

EMCC

European Individual Accreditation review 2011

1. Purpose of this paper

This paper is written to provide a background to the 2011 review of EIA, and to outline the areas where comments are sought

2. Context

The EMCC Standards Committee is responsible for the development of EMCC awards; it has set up a number of sub-committees, of which the EIA sub-committee is one. A review of EIA and the development of the next version is a major task of this sub-group, and one it intends to complete in 2011.

EMCC exists in order to define and develop professional standards in coach/mentoring, and is in the process of establishing awards that will facilitate this. First in 2004 was the European Quality Award, which set standards for coaching programmes. This was followed by EIA, whose pilots were rolled out in 2008, and is now rolling out across Europe. The third award will address supervision standards, and this is under development.

Much of the development took place within the UK. This enabled progress to be made quickly, but it is possible that the final product was insufficiently influenced by cultures and markets within all the countries of Europe. And there are some within the UK who believe that the UK did not always take care to bring with it colleagues on the mainland of Europe. So this review provides an opportunity to work in a spirit of co-operation and collaboration to agree a scheme going forward that will work for the whole of Europe.

3. Progress to date

A great deal of hard work and skill has gone into the development of EIA. The first pilots were very difficult and the material has been simplified and refined since then. So a lot is invested in the current model. It has the merit of being a European-wide award of coach/mentor accreditation demonstrating:

1. Competence/qualification
2. Experience
3. Ongoing practice
4. Professional development

It has a great deal to commend it, notably:

1. Levels – it allows applicants to choose to be assessed against standards at any one of 4 different levels
2. Framework – the assessment is based on a competence framework, that was developed using research findings about what is effective in coach/mentoring
3. Assessment – it is based on a rigorous assessment, using well-trained and paid professional assessors
4. Reflective practice – there is an emphasis on quality in general, including a focus on reflective practice
5. Inclusivity – the focus is on whether the candidate meets the standard, regardless of how he/she does it, and in what context. So, for example, whilst most applicants are business coaches, it is possible to be successful as a life coach or, indeed, any other sort of coach, if one provides evidence against the criteria

However, it has its critics. They argue that in its current form, the applicant needs to be willing to expend significant time and money. How far can and should the EMCC find a way to reduce the time spent by the applicant gathering evidence and completing the form? What is the impact on the rigour of the assessment? Does EMCC need to assess less, or less rigorously in order to meet the requirements of the market? And what about the cost? One of the drivers of cost is the time assessors spend assessing long and complex applications. Can the assessment load be reduced? If so, is there an impact on rigour? If there is, is that acceptable?

A good starting point is the standards themselves. These have been agreed across Europe. The EMCC consists of country associations and colleagues who want to operate at that level of quality. We take it seriously. The standards are thorough for good reason. This is what the EMCC stands for. However, in the same way as programmes applying for the EQA can evidence the competence of their candidates against the standards using different assessment methods, perhaps there is more scope within the EIA for different countries to assess differently, **as long as they can show that their method really does assess rigorously against the standard.** The EU works in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity: This is defined as an organizing principle that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralized competent authority. We propose that the standards themselves should remain uniform across Europe, as quality is the priority: but there should be a degree of subsidiarity in terms of **HOW** they are assessed, as long as the assessment achieves the level of quality required. Of course, this may then pose the question of how EMCC ensures that different processes achieve the required rigour.

4. The coach/mentoring accreditation market

EMCC is not the only body accrediting coach/mentors. There are a number of bodies who appear sometimes to collaborate and sometimes to compete. When this is discussed, comparisons are often made with the accreditation offered by other organisations, and it is clear that coaches have real choice in a free market. However, certainly in the UK, there are discussions between coaching bodies in the Coaching Bodies Round Table (CBRT). Mike Hurley represents EMCC on this body and he is clear that there is a lot of enthusiasm to gather real information and research the differences between coaching accreditations, and that funding is currently being sought for this purpose. The CBRT consists of representatives of:

- APECS – the Association for Professional Executive Coaches and Supervisors
- The Association for Coaching UK
- The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
- The British Psychological Society – Special Interest Group
- CIPD
- European Mentoring and Coaching Council UK
- International Coach Federation
- The Society of Coaching Psychology

So, whilst we are not aware of any comprehensive comparative studies of EMCC and the accreditation processes of other bodies, it is likely that in the medium term future, there will be, and perhaps greater collaboration and harmonisation between coaching bodies.

