

2.4 MISSION AND PURPOSE

2.4.1 ECCE's mission is to establish standards of excellence in the education and training of chiropractors. By periodically reviewing institutions against these standards, the ECCE safeguards the chiropractic profession's and the public's confidence in the competencies of chiropractors and their ability to carry out safe practice. The ECCE's mission is also to facilitate continuous improvement and sharing of best practice between providers of chiropractic education and training. The ECCE evaluates higher education in chiropractic in Europe across national borders and within a diverse framework of national requirements and legislation. In areas of the world where there is no CCE, applications can be made to the ECCE from chiropractic institutions outside Europe.

2.4.2 ECCE's purpose, as set out in its Constitution (appendix I), is:

- *To encourage the highest possible standards in chiropractic education and training.*

- *To establish standards of excellence for the education and training of chiropractors as safe and competent primary contact practitioners.*
- *To foster academic environments in which ethically and professionally responsible future practitioners of chiropractic can be educated and trained.*
- *To evaluate and accredit chiropractic institutions (and/or chiropractic educational programmes) according to, and against, a pre-determined and evolving set of procedures and standards.*
- *To publish a list of those institutions that deliver programmes in compliance with the Council's procedures and standards.*
- *To ensure that institutions holding accredited status with the Council are comparable in their educational programmes in achieving the core competencies.*
- *To actively seek recognition of the Council as the policy-making body for chiropractic education and training by all relevant authorities whether independent, national or international.*
- *To develop equivalent accreditation agreements where appropriate with other co-operating accreditation bodies.*

2.5 INITIATION OF EVALUATIONS

2.5.1 The ECCE is not a statutory body, and is not instructed by government. ECCE initiates evaluations at the request of institutions, subject to the institution meeting the eligibility criteria for accreditation (as set out in the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards) (appendix II). Although not initiated by government, the work of the ECCE is cited in official government documents in the UK, Norway, Finland and Denmark (included in the Application for Membership of ENQA October 2007, appendix III).

2.6 FINANCES

2.6.1 The ECCE is funded from two principal sources: annual dues from institutions with accredited and candidate (for accredited) status, and from the chiropractic profession (through the ECU). The ECCE publishes a Financial Policy (appendix IV) which is kept under regular review and agreed by the membership of the ECCE. Subscriptions from institutions are based on a per capita amount and calculated on the number of students graduating in that year. For an evaluation of an institution for accredited status, an evaluation fee is charged, and a fee for each re-accreditation thereafter. Again, the fee in question is set at a level agreed by the membership of the ECCE. An institution making an application for accredited status (or candidate (for accredited) status) is charged an application fee, set at a level agreed by the membership of the ECCE.

2.6.2 Budgets for income and expenditure are set by the Executive of the ECCE and approved by the full membership of the ECCE. Any changes to the budget must be approved by the full membership of the ECCE. Audited accounts for the preceding year are presented to the full membership of the ECCE for information on an annual basis. Audited accounts for the previous three years are included in appendix V.

2.7 MEMBERSHIP OF ECCE

2.7.1 Members of the Council (ECCE) must comply with the requirements as set out in the Constitution (appendix I). These ensure the independence of members and reduce the possibility of conflicts of interest with the autonomy of the ECCE. For example, members of Council must not be acting in an executive capacity in a chiropractic professional association. The ECCE aims to introduce a spread of expertise and experience and there are categories of membership to ensure chiropractors and non-chiropractors contribute to the work of the Council. There are fourteen members of Council; in addition, all institutions that are accredited by the ECCE are each represented by one member, normally the Head or Principal of the institution. These institutional members remain on Council for as long as they have accredited status with the ECCE. All other members, with the exception of the member elected to the post of Secretary/Treasurer, are able to serve a maximum of two terms each of four years. All members of the Council, with the exception of the institutional members, are nominated by a range of constituencies and elected by the Council. The full membership of the Council meets once a year at the Annual General Meeting, and observers can be invited at the discretion of the Executive. Minutes of Council meetings are recorded, circulated amongst members and approved by the Council. Minutes of Council meetings are not publicly available. Outside of the Council, the work of the ECCE is carried out by the Executive and by the Standing Committees of the ECCE, supported administratively by the Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary is employed by the ECCE and is not a member of the ECCE, the Executive or the Standing Committees, but who is in attendance at all meetings of the bodies of the ECCE (i.e. Council, Executive and Standing Committees). Details of the above are set

out in detail in the Constitution (appendix I) and a diagrammatic representation of the structure and organisation of ECCE is given in figure 1 (page 39).

2.8 EXECUTIVE OF ECCE

2.8.1 The Executive consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and Chairs of the Standing Committees. All executive posts are elected by the full membership of the Council.

2.8.2 The Executive is responsible for the day-to-day running of the ECCE. As set out in the Constitution, the Executive is responsible for:

- *Day-to-day administration of the Council.*
- *Appointment of evaluation teams.*
- *Correspondence with CCEI and other CCEs.*
- *Appointment of a representative(s) to the CCEI (who may or may not be a member of the Council).*
- *Administering initial contacts with institutions prior to application for (candidate for) accredited status.*
- *Dealing with all queries (other than those under the jurisdiction of the Commission on Accreditation) directed to the Council.*
- *Invitation of observers to meetings of the Council.*
- *Production of financial statements and budgets for approval by the Council.*
- *Production of the Financial Policy to include annual dues and accreditation fees for approval by the Council.*
- *Production of an annual report on the activities of the Council (ECCE).*

2.8.3 The Executive communicates principally by email and telephone, and holds on average three face-to-face meetings per year. Minutes of these meetings are recorded and submitted to the full membership of Council at its annual general meeting for information and discussion.

2.9 STANDING COMMITTEES OF ECCE

2.9.1 The ECCE has two standing committees: the Commission on Accreditation (COA) and the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). The Chairs of both committees are elected by the full membership of the Council, and are members of the ECCE Executive. Members of these committees, and their terms of reference, are set out in the Constitution (appendix I). Members of the COA are required to sign a Declaration of Confidentiality.

2.9.2 The COA is the body of the ECCE responsible for all matters pertaining to the accreditation (and re-accreditation) of institutions, including the final decision on accreditation (and re-accreditation) following receipt of the institution's self-study report and the evaluation report compiled by the evaluation team following an on-site visit to the institution. Minutes of COA meetings are recorded and remain confidential.

2.9.3 The duties and responsibilities of the COA, as set out in the Constitution, are:

- *The COA is responsible for all matters (including all correspondence) pertaining to the accreditation of chiropractic institutions and providing a list of institutions with accredited status to the Council.*
- *The COA shall apply and follow the standards and procedures set forth in the current Council's publication entitled "Accreditation Procedures and Standards for Chiropractic Education" and in such documents and regulations which may be adopted by the Council.*
- *The COA shall be responsible for all decisions on granting, revoking or refusing of any status of accreditation to an institution.*
- *The COA shall be responsible for receipt and approval of annual monitoring reports from the institutions in line with relevant policies and procedures.*

2.9.4 The QAC is responsible for continual review and evaluation of the ECCE's policies and procedures, the Constitution and the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II). The QAC focuses on the internal quality assurance of the ECCE.

