Guidelines to support TOE Re-Accreditation

1. Introduction

The BSE council has a commitment to maintain governance and ensure the highest standard of educational knowledge is available to all our members.

The following document informs members of the recent review of the reaccreditation process and advises its members of the new documentation/guidelines and requirements for Transthoracic and Transoesophageal reaccreditation.

The approach is to ensure that the reaccreditation for either TTE/TOE is as similar as possible to prevent duplication of a single process.

The noticeable changes within the modernised system are outlined below:

The split between practical scanning and BSE points required over the five year Reaccreditation period is described within the notes to support reaccreditation document although a simple understanding of the split is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BSE REACCREDITATION</th>
<th>SYSTEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+ Scans/Year</td>
<td>&gt;20 BSE Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50- 74 Scans/Year</td>
<td>&gt;30 BSE Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500+ Scans/Year</td>
<td>&gt;30 BSE Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 - 499 Scans/Year</td>
<td>&gt;40 BSE Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 249 Scans/Year</td>
<td>&gt;50 BSE points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We propose the following regulations for re-accreditation in Transoesophageal echocardiography

2. Principles/Eligibility for Re-accreditation

- The joint BSE ACTA Accreditation in Transoesophageal Echocardiography represents the attainment of a minimum standard assessed at a particular time. It cannot therefore be regarded on it’s own as a guarantee of continuing competence to practice.

- For that reason Practitioners who achieve accreditation in Transoesophageal Echocardiography should begin a process of continuing medical education that will lead towards revalidation of the accreditation.

- Revalidation of the TOE accreditation is required at 5 yearly intervals from the initial date of Accreditation.

- In order to revalidate the accreditation, practitioners should present evidence of continuing clinical activity and evidence of Continuing Professional Development relevant to echocardiography. This will usually be in the form of attendance at courses and conferences.

3. Expiry of existing Accreditation

Accreditation is valid for a period of five years from the date on the certificate or, if this has been lost, from the date of award of accreditation in the Society’s records. To simplify administration, the expiry date will be extended to the 1st January or 1st July following the date on the Certificate. We will endeavour to advise members that they should seek re-accreditation approximately 3 months before the expiry date of their current accreditation. However, the Society cannot be held liable for failure to provide this notification, for example if a member has moved and not advised us of their new address. The ultimate responsibility rests with the member to ensure that he/she applies for re-accreditation when this becomes due.
Extension may be granted in special cases, for example maternity leave or temporary assignment away from a job involving echocardiography (e.g. a research year during higher medical training).

If more than six months have elapsed from the due date for re-accreditation, and the member concerned either has not applied for re-accreditation or has not been granted an extension, and does not have an appeal against refusal of re-accreditation in process, then the existing accreditation will be removed and the member will have to undertake the full accreditation procedure again.

4. Current Membership of the Society

Any member applying for re-accreditation must have paid for their subscriptions for the 5 years up to the end of the current subscription year (which runs from April 1st - March 31st). Where this is not the case the application will only be accepted if all subscription arrears are first paid in full.

5. Requirements for re-accreditation

To be re-accredited, a member must fulfil the following requirements:

1.1. Be actively involved in clinical echocardiography

1.2. Show evidence of a continual echo (BSE Points)

1.3. Pay the required administration fee

These requirements are detailed in the following paragraphs

6. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Evidence must be provided of continuing professional development through attendance at appropriate scientific meetings and familiarity with current literature. The basic requirement for re-accreditation is to accumulate 20 BSE Points over the 5-year period. This total can be achieved through a combination of attending meetings and courses, and ‘distance learning’ (home study), subject to the following conditions:

1.1. At least 10 BSE Points must be obtained by attendance at specialised meetings devoted to echocardiography. These include, but are not limited to: EuroEcho; ACTA; EACTA Echo; the American Society of Echocardiography; the BSE Annual Meeting; and other national echocardiography society meetings.

1.2. No more than 8 BSE Points can be obtained through distance learning

7. Distance Learning

BSE Points can be obtained through distance learning by completing assignment sheets based on current echocardiography literature. A number of packages will be developed for this purpose, each on a particular theme, e.g. assessment of mitral regurgitation; diastolic function. Each package will be used for a limited period of time (typically 2-3 years), and the list of currently available titles will be published from time to time in the Newsletter.
8. Meetings & Courses

As a vital component within the BSE reaccreditation process, the allocation of points to educational courses has also been reviewed and updated. The classification of BSE points has also been reviewed and ratified by BSE council. It is well recognised within the BSE that education at large national and international meetings is not readily available to all its members and the value of local/regional meetings is not underestimated. The new guidance for BSE point allocation is outlined below and is now implemented for all educational applications.

