

EACA Accreditation in Commercial Communications Education

Background

EACA is an organisation which brings together the advertising, media and brand activation agencies across Europe, promoting responsible advertising and high professional standards. EACA has set up the **EACA Accreditation in Commercial Communications Education** with the aim of endorsing specialist Bachelor and Master programmes that prepare students for a career in commercial communications.

Who can apply

The accreditation is restricted to **members of the European Institute for Commercial Communications Education (edcom)**. Each member has the right to apply for the accreditation of one or more **courses in the field of commercial communications**.

Certification Options

Depending on what their curriculum covers, applicants can be accredited either for the complete framework curriculum in Commercial Communications or for a specific sub-course or discipline, such as:

1. **Online and offline media / social media;**
2. **Creative (and digital) design;**
3. **Account strategy and planning.**

Certification Criteria

Applicant schools are expected to allocate at **least 50% of the credit points to subjects which have a direct connection with the main specialisation**. Furthermore, at least **10% of the course should be related to the other two specialisations**. Finally, schools are expected to offer a **broad range of other relevant subjects** for the field of commercial communications.

Each applicant course will be assessed through a personal visit to verify:

- ✓ **Educational Credibility:** written evidence should be supplied confirming that both the educational organisation and its qualification are well regarded by the Industry and the National Educational Authority, while conforming to standards laid down by EACA. Where the establishment is a profit-making organisation, the panel should conclude that “educational standards” are given priority over commercial considerations.
- ✓ **Course Credits:** a minimum number of credit points is expected. Specific requirements are outlined in the application form.
- ✓ **Course Content:** the content should cover the entire breadth of Commercial Communications activity, as indicated in the application form.
- ✓ **Reference Material:** reading lists should be supplied by the school and due focus should be put on the availability of research work, periodicals, databases and library facilities.
- ✓ **Lecturers:** whilst it is the qualification that is being validated, the quality of lecturers and teaching is taken into consideration. It is expected that a lecturer should be both qualified and professionally expert in their particular specialisation.
- ✓ **Examination:** the course or courses must be completed by an exam, orally or in writing, that clearly reflects the course programme.

The EACA Accreditation Board

The prestige and authority of the EACA Accreditation depends entirely on the reputation and professional standing of the institutes offering educational programmes that have been granted the Accreditation. To ensure that accredited courses adhere to agreed industry standards, a set of “**Guidelines**” establishes the ground for a rigorous assessment by the **EACA Accreditation Board**.

The Board:

- ✓ brings together **leading international professionals and educators**.
- ✓ guarantees that all the accredited courses meet the high EACA standards, wherever they may be and however diverse they might be.

Accreditation Process

It is the course and not the school which is accredited. The application for programme or course accreditation follows a standard format and is based on a Self-Assessment report and a visit by an evaluation expert.

The EACA Accreditation process is based on the fundamental principle that courses should offer students a balanced mix of theoretical and practical subjects in commercial communications. The course accreditation will be valid for a period of 3 years, followed by a re-validation application that should detail any staff, structural or content changes to the programme or the course.

1. edcom schools wishing to accredit a programme are invited to submit an **Application Form** and transfer the administration fee (€500).
2. Each course is individually scored through a rigorous assessment by the **EACA Accreditation Board**, looking to ensure an internationally recognised quality of teaching required by the international communications industry. Comprehensive guidelines are available for comparison to guarantee conformity and also a detailed list of academic criteria which have to be met.
3. Applicant schools will receive an **assessment report** with the EACA Accreditation Board recommendations. Upon positive response, applicant schools are requested to cover the accreditation fee (€1,500).
4. Approved programmes will receive an on-site visit; following the visit, an official notification will be sent indicating whether the content of the course/qualification meets the requirements of the EACA Accreditation. If the requirements are not fully met, a conditional acceptance may be granted, whereby an Institute may be required to modify some of its practices to come into line with the standards laid down by EACA. It is possible, but unlikely, that an acceptance visit could result in a complete rejection.
5. After the visit and once the school receives a positive report, the accreditation process will be complete. Schools are then welcome to cover the Annual Accreditation fee which ensures 30 digital certificates (€1,000); the fee will be invoiced every year for the next three years following the approval.
6. Every third year, schools are invited to apply for an **Accreditation Renewal** (€1,500).

Course certification costs

Application Processing Fee	€ 500.00
Accreditation Fee	€ 1,500.00
Annual Accreditation Fee incl. 30 certificates Additional certificates: 2€ per certificate	€ 1,000.00
Accreditation Renewal	€ 1,500.00

Benefits

- ✓ **Industry recognition** for students and, thus, an introduction to the international communications job market.
- ✓ Evidence of **highest teaching standards** and comprehensive preparation of students for the challenging and ever-evolving work environment.
- ✓ **Good reputation** of accredited edcom institutions amongst practitioners which will translate in higher demand for their programmes.
- ✓ **Annual sessions** around edcom meetings to share experiences and exchange feedback on how to improve curricula.
- ✓ **Publication** of accredited schools on the EACA Inspire! website.
- ✓ **Continuous development for academics** from accredited institutions (reduced price for a place in the EACA International Summer School for Academics).

Please note that the EACA Accreditation in Commercial Communications Education will be awarded to students who have passed their final examinations and have earned a diploma or certificate from a nationally accredited edcom member school. The accreditation will, therefore, complement and not replace their school qualification.

In a nutshell

The EACA Accreditation in Commercial Communications Education offers benefits for edcom students, academics and schools, who will jointly form the nucleus of experienced forward-looking specialists, helping to advance the standards of commercial communications and marketing proficiency for the ultimate benefit of consumers.

edcom member institutions which have been granted the EACA Accreditation must sustain a high level of education and comply with industry-agreed standards of teaching. The EACA Accreditation will, therefore, represent a quality guarantee for young starters in the field and a bridge between academia and industry.