2.10 ACTIVITIES OF ECCE

2.10.1 This section (2) of the self-evaluation report has focused on the structure and organisation of the ECCE in carrying out its principal activity, i.e. the external quality assurance of higher education in chiropractic and accreditation of institutions providing education and training at a standard that ensures students have the opportunity to attain the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be safe and competent chiropractors. The ECCE is strictly apolitical and does not enter into, or make comment on political issues that may face the profession from time to time. The ECCE operates a no fear or favour policy towards institutions, and conducts its procedures in a transparent and sensitive manner, and is only concerned with whether or not an institution provides chiropractic education and training that is in (substantial) compliance with ECCE standards. A significant proportion (but not all) of the members of the ECCE are themselves members of staff at chiropractic institutions. Quite properly, these are the people with the experience and expertise in chiropractic education and training, and who are in a position to judge the quality of education and training. As with the external examiner system in higher education, and review procedures in other disciplines such as medicine, the ECCE is fortunate to be able to rely on the professionalism of these people who give freely of their time to promote the standards of chiropractic education and training. At the same time, the ECCE is cognisant that conflicts of interest may occur, and has put procedures and policies in place to ensure that these do not compromise the work of the agency.

2.10.2 The ECCE is a credible and recognised agency, which has earned a reputation for undertaking external review of institutions that is rigorous, transparent and fair. All of the chiropractic institutions in Europe (apart from two new institutions) have sought (or are currently seeking) accredited (or candidate (for accredited)) status with the ECCE. In 2009, the first institution outside of Europe (for reason of not having a CCE in its own geographic area) received ECCE-accredited status (Durban University of Technology, South Africa), and an application to ECCE has recently been received from the University of Johannesburg. The following section details the external quality assurance activities undertaken by ECCE.



3 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE UNDERTAKEN BY ECCE

3.1 EXTERNAL REVIEW

3.1.1 External review of an institution takes place on a systematic and regular basis. Once accredited, an institution must undergo re-accreditation once every three or five years. In addition, the institution is required to submit an annual monitoring report (AMoR) each year.

3.1.2 The table shows the external review activities undertaken:

Institution	First accredited	Last accredited	Re-accreditation review date:
Anglo-European College of Chiropractic	1992	2007	2012
Durban University of Technology	2009	2009	2012
Institut Franco-Européen de Chiropractique	1996	2009	2014
Syddansk Universitet Odense	1999	2008	2013
Welsh Institute of Chiropractic	2002	Review in progress 2010	-

3.1.3 The ECCE also reviews institutions applying for candidate (for accredited) status rather than full accredited status. These are normally new institutions that are in the process of developing chiropractic programmes.

3.1.4 The following section details the procedures used by the ECCE as an external quality assurance agency.



4 EVALUATION PROCEDURES USED BY ECCE

The procedures used by ECCE in the external review of chiropractic higher education institutions are detailed in the handbooks: Accreditation Procedures and Standards in Undergraduate Chiropractic Education and Training (appendix II) and the Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI). These handbooks, together with other documentation, are available for download in pdf format from the ECCE website.⁷

4.1 INITIAL CONTACT

4.1.1 For an institution seeking accreditation with ECCE, an initial application is made in writing (in English) to the ECCE from the Head/Principal with the signed approval of the institution's governing body, together with evidence of how the institution meets the eligibility criteria as set out in the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 4 Section 2. The COA will make a decision on satisfactory compliance with the eligibility criteria, and if satisfied, will request an institutional self-evaluation. The self-study report is evidence of the institution's ability to comply with the ECCE standards; a detailed outline for the preparation of the self-study report is set out in the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 3. The self-study report is submitted to the COA, and a decision made as to whether it is satisfactory in description and in critical reflection. If so, the institution is contacted to put in place arrangements for an external review (evaluation visit). At this point all arrangements for the on-site visit, including proposed membership of the evaluation team and a draft timetable, are made between the institution and the ECCE Executive Secretary in discussion with members of the evaluation team and the Chair COA. The terms of reference for the evaluation visit are set out in the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 4 Section 3.1.3 and the Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI). Once the team members and timetable have been agreed, an evaluation fee

⁷ www.cce-europe.org

is paid by the institution. There is flexibility in scheduling on-site visits to allow institutions to hold reviews at times that are best suited to the institution, although all reviews must be carried out at a time when students are present.

4.1.2 Similar procedures occur for re-accreditation reviews (ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 4 Section 3.1.6). Applications to extend an existing accreditation to an additional site are set out in the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 4 Section 3.4.

4.1.3 For applications for candidate (for accredited) status, the institution must make initial contact in writing, provide evidence for meeting the eligibility criteria and provide a self-study report. These procedures are set out in the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 4 Section 5. Normally an external review does not take place for this category of accreditation, and the decision by the COA is based on evidence of meeting the eligibility criteria and on evidence presented in the self-study report. The maximum period an institution can hold candidate (for accredited) status is five years. At the end of this period the expectation is that the institution will apply for full accredited status and undertake the same initial contact procedures as described in 4.1.1. Candidate (for accredited) status is designed to enable new institutions that are in the process of developing programmes and working towards compliance with ECCE standards to establish a formal association with ECCE (ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 4 Section 1.3.2). However, candidate (for accredited) status is not a pre-requisite for application for full accredited status (as was the case for Durban University of Technology in 2009).

4.1.4 Irrespective of the category of application, the ECCE standards (ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 2) are the predefined criteria that inform all stages of the external review process.

4.2 ECCE STANDARDS

4.2.1 The ECCE standards comply with Part 1 ESG for internal quality assurance within HEIs. There are ten areas defined in the ECCE standards as set out in the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 2 Section 2.2. These are:

- *Aims and objectives*
- *Educational programme*
- *Assessment of students*
- *Students*
- *Academic and clinical staff*
- *Educational resources*
- *The relationship between teaching and research*
- *Programme evaluation*
- *Governance and administration*

- *Continuous renewal and improvement*

4.2.2 Within each of these ten areas, there are sub-areas which define specific performance indicators. These are the standards that must be met (either fully or substantially) by the institution to gain accredited status. In total there are thirty six standards, each of which is annotated to clarify, amplify or exemplify expressions that are used in the standards; these annotations are used as guidelines in interpreting the standards.

4.3 EVALUATION METHOD

4.3.1 The ECCE uses a staged process for the evaluation of chiropractic education institutions. This is outlined in figure 2 (page 40).

4.3.2 Following the initial contact, and evidence of meeting the eligibility criteria and submitting a satisfactory self-study report as outlined in 4.1.3, the evaluation proceeds with an on-site visit to the institution by a group of experts (evaluation team) to verify the self-study report and attain further evidence through additional documentation made available by the institution and face-to-face meetings with staff and students. Following the visit, and subsequent to the institution's opportunity to make factual corrections, an evaluation report is finalised, which is submitted to the COA outlining the team's recommendations and any strengths, weaknesses and concerns that are of particular note. At the meeting of COA to make the final decision, the Chair of the evaluation team presents the final report, and is available to answer any questions members of COA may have. The decision, together with the period of accreditation, is communicated in writing to the institution, and placed on the ECCE website together with the final report. The following sections detail this process:

4.4 EVALUATION TEAM

4.4.1 The ECCE Executive seeks experts from education both within and outside of chiropractic, and where there is assumed to be no conflict of interest either perceived or real. All members of the team must have attended an ECCE training event. These events are held as one day seminars at regular intervals (the last training day was held September 2009 with approximately 25 attendees). Training events are held to provide information on interpretation of the ECCE standards and the external review process so that all members of an evaluation team are fully conversant with the evaluation process. The requirements, and roles and responsibilities, for team members are set out in the ECCE Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI) Sections 2 and 3 respectively.

