



European Association of
Cardiothoracic Anaesthesiology
and Intensive Care

EACTAIC Regulations for Interrupted Fellowship Training during the Pandemic

The members of the Board of Directors and Education Committee of the European Association of Cardiothoracic Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care (EACTAIC) approved the following suggested solutions for mitigation of the interruption in fellowship training by the Task Force published in the Journal of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesia. [1]

- (1) The EACTAIC host centres should ensure ongoing communication with and provide their fellows with accurate local measures to contain COVID-19 infection and protect employees.
- (2) Fellows should be encouraged to participate in online learning activities (e.g., webcasts, webinars, and forums) to improve their cardiothoracic and vascular medicine knowledge and related topics.
- (3) An individual agreement between the host centres and fellows should govern the time frame for medical care of COVID-19 patients and associated ICU/IMC shifts.
- (4) The host centres that cannot afford to pay a monthly salary should offer some privileges/benefits to fellows in charge of caring for COVID-19 patients, such as days off, free meals during shifts, medical benefits if they do not have health insurance, or, if possible, free access to (national and international) training courses (webinars).
- (5) EACTAIC might waive defined lengths of training periods and rotations, or the number of cases required for training periods to move towards a competency-based rather than time-based curriculum.
- (6) The host centres should provide psychological and mental support as necessary.
- (7) EACTAIC will waive the requirement to take the EACVI/EACTAIC certification exam for transesophageal echocardiography in 2020/2021, with the exam will be made up and completed at the earliest possible time date.
- (8) Time spent in the ICU during the COVID-19 outbreak should be considered fulfilling the ICU rotation requirements during the mandatory education and training period.
- (9) Extension of the training periods might be required to allow the fellow to fulfil the required number of cases and competency levels.
- (10) Encourage mutual exchange among the mentors for education and lectures.
- (11) International trainees should be allowed an extended period of time to organize logistics to participate in the fellowship program, which international travel restrictions may hamper.



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- (12) The EACTAIC host centres for the EACTAIC fellowship program should pay for the fellows caring for COVID-19 patients.
- (13) Offer alternatives for fellows to protect their training time, such as temporary work at other hospitals.
- (14) Working in COVID-19 ICU can be considered as only partial fulfilment for the ICU training rotation.

These regulations are effective on **October 15, 2021**, and applied to the fellows during the pandemic and any unforeseen circumstances.

Prepared by the Task Force on behalf of the members of the Education Committee and Board of Directors:

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Reference

1. Mohamed R El Tahan , Kirstin Wilkinson, Jonathan Huber, Jan-Uwe Schreiber , Anna-Flo Forner, Paul Diprose , Fabio Guarracino, Gabor Erdoes. Challenges in the Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesia Fellowship Program Since the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic: An Electronic Survey on Potential Solutions. J Cardiothorac Vasc Anesth. 2021 Aug 10;S1053-0770(21)00680-7. doi: 10.1053/j.jvca.2021.08.008. Online ahead of print. [[click here](#)]