



Protocol for organization of the EFCS Annual Tutorial

The European Federation of Cytology Societies (EFCS) organizes Annual Tutorials (AT) which represent a fundamental part of EFCS educational activities. It is organized by EFCS and a local host representing EFCS national member society ("society" in further text) in good standing. The candidacy for hosting the AT must be agreed on the society board. The candidate society shall send an application letter to the EFCS, attesting its will and possibility to host the tutorial. The application shall be accepted by the EFCS Board of Directors and approved at the EFCS Annual General Meeting. The budget of the tutorial shall be agreed on in advance as a mutual agreement between the EFCS and the host society.

The society chosen to host the tutorial and the EFCS shall sign together a document certifying the compliance with agreements. The agreement should be signed at least one year before the tutorial, to facilitate the search for sponsors for the social activities.

The EFCS Annual Tutorial Committee

The EFCS Annual Tutorial Committee comprises of the chair, co-chair, and the chair of local organizing committee of host society for the current tutorial. The chair of the local organizing committee shall be specified in the application letter of the host society, and that person will be responsible for all the tasks of the local organizer.

Technical organization of the EFCS Annual Tutorial is the responsibility of the EFCS official associate management company.

EFCS Tutorial chair and co-chair are the members of the EFCS Council Board. They are appointed by the EFCS Board of Directors for a period of three years, renewable in their function twice for a further three years by agreement of the EFCS Board of Directors.

Conditions for the local host

Venues for tutorials shall be chosen between attractive locations across Europe and some non-European countries. Dates shall be chosen out of season to reduce the costs and should not overlap with other international meetings of interest for pathologists and cytologists. The local host must be able to provide:

1. Hospital or university venue to host the course free of charge, if possible.
2. 50 microscopes, locally available or provided by sponsors.
3. Assurance of the availability of the low-cost accommodation at short distance to the tutorial venue.



Format of EFCS Annual Tutorials

Annual Tutorials are conceived for a standard of 50 participants coming from the host country and from abroad in similar proportions. The attendants should include cytopathologists, residents, and cytotechnologists in balanced numbers.

The tutorial is made up of lectures and microscope workshops, which shall alternate during the days. Courses shall be residential for a period of 4.5 working days; currently they shall include about 1 working day dedicated to gynaecological cytology and 3.5 working days dedicated to non-gynaecological cytology.

The lecturers/tutors should not be more than 10. Local lecturers should be three or four local experts, selected by the local organizing committee and approved by the tutorial committee. Visiting lecturers should be resident in Europe and should be members of the EFCS; they are selected by the tutorial committee. It is desirable for the lecturers to be changed every year. However, the same lecturer could be chosen for different topics. Visiting tutors who can provide more than one lecture/workshop topic should be favored.

The topics to be covered should include the main field of diagnostic and screening cytology such as:

1. Technical methods and skills including ROSE and Digital Cytology
2. Molecular Cytology
3. Cervical squamous and glandular lesions, cervical cytology in HPV-positive women
4. Respiratory tract cytology
5. Serous fluids (pleura and ascites)
6. Breast cytology
7. Thyroid cytology
8. Salivary gland cytology
9. Urinary cytology

Other topics may be included as agreed between the local organizing and tutorial committee depending on local interest and expertise. Although the lectures should mainly focus on morphology, the use of already consolidated ancillary techniques should also be briefly covered.

Workshops are expected to last approximately 2'30'' hours for each topic including a lecture of not more than 30'' and 30'' of interactive slide seminar.

Pre-tutorial and post-tutorial tests will be included and set by the EFCS tutorial committee; this may be slide-based or digitalized.

Virtual slides should be used for the interactive slide seminars. Virtual slides should be uploaded by the tutors on the EFCS platform (Eurocytology). When virtual slides are used, links to the slides shall be available in advance for the participants.



Local organization

The local and technical organizers should take care of the organization of venue, microscopes, refreshments, and social events for approximately 50 participants and 10 Tutors.

In particular:

1. Arrange an appropriate venue (preferably a hospital or university structure) possibly free of charge, with facilities for computer-based presentations, good internet connection and good quality microscopes, which should be available or obtained preferably for free by a sponsor.
2. Provide name badges for participants and lecturer/tutors, simple wallets, or folders with information about local facilities in the town.
3. Prepare and print certificates of participation (with logos of the EFCS and the respective National Cytology Society) and certificates of the European Accreditation, which will be given to each participant at the end of the tutorial.
4. Select a hotel or other venue for overnight accommodation, which should be cheap and easy to reach from the tutorial venue and agree on a price for the booking of rooms by the participants and tutors.
5. Arrange lunches and refreshments (coffee breaks and water during the meeting), which should be included in the overall package, as well as the welcome cocktail on the first evening.

It would be desirable for the local organizer to find one or more sponsors to offer a dinner and/or other evening entertainment to all the participants and tutors in the middle of the tutorial. Sponsorship should be declared in the tutorial budget before the delegate fee is agreed.

The hall hosting the tutorial and the microscopes shall be left available for the QUATE exam, which is supposed to follow the course on the last day (*see the QUATE session, below*).

The details concerning the local organization must be discussed in advance with the Tutorial Chair and co-Chair.

Advertising

Information on the tutorial is essential and shall be given through the EFCS website, EFCS Newsletter, journals, and other websites, during preceding meetings and webinars, as well as on social networks. It could be asked also of every representative of affiliated national society to spread the information in their countries. All EFCS national representatives should be timely informed to be able to help with advertising, using the society website, members' contacts, and national meetings.