4.4.2 Team members are appointed by the ECCE Executive, with particular note of any language requirements, and each is required to sign a Conflict of Interest statement (ECCE Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI) appendix 2) to the effect that there is (or is not) a declaration to be made. If a declaration is made, the Executive may still proceed with the

appointment if it is considered that this will not compromise that member's role on the team. If such a declaration is made this is made known to the institution. Irrespective of declarations of interest, once appointed all members of the team are disclosed to the institution. If the institution objects on reasonable grounds, then a replacement(s) is provided. All team members are agreed by the institution before the on-site visit proceeds.

4.4.3 The team normally consists of four or five members, one of whom is appointed as Chair of the team, and one of whom is normally the ECCE Executive Secretary. Members of the team are normally professionals with experience in higher education.⁸ All members of the team contribute to the final report, which is the responsibility of the team Chair. The ECCE Executive Secretary acts as secretary to the team, and who is a full member of the team with equal status to other members. The roles and responsibilities of the Chair and Secretary are set out in the ECCE Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI) Sections 5 and 6 respectively.

4.4.4 The secretary of the team is responsible for liaising between the Chair of the evaluation team, members of the team and the institution to ensure that everyone involved is fully briefed and all travel and accommodation arrangements are in place. A timetable for the visit is agreed beforehand with the institution so that there is as little disruption to the institution as possible, and staff and students who are required to meet with the team can make the necessary arrangements. The institution is also informed beforehand of all the documentation that is likely to be required for scrutiny by the team.

4.5 EVALUATION VISIT

4.5.1 The on-site visit is conducted in English, and normally takes two to three days, with the final day concentrated on finalising a draft of the evaluation report. There is a preliminary private meeting of the team at the start of the visit, followed by meetings with staff and students as scheduled. Interspersed are private sessions for the team where team members can reflect on proceedings and start to prepare the report. Writing the report is an iterative process, and normally team members are allocated specified areas of the report depending on their subject expertise. The timetable for the last evaluation visit conducted by the ECCE showing allocation of responsibilities of the team is given in appendix VII (included in the final evaluation report, Durban University of Technology, November 2009).

4.5.2 A detailed account of the evaluation visit is set out in the ECCE Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI) Section 9. The Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI) also includes a number of annexes (B to F) as aide memoires to the team.

⁸ At the present time the ECCE does not include students on the team. This has not been possible up to now because of the difficulties for undergraduate students arranging time away from their studies while visiting another institution. This is not insurmountable however, and the ECCE, given that it agrees in principle with student representation, will consider how this can be achieved in the future.

4.5.3 At the end of the on-site evaluation, the team finalises the draft report, and presents its main findings orally to senior staff of the institution. The key findings are structured as strengths, weaknesses and concerns, which are defined in the Glossary to the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II).

4.6 EVALUATION REPORT

4.6.1 The reporting stage is outlined in the ECCE Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI) Section 10. The report is finalised after the visit by the Chair of the evaluation team and agreed by all members of the team. It is then sent to the institution for correction of factual errors only.⁹

4.6.2 The final report, after factual corrections by the institution, is submitted to COA, together with an oral report from the Chair of the evaluation team. The COA is informed by the report, although it is not obliged to follow the recommendations given therein. The decision of the COA is communicated to the institution and the final evaluation report placed on the ECCE website. The institution is also informed of the date for the next external review and of the annual monitoring process in which all accredited institutions are required to participate and return an AMoR (ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 3 Section 3.2 and Part 4 Section 6).¹⁰ This process ensures that institutions keep the ECCE informed of its current status in terms of numbers of students and staff, student admissions and progression data, fulfilment of clinical training requirements and major changes in resources. The AMoR also includes any areas of concern/weakness identified in the evaluation report, and provides information to COA as to how the institution is addressing these. The AMoR is submitted to COA, and each institution, normally represented by the Head/Principal, is required to meet with the COA and discuss this report in a face-to face meeting.

4.6.3 Hence, institutional self-evaluation is a critical component of the external quality assurance process of the ECCE. As outlined above, this takes two forms:

- Self Study Report for accreditation and re-accreditation purposes
- Annual Monitoring Report (AMoR)

⁹ The format of the evaluation report has recently been changed to make it more transparent and facilitate the decision made on accreditation by COA. In this, the ENQA reporting process has been very helpful in informing the ECCE reporting process, and the format of the final report now follows that used by ENQA whereby the team refers to each standard and describes the evidence, an analysis of that evidence and based on this analysis, a judgement on compliance (fully, substantially, partially or non-compliant). Based on these judgements on the thirty-six standards, the team arrives at a recommendation on overall compliance bearing in mind that an institution cannot be expected to be totally compliant with all standards. A copy of the last evaluation report compiled by an evaluation team (November 2009), which used this revised format, is given in appendix VII. This practice will continue.

¹⁰ The Annual Monitoring Report (AMoR) is a proforma that can be downloaded from the ECCE website.

4.7 DECISIONS ON ACCREDITATION

4.7.1 Decisions to accredit, re-accredit or award candidate (for accredited) status are the sole responsibility of COA. The COA can either approve, defer a decision or refuse accredited status. The decisions available to the COA, with their consequences, are set out in the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 4 Sections 3.1.4, 3.2.4 and 5.2.2. Where a decision is deferred, further information is required. In cases of refusal, the COA will make recommendations on areas of weaknesses and concerns to assist the institution to work towards a successful application.

4.7.2 The ECCE has an appeals process for an institution wishing to appeal a refusal to accredit (or re-accredit). The appeals procedure is detailed in the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 4 Section 4. The appellant institution must provide the grounds for appeal in writing before the date of the hearing, and has the right to be represented at the hearing by up to two persons (see 5.2.20 of this self-study report).



5 COMPLIANCE WITH ESG

This section itemises the individual standards of Parts 2 and 3 of ESG, followed by the ECCE's account of how it complies. The ESG (and reference numbering) are taken from Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 3rd edition, 2009.

5.1 PART 2. EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures

STANDARD:

External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

GUIDELINES:

The standards for internal quality assurance contained in Part 1 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. It is important that the institutions' own internal policies and procedures are carefully evaluated in the course of external procedures, to determine the extent to which the standards are being met.

If higher education institutions are to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance processes, and if those processes properly assure quality and standards, then external processes might be less intensive than otherwise.

5.1.1 ECCE compliance: The ECCE standards, as set out in ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 2, cover the internal quality assurance processes as described in Part 1 ESG, and as described in 4.2.1 of this self-evaluation report.

2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes**STANDARD:**

The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

GUIDELINES:

In order to ensure clarity of purpose and transparency of procedures, external quality assurance methods should be designed and developed through a process involving key stakeholders, including higher education institutions. The procedures that are finally agreed should be published and should contain explicit statements of the aims and objectives of the processes as well as a description of the procedures to be used.

As external quality assurance makes demands on the institutions involved, a preliminary impact assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the procedures to be adopted are appropriate and do not interfere more than necessary with the normal work of higher education institutions.

5.1.2 ECCE compliance: The standards, policies and procedures adopted by ECCE have been developed, revised and reviewed over a period of time, and discussed with a range of stakeholders. There is flexibility to keep disruption to an institution to a minimum, and the ECCE is responsive to an institution's needs as much as is possible. All procedures, policies and the ECCE standards are documented and freely available on the ECCE website.

2.3 Criteria for decisions**STANDARD:**

Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

GUIDELINES:

Formal decisions made by quality assurance agencies have a significant impact on the institutions and programmes that are judged. In the interests of equity and reliability, decisions should be based on published criteria and interpreted in a consistent manner. Conclusions should be based on recorded evidence and agencies should have in place ways of moderating conclusions, if necessary.