**BSE POINT CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Meeting Type</th>
<th>Points per Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Specialist meetings primarily devoted to echocardiography</td>
<td>5 per hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. BSE, EAE, ASE, ACTA, EACTA Echo</td>
<td>Allocation 5 BSE points / Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>International meetings whose focus is on general cardiology which incorporates echocardiography (BCS, ECS, ACC)</td>
<td>Allocation 3 BSE points / Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Also included in class II, National / Regional educational courses with a focus solely on echocardiography, these are not designed to replace the annual meeting but further support the educational requirements of the whole society membership. Such examples as: Hammersmith Echocardiography Conference, 3D + Advanced 2D Transthoracic Echo course e.g. BCS, ESC, ACC, AHA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Local echo meetings with a minimum of 2 hours of educational content (at least 1 educational speaker must be an actively accredited BSE member)</td>
<td>Allocation 2 BSE points / meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Such examples as: Local echo meeting supported by local cardiac network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note - Case reviews are awarded no points in any category. Departmental review meetings do not qualify for BSE points.*

**Individual Reaccreditation**

For the purpose of individual reaccreditation over a five year period for either TTE/TOE any one individual must evidence a minimum of 20 BSE points collated from **CLASS I** meetings, and a maximum of 10 BSE points from regional education **CLASS III**

Other potential areas for reaccreditation points which can be utilised by any individual are also considered:

- **Distant Learning Modules:** Maximum of 24 points over 5 year period
- **Log Book marking study days:** Maximum of 2 points over 5 year period
• For other courses/meetings, a completed BSE points request form and a copy of the programme must be submitted to be assessed for BSE Points purposes.

• Whilst we wish to encourage departments to hold internal case review meetings and in-service training programmes for staff, the difficulty of monitoring these and determining their educational benefit for those already holding BSE accreditation means that these will NOT be eligible for BSE Points.

![NOTE: BSE Points awarded by the BSE will NOT necessarily be the same as CPD credits offered by courses and meetings. This is because BSE recognises only the echocardiography-related content, and also takes into account the academic level.]

8.1. Proof of attendance at meetings and courses will be required. In future this should be in the form of an attendance certificate (BSE will issue these for its own meetings and for the British Cardiac Society meetings).


The basic requirement of 75 clinical studies each year is by no means excessive for most BSE member. However, we recognise that some, particularly those holding senior positions within the medical or technical services, may not be in a position to perform this number of routine studies.

BSE Points are a vital component of the scheme, and we believe that, once employers realise that failure to facilitate staff attendance at postgraduate meetings will result in them losing accreditation, and thus the medico-legal support for the echocardiography service, this requirement may actually be beneficial. However, we accept that this will involve a major culture change in some departments, and that in the short term some members may have difficulty in obtaining study leave and funding to attend meetings.

Therefore, in order to allow those members who find it difficult to fulfil the requirements of Paras 6 and 7, we will accept the following alternatives to the basic requirement of 75 clinical studies per year, plus a total of 20 BSE Points over the 5-year qualifying period.

Either:

At least 75 clinical studies, plus at least 20 BSE Points, of which at least 10 must be obtained from specialised echo meetings and courses, and no more than 8 of which can be obtained through Distance Learning

Or:

At least 50 clinical studies each year plus at least 30 BSE Points, of which at least 15 must be obtained from specialised echo meetings and courses, and no more than 12 can be obtained through Distance Learning.

Each of these represents a complete ‘package’ and it will not be possible to extrapolate between them.

10. Fees

The BSE does not wish to make any profit from administering the re-accreditation scheme, but has to cover its costs, including administration time, postage, production of certificates, creating and marking distance learning modules. The initial charges will be as follows:

1.1 To process a re-accreditation application and issue a new Proficiency Certificate: £40.00
1.2 To process a Distance Learning module: £15.00
1.3 To process an appeal against refusal of re-accreditation (see below) £100.00

These fees will be reviewed annually in the light of experience as the scheme progresses.

If it can be shown beyond reasonable doubt that in pursuit of obtaining re-accreditation a Member has knowingly made a false claim to satisfy any of the requirements, then he/she will be expelled from the Society and forfeit all existing accreditation. This may have further serious consequences should the person’s post be dependent upon holding BSE accreditation; and medico-legal implications for any activities related to echocardiography carried out on the basis of a false claim to satisfy the Society’s criteria for accreditation.
11. Notification of results of a re-accreditation application

In cases where an application has been submitted which is incorrectly completed, or lacks supporting documentation, the administration office will try to contact the member and advise him/her of the deficiency in time to rectify it before the six-month deadline.

Applications should normally be processed within 6 weeks. Successful applicants will receive a new Accreditation Certificate. In case of refusal, or failure to apply before the deadline, a letter formally withdrawing existing accreditation, and stating the reason(s), will be sent, and the member advised of his/her right to appeal the decision.

12. Appeals against refusal of Re-accreditation

A member who feels that a decision denying re-accreditation, or an extension of existing accreditation, is unjust, will have the right to appeal the decision. All appeals must be made in writing to the Chairman of the Education & Training Committee. They must be filed within 60 days of the decision being appealed, and be accompanied by any relevant supporting documents (e.g. programmes of courses attended that are being claimed for BSE POINTS). An appeal must be accompanied by an administration fee of £100. Appeals will be acknowledged in writing, and the documents, with the member’s identification removed, will be presented to the next meeting of the full BSE Council. Depending on the date of submission, this may involve a delay of up to 4 months before the appeal is considered. The accreditation status of a member who has a pending appeal will be ‘frozen’. The outcome of any appeal will be sent to the member in writing.

If an appeal is refused, and the member still feels that the rejection is unfair, a final right of a personal hearing before the BSE Council may be allowed, but only at the discretion of the President, and normally only where a point of principle may be involved.