Registration

Registration is done online through the EFCS website www.efcs.eu. Delegates wishing to attend only the non-gynaecology, or the gynecology part of the tutorial should only be accepted if requests for the alternative component are available. In general, in this case the fee will be respectively 70% and 30% of the fee for the complete tutorial.



The technical organizer will take care of registrations and will issue the receipt after having the registration confirmed by the tutorial chair. Online registration will be available on the dedicated site on EFCS web approximately six months prior to the tutorial. The payment can be made by bank transfer or credit card.

During the on-line registration process, it must be specified that if the payment is made by a person different from the participant, their name should be clearly specified, as should be specified the sponsor whose name will be written on the receipt.

The distribution of participants from different countries should include as many European countries as possible. However, participants of the host country may have priority. Non-European participants can be included as well.

In the case of more than 50 applicants, the remaining will be placed on a waiting list. They could be recalled if any of the applicants give up. Otherwise, they would be informed in advance for participating in the next tutorial. The registrations must be closed two weeks before the beginning of the tutorial or when the threshold of 50 registrations has been reached, whatever comes first.

Tutorial budget

Based on the planned expenses, the local organizing committee will discuss and agree the budget with the EFCS tutorial chair, co-chair, EFCS treasurer and technical organizer. The general rule in the organization should be to keep low costs, to make the registration fee more suitable for the participants.

The final aim is the self-financing of the tutorial, thanks to the registration fees of a standard of 45 participants.

Expenses to be considered in the total budget include:

1. Graphic design, printed materials, technical support, and advertising
2. Accreditation of the event
3. Travel and accommodation expenses of the tutors
4. Lunch (four days) and refreshments (five mornings and four afternoons) for participants and tutors
5. One welcome cocktail for participants and tutors
6. Facility rent if unavoidable.

If there will be an enrolment of fewer than 45 participants, or in any situation in which the financial gain from the registrations would not be able to cover all the expenses, the missing amount will be provided for a half by the EFCS and for a half by the host cytology society. Similarly, if the finances are in surplus at the end, the amount will be divided equally between the EFCS and the host cytology society.



Timing for the organization

The organization process starts approximately twelve months before the tutorial.

The scientific programme with names of the tutors, venue details and registration fee must be ready at least six months before the start of the tutorial-

European accreditation

The EFCS tutorials usually receive accreditation by the UEMS. The Tutorial technical organizer will carry out the application for accreditation through the website www.eaccme.eu. This must be done at least six months before the start of the tutorial. After approval by the UEMS, the EFCS treasurer shall pay the amount required to complete the accreditation. The number of credit points shall be declared on the website after obtaining the accreditation.

Tutors

Tutors must ensure appropriate teaching material for 50 participants (PowerPoint presentation for a 30-minute lecture, at least 100 glass slides per workshop) as well as at least 5-10 virtual slides for each topic. Virtual slides will be available on-line for the participants at least two weeks before the tutorial's start and will be shown by the tutors during the discussion.

Tutors will be asked to allow their PowerPoint presentations to be saved (as PDF files) and put on the website of EFCS after the tutorial, accessible only by delegates.

Speakers may be asked to allow recording of their lecture and discussion.

Together with the virtual slides, this material may be made available to the participants and used later for EFCS webinars.

Visiting tutors/lecturers are entitled to hotel accommodation for the night before and the night after their talk and are expected to provide themselves for their travel arrangements, which cost will be refunded by the EFCS treasurer.

Tutorial evaluation and certificates

At the end of the tutorial, participants will receive evaluation forms to give their opinion on the courses. Each lecture and workshop shall be evaluated as excellent, average, weak or inadequate based on quality of presentation, academic content, and practical value. Tutors will be informed about their specific evaluation. Tutors/Lecturers with particularly good evaluations should be favored for later tutorials.

After collecting the feedback, the tutorial committee shall deliver certificates of attendance and accreditation to each delegate.



The Tutorial committee will write a detailed tutorial report including photo-documentation, to the EFCS Board of directors after the end of the course, which contents can be used in the EFCS web, newsletter and other EFCS approved information media.

Virtual tutorial

Virtual tutorials may substitute on-site tutorials when these are impossible to organize. Virtual tutorials can be organized independently of the on-site annual tutorial in shortened format as “mini tutorials”. Mini tutorials on one or two topics are based on lectures and virtual slides, that may be hosted on the Eurocytology platform. Virtual slides are shared in advance with the participants, who may interact with the tutor via chat.

QUATE exam

The QUATE exam may be held in the same room, after the tutorial, so that everyone can have the possibility to participate without missing any course. In this way, the exam will be the conclusion of the training taken by the applicants through the tutorial and previous educational events. The microscopes used by the attendants of the tutorial shall be left available for those taking part in the QUATE exam.

The examiners must be different people from those who have the respective lectures in the tutorial.

QUATE exam is organized by the EFCS appointed QUATE co-chairs. Information and instructions for the QUATE exam are available on the EFCS website. Registration for the QUATE exam is independent from the registration for the tutorial. Budget of the QUATE exam is separate to the tutorial budget and will be covered by exam fees from participants. The decision whether the QUATE will be held or not after the tutorial should be taken before signing the agreement between the host society and the EFCS.

Application letter for hosting the EFCS Annual Tutorial

The candidate society for the tutorial host should send an application letter to the EFCS Board of directors and EFCS tutorial chair in which shall specify the following points:

1. Proposal for the chair and members of the local organizing committee.
2. Proposal regarding the venue for the course.
3. Availability of adequate number and quality microscopes.
4. Possibility to attract sponsors, especially for social events.
5. Availability of low-cost accommodation near the venue.

This protocol was approved by the EFCS Board of directors on 11th May 2023.