5.1.3 ECCE compliance: Criteria for reaching decisions on accreditation of institutions are clearly set out in the eligibility criteria and the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) Part 4. Members of evaluation teams and the COA are selected for their expertise and experience in higher education, and members of evaluation teams must have attended a training event beforehand. The final report must give the supporting evidence on which analyses and judgements are based. The COA provides full and frank feedback to institutions in the way in which its decisions have been reached.

2.4 Processes fit for purpose

STANDARD:

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

GUIDELINES:

Quality assurance agencies within the EHEA undertake different external processes for different purposes and in different ways. It is of the first importance that agencies should operate procedures which are fit for their own defined and published purposes. Experience has shown, however, that there are some widely-used elements of external review processes which not only help to ensure their validity, reliability and usefulness, but also provide a basis for the European dimension to quality assurance.

Amongst these elements the following are particularly noteworthy:

- insistence that the experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task;
- the exercise of care in the selection of experts;
- the provision of appropriate briefing or training for experts;
- the use of international experts;
- participation of students;
- ensuring that the review procedures used are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached;
- the use of the self-evaluation/site visit/draft report/published report/follow-up model of review;
- recognition of the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality.

5.1.4 ECCE compliance: The ECCE bases all its procedures on a fit for purpose principle. Members of evaluation teams are appointed by the ECCE Executive with due regard to experience and expertise. In appointing a team, members are selected on an international basis and the totality of members will not be from any one country. Where there is more than one institution in a country, members of the team will not normally be associated with the other institution(s) in that country. Due regard is given to language, and although self-study reports and evaluations are carried out in English, there will be at least one member whose native language is that in which the programme is delivered. Training events are held by ECCE and all members of evaluation teams must have attended at least one of these. Students are not included but this issue is being addressed. The self-study report and an intensive on-site visit are considered sufficient to scrutinise the relevant evidence on which to base analyses and judgements. Institutional improvement and enhancement policies are recognised as essential in the assurance of quality and explicitly referred to in the ECCE standards (i.e. Continuous renewal and improvement).

2.5 Reporting**STANDARD:**

Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

GUIDELINES:

In order to ensure maximum benefit from external quality assurance processes, it is important that reports should meet the identified needs of the intended readership. Reports are sometimes intended for different readership groups and this will require careful attention to structure, content, style and tone.

In general, reports should be structured to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations, and recommendations. There should be sufficient preliminary explanation to enable a lay reader to understand the purposes of the review, its form, and the criteria used in making decisions. Key findings, conclusions and recommendations should be easily locatable by readers. Reports should be published in a readily accessible form and there should be opportunities for readers and users of the reports (both within the relevant institution and outside it) to comment on their usefulness.

5.1.5 ECCE compliance: Evaluation reports are produced in hard copy and also included on the ECCE website. The report concludes with strengths, weaknesses and concerns, which summarise the key findings of the evaluation team and enable the reader to easily find the conclusions of the team. There has been a recent revision of the way in which reports are compiled. With the introduction of subheadings for each standard, the team is directed to describing and analysing the evidence, and based on this, making a judgement on the compliance of the institution. This is an improvement on previous formats and makes the findings of the team transparent to the institution and to the COA.

2.6 Follow-up procedures

STANDARD:

Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

GUIDELINES:

Quality assurance is not principally about individual external scrutiny events: It should be about continuously trying to do a better job. External quality assurance does not end with the publication of the report and should include a structured follow-up procedure to ensure that recommendations are dealt with appropriately and any required action plans drawn up and implemented. This may involve further meetings with institutional or programme representatives. The objective is to ensure that areas identified for improvement are dealt with speedily and that further enhancement is encouraged.

5.1.6 ECCE compliance: Following the accreditation (or re-accreditation) of an institution, the relationship between the institution and ECCE continues on a formal basis through the annual reporting (AMoR) process. Institutions are required to complete an AMoR that documents key outcomes for the year including student admissions and progression, completion of clinical requirements by students, the student/staff ratio, and documentation of any changes to staffing and other resources. In addition, progress made in addressing any weaknesses and concerns raised in the evaluation report is documented. Follow-up is assured by an annual meeting between COA and the institution at which the institution speaks to its AMoR (submitted to COA beforehand). As such, the external review undertaken by the ECCE does not end with the evaluation report but

continues on a regular basis through meetings and documentary evidence, facilitating improvement and further enhancement of the institution.

2.7 Periodic reviews

STANDARD:

External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

GUIDELINES:

Quality assurance is not a static but a dynamic process. It should be continuous and not “once in a lifetime”. It does not end with the first review or with the completion of the formal follow-up procedure. It has to be periodically renewed. Subsequent external reviews should take into account progress that has been made since the previous event. The process to be used in all external reviews should be clearly defined by the external quality assurance agency and its demands on institutions should not be greater than are necessary for the achievement of its objectives.

5.1.7 ECCE compliance: ECCE conducts external reviews of institutions on a cyclical basis, once every three or five years. The duration of an accreditation depends on the maturity of an institution and a judgement on whether an institution would benefit by a review in a shorter time frame (three years). Reviews for re-accreditation are notified to an institution well in advance so that a mutually agreed date can be identified within the time frame of the accreditation period.

2.8 System-wide analyses

STANDARD:

Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.

GUIDELINES:

All external quality assurance agencies collect a wealth of information about individual programmes and/or institutions and this provides material for structured analyses across whole higher education systems. Such analyses can provide very useful information about developments, trends, emerging good practice and areas of persistent difficulty or weakness and can become useful tools for policy development and quality enhancement. Agencies should consider including a research and development function within their activities, to help them extract maximum benefit from their work.

5.1.8 ECCE compliance: The ECCE is represented on the Council on Chiropractic Education International (CCEI) and shares best practice with other external review agencies in chiropractic education on a world-wide basis. The ECCE also presents its work at relevant conferences, and writes a regular news item for a journal distributed three times a year to the chiropractic profession in Europe. A report by the President on the work of the ECCE is also submitted twice a year to the ECCE Council, a copy of which is submitted to the European Chiropractors Union (ECU). Much of the work of the ECCE is taken up with the core business of evaluation of institutions. This is reflected on internally at Executive and COA meetings, and in extensive discussions with institutions and other stakeholders.

5.2 PART 3. EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education

STANDARD:

The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

GUIDELINES:

The standards for external quality assurance contained in Part 2 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. The standards reflect best practices and experiences gained through the development of external quality assurance in Europe since the early 1990s. It is therefore important that these standards are integrated into the processes applied by external quality assurance agencies towards the higher education institutions. The standards for external quality assurance should together with the standards for external quality assurance agencies constitute the basis for professional and credible external quality assurance of higher education institutions.

5.2.1 ECCE compliance: As described in 5.1 above, the ECCE takes into account Part 2 of the ESG, and its standards form the basis for the external quality assessment process.

