

## To EV or not to EV

An interesting question concerning the merits or otherwise of external validation processes has been raised and deserves some analysis.

External validation (EV) is a part of the audit process which all organisations of any size - from education to health to finance - undergo as a matter of course. It is a process by which impartial outside agencies analyse and comment upon the completeness and accuracy of that which is being validated against set criteria, be it financial data, research protocols or, as in the case of ACHO, compliance with the standards set by the core curriculum. It takes into consideration whether core curriculum standards are being adequately taught, that there is no evidence of bias, unfairness or significant deviation from the core, and so on. EV provides affirmation that the internal assessment process of ACHO is functioning well and helps to increase public confidence in the validity and integrity of both individual schools and ACHO as a whole.

While it is sometimes argued that internal verification should be considered perfectly adequate for crystal therapies, it is viewed as no longer sufficient by an increasing number of insurers (and indeed students and practitioners) who now require externally validated evidence that any training given meets standards which will not, at the very least, increase liability. ACHO colleges would thus be doing their students a considerable disservice if they did not offer them the opportunity to gain the required validation if they so wish. That it is an additional cost should be made clear to students from the outset. It also leaves them to decide whether they want to pay for validation or not: the choice has to be made not only on the grounds of cost but also against the background of increasing insurance requirements in an increasingly litigious world. Unfortunately ACHO has no control over the costs of validation, which are set using criteria encompassing a variety measures and often across a broad range of subjects.

EV is here to stay and we must make sure we are willing and able to meet its demands.