As it stands at present, there is a general impression that EMCC is costlier, tougher, more rigorous, more time consuming, more focused on quality, less focused on numbers (of coaching hours, for example)

But where does that comparison lead us? On the one hand, we may want to reduce the demands of EMCC EIA in order to make it more competitive. However, EMCC Council has clearly stated that it will resist watering down the qualitative strength of the award. It would be great to reconcile these aspirations. But can we? And if not, where do we go next?

5. Review process

There are in effect two reviews of EIA.

1. Thierry Gaches leads a special task force reviewing the current scheme. It is intended to ascertain whether it is possible to make adjustments to the current EIA evaluation process in order to reduce the “total investment” by the Coach to get his (her) accreditation, currently recognized as about 12 days: 2 days in cash, (the EIA price) and 10 days in preparation time and thus facilitate the launch in France, Spain and other countries.
2. the review by the EIA sub-group of the Standards Committee is a fundamental review of the whole EIA process

The two reviews are being merged, as it makes little sense to consult membership twice on similar issues..

Time spent reviewing is precious, and the engagement with stakeholders and EMCC membership that will go into it needs to be time well spent. We therefore need to do it thoroughly. As well as outlining the key issues as we see them, this paper invites feedback in a form that will enable us to make best use of it to inform the development of an improved version of EIA.

6. Issues explored

The subgroup and the special task force comprise representatives of a number of EMCC associations, and have a strong assessor membership. They have explored a number of issues such as:

- In the UK, it is acceptable to have an accreditation process without an interview. But this does not feel comfortable in some European cultures. Also an interview has the potential to confirm that the candidate's claims and the impression given by the written documentation matches up to reality. There are logistical issues to consider especially in parts of Europe where a face-to-face meeting would be hard for geographical reasons, but telephone / Skype may be an alternative. If an interview were part of the process, would we require it for every applicant? Would it be optional? How far could we reduce the written work required by the candidate? What extra development would assessors need? In Holland the interview is used where there is doubt, as it is in the UK. In the UK, assessors will often ask for further information from the candidate by email, and sometimes a telephone conversation helps the candidate understand what is required and convey it – so the possibility of a conversation between assessor and candidate to elicit further information and evidence is part of the process, probably everywhere in Europe. Anne Brockbank comments that the status of interviews as a selection instrument is not high and is costly in assessor time (more than assessment of recordings say)
- Could evidence be provided by way of a recording of a live coaching session. There might also be a requirement that the candidate document where evidence against indicators can be found. Alternatively or additionally, the candidate might be required to reflect on the session
- One of the major areas of discussion was the competences. For a candidate who has not attended a programme with EQA, the capability indicators are considerable. Is there any way to reduce the load?
 - One idea is to require evidence at competence level only, not going down to capability indicator. It is argued that the capability indicators are helpful for the purpose of clarifying said competences in the competency framework but for the purpose of EIA accreditation, candidates may submit at competences rather than capacity indicators detailed level. Would this provide sufficient evidence?
 - Another is to require evidence for the competences of the level applied for: possibly the one immediately below as well. The objection to this will be the cumulative nature of the competence indicators. For example, some of the ones at foundation level are not repeated, so not requiring evidence at foundation level for candidates applying at

higher level might lead us to overlook some fundamental capabilities. Anne Brockbank, who leads the EMCC Standards subgroup on competences, comments that The EIA process is thorough and reflects the hard work of its designers- and argues that Cis should stay but may be streamlined by the CFW subgroup

- There are a number of places where the candidate is required to reflect. Can these be reduced? Obviously the argument will be that reflection is the aspect of EMCC that we particularly promote and value. Could we manage to assess with less? And if we did not streamline the reflective sections for everyone, might we do it for applicants at the lower level or levels?
- Ethical practice is encompassed in the competences. Can we manage without an additional section?

7. Views sought

We would like the views of members and stakeholders on the EIA process in general, and on the components of it in particular. We would invite you also to comment on some of the specific issues raised by the task force. Feel free to comment only on parts of it. If you can back up your comments with personal experience or research, then so much the better. Please use the form below, as this will enable us better to make sense of the responses we receive

We look forward to hearing from you. Please follow the link

<http://4541841.poll daddy.com/s/emcc-eia-review-2011>

The questionnaire will remain open until the 30th July 2011

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