3.2 Official status

STANDARD:

Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

5.2.2 ECCE compliance: Although ECCE is not a statutory organisation, it is recognised as an external quality assurance agency by public authorities in Europe (and in South Africa). As

examples, the following are documented references to ECCE. The supporting documentary evidence can be found in appendices 1 to 4 of the Application for ENQA Membership submitted by ECCE October 2007 (appendix III). Also see footnote.¹¹

- In the UK, the ECCE was referred to when setting up the General Chiropractic Council following the Chiropractors Act 1994. The minimum standards of education are defined as equivalent to those of the ECCE; *'...that the minimum standards of education and training should be equivalent to those of the European Council on Chiropractic Education at 1 January 1992'* (Application for ENQA Membership October 2007 appendix 1).
- In Norway, the Ministry of Health and Care Services defines the requirement to practise as a chiropractor as having *'passed the chiropractor training accredited by the European Council on Chiropractic Education (ECCE)..'* In addition, the Norwegian Registration Authority for Health Personnel refers to authorisation to practise as a chiropractor *'..granted to applicants who have successfully completed education/training as a chiropractor at an educational institution approved by the European Council on Chiropractic Education (ECCE)..'* (Application for ENQA Membership October 2007 appendix 2).
- In Finland, *'the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs has accepted the degree of Doctor of Chiropractic, issued at educational institutions accepted by the WFC or ECU, and the chiropractic quality assurance institution CCE, as a degree for the professional title of Educated Chiropractor'* (Application for ENQA Membership October 2007 appendix 3).
- In Denmark, the Chiropractors Act (1991) regulating chiropractic practice refers to the Council on Chiropractic Education accredited institutions as the approved education for persons wishing to practise as chiropractors (translation). A letter from the National Board of Health (21 March 2006) verifies that ECCE/CCE will continue to be used as the reference base for acknowledging overseas chiropractic education (Application for ENQA Membership October 2007 appendix 4).
- In South Africa, the national external quality assurance agency (Higher Education Quality Committee, Council for Higher Education (CHE)) evaluated the chiropractic programme at Durban University of Technology. The CHE evaluation report (August 2006), which will be tabled at the ENQA review visit (April 2010), specifically refers to the expectation that the institution would subsequently attain international

¹¹ In Switzerland, the 'European accepted Standards in Undergraduate Education and Training established by the European Council on Chiropractic Education (ECCE)' are used to inform the quality standards contained in the Accreditation of Postgraduate Chiropractic Education Quality Standards, the Centre of Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities (OAQ), January 2009.

accreditation with the ECCE (CHE Evaluation Report p. 4). (This report will be tabled at the Review Visit April 2010).

5.2.3 ECCE compliance: The ECCE is registered as a non-profit making organisation in Aachen, Germany. The current composition (named members) of the Executive Committee and the Constitution document is filed at Amtsgericht Aachen. The ECCE is legally registered on the Register of Associations (Vereinsregister VR 2732).

3.3 Activities

STANDARD:

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

GUIDELINES:

These may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the agency.

5.2.4 ECCE compliance: ECCE undertakes all its external quality assurance activities at institutional level. Institutions undergo periodic review for re-accreditation on a three or five year cycle depending on the maturity of the institution and the findings from previous evaluations. Superimposed on this is an annual reporting (AMoR) process of all accredited institutions. In this, institutions are required to systematically report on current activity including staff and student data, and to inform the COA of any changes in activities in the period since the previous AMoR as well as how it is addressing any weaknesses/concerns from the previous evaluation report. This information is provided in writing and also in an annual face to face meeting between the institution's representative (normally the Head/Principal) and the COA. The ECCE is currently considering the processes and procedures for re-accreditation in the light that an accredited institution should be reviewed in a manner that focuses on change and enhancement.

3.4 Resources

STANDARD:

Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.

5.2.5 ECCE compliance: The Council and its sub-Committees are responsible for the strategic direction and conducting the business of the agency. The ECCE employs an Executive Secretary responsible for the administration of the Council. Members of the Council are elected as set out in the Constitution (appendix I). The Executive is responsible for the day to day operation of the Council and conducts its business through emails, and telephone conferencing as appropriate, and meets three times a year. The full Council meets annually. The Commission on Accreditation (COA)

is responsible for the core business of the ECCE, i.e. external reviews and evaluations, and decisions thereof. The COA meets at least once a year, and at other times when institutions are in the process of being (re-)accredited. Much of the ECCE's work is carried out without remuneration to its members, who are committed to maintaining and improving the standards of chiropractic education and training in Europe. As the number of chiropractic education institutions increases in Europe so the workload for ECCE will expand. ECCE membership and administrative support are thus areas that will be continually monitored to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Outside of membership, the ECCE is also able to draw on the experience and expertise of individuals in education (both in and outside of chiropractic) as part of evaluation teams that make on-site visits to institutions. Members of these teams are remunerated for their work.

5.2.6 ECCE compliance: The ECCE is funded from subscriptions and fees from the chiropractic education institutions as set out in the ECCE Financial Policy (appendix IV), and an annual subscription from the ECU, which represents the chiropractic profession's interests in Europe. The ECU¹² is made up of the majority of professional chiropractic associations in Europe, and in turn is a member of the World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC).¹³ In addition to subscriptions, institutions applying for accredited and candidate (for accredited) status are charged a fee, as are all institutions undergoing a periodic re-accreditation (Financial Policy, appendix IV). The ECCE is in a sound financial position with significant reserves. ECCE audited accounts for the previous three years are included in appendix V.

3.5 Mission statement

STANDARD:

Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

GUIDELINES:

These statements should describe the goals and objectives of agencies' quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of their work. The statements should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the agency and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statements are translated into a clear policy and management plan.

5.2.7 ECCE compliance: The mission statement of the ECCE is *'to establish standards of excellence for the education and training of chiropractors as safe and competent primary contact practitioners'*. This statement is available on the home page of the ECCE.¹⁴

¹² www.ecuunion.eu

¹³ www.wfc.org

¹⁴ www.cce-europe.org

5.2.8 ECCE compliance: The purpose of the ECCE is detailed in Part 1 of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II) and in the Constitution (appendix I). Both are available in print format and in electronic format from the ECCE website.

Purpose:

- *To encourage the highest possible standards in chiropractic education and training.*
- *To establish standards of excellence for the education and training of chiropractors as safe and competent primary contact practitioners.*
- *To foster academic environments in which ethically and professionally responsible future practitioners of chiropractic can be educated and trained.*
- *To evaluate and accredit chiropractic institutions (and/or chiropractic educational programmes) according to, and against, a pre-determined and evolving set of procedures and Standards.*
- *To publish a list of those institutions that deliver programmes in compliance with the Council's procedures and Standards.*
- *To ensure that institutions holding accredited status with the Council are comparable in their educational programmes in achieving the core competencies.*
- *To actively seek recognition of the Council as the policy-making body for chiropractic education and training by all relevant authorities whether independent, national or international.*
- *To develop equivalent accreditation agreements where appropriate with other co-operating accreditation bodies.*

5.2.9 ECCE compliance: The ECCE is concerned first and foremost with the external quality assurance of institutions providing chiropractic education and training in Europe. In the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II), the ECCE is defined as:

- *'An international autonomous organisation concerned with accreditation (and re-accreditation) of institutions offering chiropractic education and training. Accreditation (and re-accreditation) of institutions is determined by the quality of chiropractic education and training judged against a set of educational standards'.*

5.2.10 ECCE compliance: The historical context of the ECCE is set out in Part 1, Section 1.1. Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II).

5.2.11 ECCE compliance: All of the documents and the procedures operated by ECCE are based on the ECCE standards developed to ensure that chiropractic education and training provided by institutions assures that graduates achieve the learning outcomes consistent with safe and

competent practice. These outcomes are detailed in Part 2, Section 2.1 of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II).

3.6 Independence

STANDARD:

Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

GUIDELINES:

An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:

- its operational independence from higher education institutions and governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts);
- the definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are undertaken autonomously and independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence;
- while relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

5.2.12 ECCE compliance: The ECCE is an independent body, registered as a not for profit organisation. It has no formal links to any government authority, chiropractic professional organisation or individual chiropractic education institution. All decisions regarding all operations are taken by the ECCE alone or its delegated authority, i.e. the Commission on Accreditation (COA). Decisions on accreditation (and re-accreditation) are taken solely by the COA, without influence from the ECCE Council or any other body. In this respect, no (education) institutional member of the Council is eligible to be a member of COA (as set out in 10.1.1 of the Constitution, appendix I).

5.2.13 ECCE compliance: Membership of the ECCE is governed by strict eligibility criteria to ensure there is no influence from either professional organisations and/or institutions. These criteria are set out in Section 3 of the Constitution (appendix I).

5.2.14 ECCE compliance: The nomination and appointment of members of an evaluation team are determined by the ECCE Executive in consultation with the institution under review. The final decision on external reviewers remains with the ECCE Executive as set out in Part 4, Section 1.4 of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II).

3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies

STANDARD:

The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance

process;

- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

Guidelines:

Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes. Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people. Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

5.2.15 ECCE compliance: A self-study report is required by every institution on application for accredited and candidate (for accredited) status, and for periodic re-accreditation. This report is based on the ECCE standards, and is set out in institutional self-evaluation (Part 3) of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II).

5.2.16 ECCE compliance: An on-site evaluation is a required part of the accreditation process, and at each periodic re-accreditation thereafter. Full details of the on-site visit are set out in Section 9 of the Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI), and in Part 4 Section 3.1.3 of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II).

5.2.17 ECCE compliance: An evaluation report is produced at the end of every on-site visit, and used by COA as part of its procedures in reaching a decision on accredited (or re-accredited) status of an institution. The evaluation report is detailed in section 10 of the Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI), and in Part 4, Section 3.1.4 of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II), and includes a summary of the strengths, weaknesses and any concerns as detailed by the evaluation team. The evaluation report is published in its entirety on the ECCE website.

5.2.18 ECCE compliance: A formal annual reporting (AMoR) process is in place, in which institutions must formally report on student and staff data, and address any weaknesses and/or concerns identified in the evaluation report. Each institution is required to participate on an annual basis in between periodic re-accreditation events (see also 5.2.4).

5.2.19 ECCE compliance: To ensure consistency, all external reviewers are required to attend formal training events held by the ECCE (see 4.4.1).

5.2.20 ECCE compliance: The ECCE operates an appeals process, which is only permissible in cases of refusal of accredited (or re-accredited) status of an institution as determined by the COA. Appeals are submitted in writing, and an appeals hearing at which the institution is represented follows. The appellant institution has the right to appoint one member of the appeals panel, subject

to defined eligibility criteria. Details of the appeals process is set out in Part 4, Section 4 of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II).

5.2.21 ECCE compliance: The ECCE distinguishes between appeals and complaints. Complaints are dealt with by procedures set out in Part 4, Section 9 of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II).

3.8 Accountability procedures

STANDARD:

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

GUIDELINES:

These procedures are expected to include the following:

1. A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website;
2. Documentation which demonstrates that:
 - the agency’s processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
 - the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts;
 - the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties;
 - the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.
3. A mandatory cyclical external review of the agency’s activities at least once every five years.

5.2.22 ECCE compliance: The ECCE has a formally constituted Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) that is responsible for continual review and evaluation of the agency’s policies and procedures, and documentation. The last major review of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards was in 2004.

5.2.23 ECCE compliance: The President of the ECCE submits a report on ECCE activities to the Council (and ECU) twice a year, which is published on the ECCE website. The ECU is represented on the ECCE Council (Section 3.1.2 of the Constitution (appendix I)). The ECCE receives feedback from institutional members on an informal basis at the annual meetings with members of the COA, and during the annual general meeting of the Council. There is also a formal mechanism for annual feedback from institutional members through the annual reporting (AMoR) process.

5.2.24 ECCE compliance: A formal system of feedback on the accreditation (and re-accreditation) is implemented, with feedback questionnaires distributed to the Chair and members of the evaluation team, and to the institution undergoing review. Any appropriate actions are notified to the Executive through the Chair of the QAC, who is a member of the Executive.

5.2.25 ECCE compliance: The appointment of members of evaluation teams is subject to eligibility criteria as set out in Section 2 of the Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI), and all members sign a Conflict of Interest statement as set out in appendix 2 of the Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI). The Executive Secretary works closely with members of an evaluation team to ensure evaluation reports are of the required standard and fit for purpose.

5.2.26 As a full member of ENQA, ECCE would have to undergo a mandatory cyclical review of its activities every five years for continued membership.

ENQA CRITERION 8 – MISCELLANEOUS

- i. The agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgements and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups.
- ii. If the agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, it should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of the agency.
- iii. The agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.

5.2.27 ECCE compliance (i): The purpose and mission statement of the ECCE are clearly set out in the agency's documentation (Section 1.2, ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards, appendix II) and website (www.cce-europe.org). The ECCE operates in a fair and transparent manner, and consults regularly with its stakeholders both formally and informally. The ECCE policies and procedures are described in the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Policies (appendix II), and the ECCE abides by these in all of its actions and decision-making processes. The ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Policies (appendix II) are thus the benchmark for the conduct and decisions of the ECCE, and provide the reference point for internal and external stakeholders alike. Moreover, the transparency of these policies and procedures ensures that judgements and decisions are made consistently and are not dependent on any one or group of individuals.

5.2.28 ECCE compliance (ii): The ECCE does make formal quality assurance decisions, which have formal consequences for institutions in terms of peer recognition and transportability of graduates to work outside of national boundaries. There is a formal appeals procedure for decisions on accreditation and re-accreditation, details of which are set out in Part 4, Section 4 of the ECCE Accreditation Policies and Procedures (appendix II). This procedure is bespoke to the constitution of the ECCE, and is designed to operate effectively within the ECCE context.

5.2.29 ECCE compliance (iii): The ECCE would welcome the opportunity to contribute to ENQA as a full member. As a member of ENQA, the ECCE would actively share good practice in quality assurance of higher education institutions with other members, and also learn from them so as to enhance and improve its own activities and performance. The ECCE is a relatively small organisation, but we believe that the issues faced by ECCE are not ones of scale but ones in all probability shared by others regardless of size. The ECCE is unique in that it is concerned with accreditation of education and training that ensures safe and competent practice in primary healthcare, and as such works to maintain educational and training standards within a professional context. The ECCE is also concerned with transnational education across Europe, and has some valuable experience to share on the issues associated with accreditation of institutions in more than one country. The ECCE has a strong European heritage and outlook, and strives to ensure parity and equality of representation. It is because of these differences, and not in spite of them, that the ECCE can, and will contribute in a relevant manner to the activities of ENQA.



6 APPLICATION FOR ENQA MEMBERSHIP (OCTOBER 2007)

6.1 The ECCE considered that membership of ENQA was a logical and appropriate step in the continuous improvement and enhancement of ECCE as an external quality assurance agency for chiropractic education and training in Europe. The ECCE took the view that its procedures and processes aligned themselves with ESG, and that membership would not only provide a rigorous and robust review of its own processes and procedures, but that opportunities would be made available to ECCE to share best practice with other external review agencies and to learn from them. This strategic objective was fully supported by the major stakeholders in ECCE, including representatives of the chiropractic profession (ECU) and the individual accredited chiropractic educational institutions.

6.2 In October 2007, ECCE made an application for membership to ENQA. This application (with appendices) is submitted to the ENQA review panel alongside this self-evaluation document (appendix III). In January 2008, ECCE was formally informed that it had achieved candidate membership with recommendations for a submission for full membership in due course.

6.3 The following details the responses to 'Annex 1 Questions to be addressed (by ECCE) in order to meet the criteria for full membership' in a letter from ENQA dated 25 January 2008 (appendix VIII):

- **Students are not involved in the evaluation process.**

It is the case that students have not been involved in the evaluation teams that visit institutions as part of the accreditation (and re-accreditation) process. However, the ECCE does recognise the value of having student participation and this has recently been discussed informally with accredited institutions. As a first step, students will be invited to future ECCE training events. Part of the difficulty in including undergraduate chiropractic

students revolves around the logistics of asking students to attend evaluation visits that may take place at some distance from their own institutions, and also their availability during term time when classes are in session and evaluations necessarily take place. However, this is not insurmountable, and the Executive has discussed the possibility of requesting institutions to grant undergraduate students leave of absence of up to a week to participate in evaluation events, as well as time to contribute to the final evaluation report.

Students do however participate during the evaluation event, albeit not on the evaluation team. In the Evaluation Manual (Annexe D) (appendix VI) there is an aide-memoire for the face-to-face meeting(s) that occur(s) between students of the institution and the evaluation team. The ECCE considers these meetings an essential part of the evaluation process, and an important source of evidence on which to review an institution.

- **Evaluation reports are not published in their entirety**

The ECCE debated this issue at Executive and at the full annual Council meeting (Minutes of the meeting held 8 November 2008; item 13 Publication of Evaluation Reports). It was unanimously agreed that evaluation reports would be published in full on the ECCE website. As a result, evaluation reports from 2007 onwards are published in their entirety. This practice will continue.

- **ECCE does not take into account the presence and effectiveness of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area (ESG)**

As a result of the work done by ECCE as part of the application processes for both candidate and full membership of ENQA, the ECCE has taken account of ESG, and an account of the way in which it meets ESG is detailed in section 5.0 of this self-evaluation report. To make this clear the following references have been inserted into the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards in Undergraduate Chiropractic Education and Training Version 3 (appendix II).

*'This current revision of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (Version 3, November 2009) is based on the original revision (Version 1, November 2004) and the second revision (Version 2, November 2007). In 2007, the ECCE applied to the **European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)**, and was granted candidate membership in December 2007. The application was based on the **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)** accessed on 27 July 2009 at:*

http://www.engq.eu/pubs_esg.lasso

The ECCE intends to comply in full with the ESG and is in agreement with the Standards and Guidelines outlined therein, specifically with the accreditation of institutions in compliance with Part 1 (European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions) and the ECCE itself adhering to parts 2 (European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education) and 3 (European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance agencies).'

- **The no-conflict-of-interest mechanism of ECCE is not satisfactory as: i) there is no written declaration to be signed, ii) an expert affected by a conflict of interest may anyway undertake the evaluation and iii) a Council member who has declared a conflict of interest may be excluded from voting by a simple majority vote of at a quarter of the Council members present at the meeting.**

i) A written declaration has now been implemented for all members serving on an evaluation team. This must be signed prior to the visit taking place. This is now included as appendix 2 in the Evaluation Team Manual and referred to in section 4.2 of the Manual (appendix VI).

ii) Not if this is considered by the Executive to compromise the objectivity and fairness of any decisions, judgements and opinions made as part of the evaluation process. This is referred to under 2.3.8 of the Evaluation Manual (appendix VI). Thus, the Executive decides, after the declaration has been made known to the institution and the institution has agreed the evaluation team membership, whether any declaration does constitute such a compromise. In such cases, a replacement is appointed.

iii) Reference to conflicts of interest of members of the Council (section 8.6 of the Constitution) (appendix I) has now been revised and reads:

'A conflict of interest on the part of any member in any matter under discussion must be declared by the said member either before or during the meeting. In all cases, the member will be excluded from the meeting for the said matter.'

A perceived conflict of interest of any member in any matter under discussion can also be raised by any member of the Council either before or during the meeting. If this objection is supported by a simple majority vote, then the said member will be excluded from the meeting for the said matter.'

- **The composition and appointment criteria and procedures of the expert panel members should be clearly defined and reconsidered to guarantee full independence.**

Expert panel members must be impartial and not influenced by any previous associations with the institution, staff or students. To ensure this is the case, additional criteria have been entered in the Evaluation Team Manual (appendix VI) under section 2:

'2.9 No association with the institution either as a member of staff, either in a permanent, visiting or temporary capacity, or as an external examiner, either currently or for the previous 5 years.'

2.10. Not related to a current member of staff or a current student at the institution.'

- **The composition of the appeal panel should be clarified. In addition, according to ECCE rules, it seems that an appeal is not possible on the arguments of the decision itself, only on factual faults.**

The ECCE considered this point and it is correct that grounds for appeal on a decision on accreditation (and re-accreditation) are based on procedural issues only. The ECCE has aligned this to appeals on academic decisions that do not compromise the judgements, *per se*, of the examiners. In Part 4, Section 4 of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II), the appeals process is described. Members of the appeals panel must be impartial and in no way compromised either by virtue of professional or personal circumstances, or by virtue of association with the decision of the COA. Thus, any member of the Appeal Panel will:

- Not be a member of the ECCE Council.*
- Not be a member of staff (either permanent or visiting or temporary) or external examiner of the appellant institution, either currently or for the previous 5 years.*
- Not be related to a current member of staff, or a current student at the appellant institution.*
- Sign a 'No Conflict of Interest' statement and Confidentiality Agreement.*

This has been included, in part 4, section 4 (4.3) of the ECCE Accreditation Procedures and Standards (appendix II).

- **The resources of the ECCE could be improved as there seems to be only one permanent staff member.**

As discussed in section 5.0 of this self-evaluation report under ESG Standard 3.4 Resources, the ECCE is a relatively small organisation compared to other external quality assurance

agencies and to date one permanent Executive Secretary to administer the work has proven sufficient. As the number of institutions seeking accreditation (and re-accreditation) increases however, this resource capacity will be kept under review and expanded as appropriate. With more institutions, the income to ECCE will consequentially and proportionally increase, and finances will be available to meet the needs of the agency to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose, and financially secure.

- **There is no internal (cyclical) quality assurance process.**

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) is a standing committee of the ECCE. It is responsible for the quality assurance of the policies and procedures of the ECCE, and in particular the policies and procedures for the accreditation and re-accreditation of institutions. The COA Chair is a member of the Executive Committee and issues/concerns are raised at this level of operation. The ECCE, and in particular the Commission on Accreditation (COA), receives annual feedback from its accredited institutions through the annual reporting (AMoR) process. This feedback is passed to the QAC. Similarly, feedback is presented from the institutions at the annual meeting of the Council in the standing agenda item 'Reports from Institutions'. Representatives of all accredited institutions are required to attend the COA on an annual basis and give a verbal report in a face-to-face meeting. Moreover, at the time of accreditation, or re-accreditation, a questionnaire is sent to the Chair and members of the evaluation team, and to the institution, soliciting feedback concerning the evaluation process. This information is passed to the QAC for review, and if appropriate, discussion and action at the Executive level. Feedback questionnaires for the annual council meeting and training event are under consideration.

Currently, there is no external quality assurance of the ECCE. As a member of ENQA, ECCE would be subjected to a mandatory cyclical external review of its activities once every five years.



7 FINAL REFLECTIONS

7.1 The initial application to ENQA in October 2007 (appendix III), and the preparation for full membership, including the compilation of this self-evaluation, has proved an illuminating and informative experience. There is no doubt that undertaking this self-evaluation has highlighted areas for improvement, as well as informing future strategic objectives for the organisation. Undertaking this exercise on a cyclical basis in the future will assure that the ECCE not only maintains its own quality and continuously improves, but in so doing will assure stakeholders in chiropractic education and training in Europe that the ECCE is operating at a level that is in keeping with that of its peers. For these reasons, membership of ENQA is an important and essential step in the development of the ECCE. The following is a SWOT analysis for the agency:

7.2 Strengths: The strengths of the ECCE lie in its place within chiropractic education and training, not only in Europe but world-wide. Chiropractic is a well-organised profession at national and international levels, and ECCE plays a significant role in this. The ECCE, alongside other CCEs, is respected as a quality assurance agency that conducts itself in an autonomous and independent manner without political or statutory influence. Graduates from ECCE-accredited institutions are recognised as having undergone an education and training that is in compliance with robust and rigorous standards informed by current pedagogic practice in relevant disciplines. Chiropractors that have been educated at accredited institutions can seek employment in countries across the world, and are eligible to become members of professional associations within those countries.

7.3 Weaknesses: The weaknesses of the ECCE stem from the limited number of institutions educating and training chiropractors in Europe. The activity of the ECCE is naturally proportionate to this, and the ECCE has in the past been somewhat insular relying on expertise within chiropractic education instead of embracing an inclusive model that looks further afield. For much of the early period following the establishment of the ECCE, ECCE was considered an accrediting agency operating within the close confines of the chiropractic profession. However, with the current expansion in chiropractic education institutions in Europe, notably in the university sector, as well as the expected increase in the future, the opportunity is there for the role of the ECCE to expand;

already there have been concerted moves to include professionals with education experience outside of chiropractic. Moreover, the current application to ENQA illustrates the desire of ECCE to externalise its activities and while not mandatory, subject itself to rigorous evaluation by its peers in quality assurance in higher education across subject and discipline areas.

7.4 Opportunities: This opportunity for ECCE to expand and operate at a level in keeping with other quality assurance agencies in higher education in Europe should not be underestimated. Chiropractic, which focuses on the management of patients with musculoskeletal disorders, is increasingly accepted as part of mainstream healthcare, and in several European countries is a recognised and statutory regulated profession (e.g. UK, Norway and Denmark). With these developments in the profession, it is essential that ECCE is a recognised, respected, credible and robust quality assurance agency. The future is encouraging and exciting for the ECCE, and evaluation of its activities by the recognised leader in the field of quality assurance in higher education in Europe will undoubtedly facilitate the growth and enhancement of the ECCE.

7.5 Threats: Currently the ECCE is the only agency that has as its core purpose external review of chiropractic education and training across national boundaries in Europe. This role could perceivably be threatened by other agencies that establish themselves in a similar role. It is the contention of the ECCE that there should be only one agency that operates with this purpose in Europe and that chiropractic institutions striving to achieve recognition through compliance with more than one set of international standards (over and above national statutory requirements) would be confusing not to mention costly and disruptive. More than one set of international criteria could also be perceived as producing graduates of different standards. The ECCE maintains that there should be one set of standards (alongside national statutory requirements where applicable) that all chiropractic institutions in Europe must meet in providing education and training that produces chiropractors who are safe and competent to practise in today's healthcare environment. Once again, membership of ENQA would facilitate the ECCE in its position as the gold standard in external quality assurance of chiropractic education and training across national boundaries in Europe.

Figure 1 STRUCTURE and ORGANISATION of ECCE

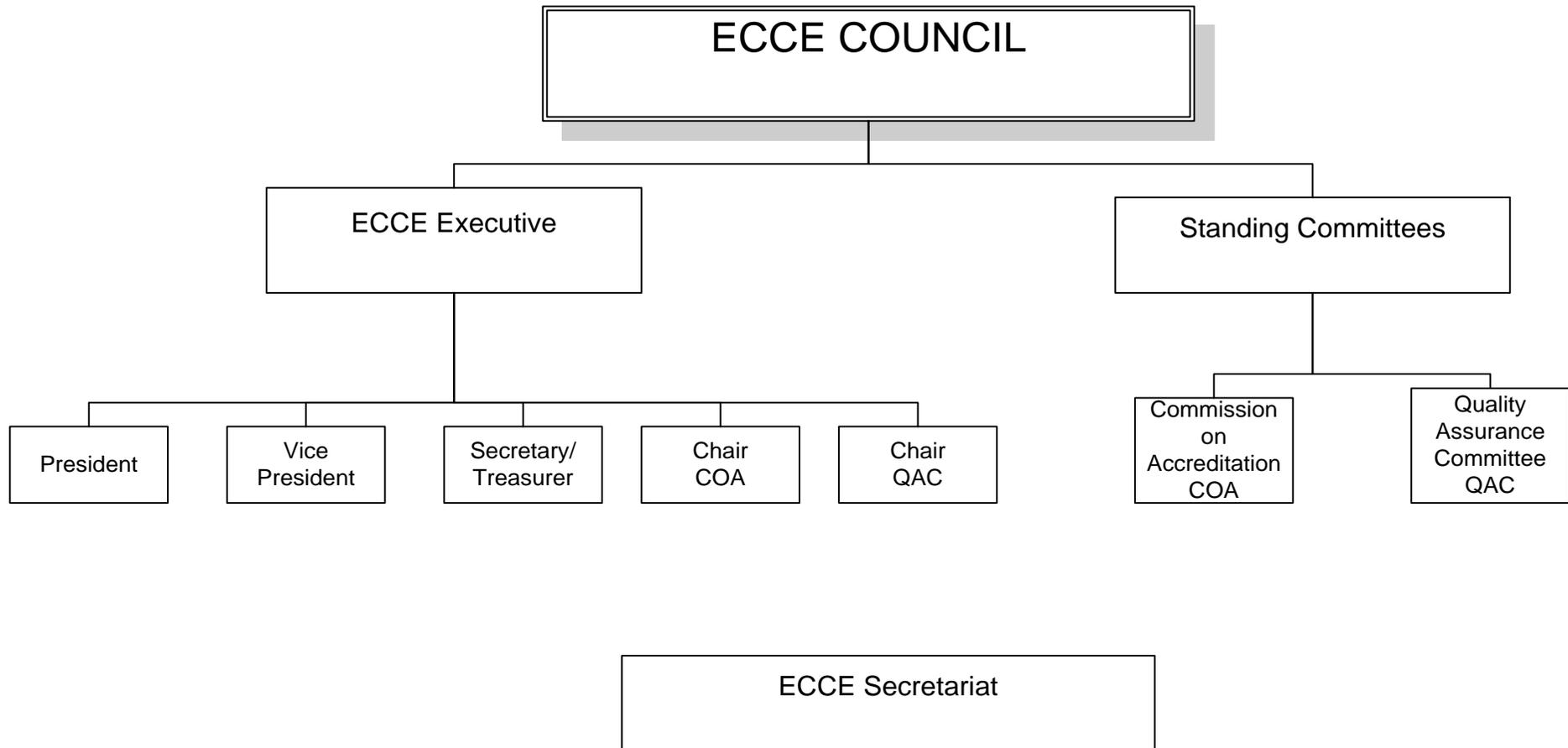


Figure 2 ACCREDITATION and RE-ACCREDITATION RPOCEDURES

