EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

Standard operating procedure

Title: Handling of ENCePP study seal applications		
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1. Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to provide a harmonised approach for members of the ENCePP Secretariat to handle applications received from investigators requesting the ENCePP Study Seal. It is designed to ensure that such applications are handled in an efficient and consistent manner.

The SOP relates only to medicines intended for human use.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to the ENCePP Secretariat in the Pharmacovigilance and Risk Management Sector of the Patient Health Protection Unit of the EMA. The scope relates to the responsibilities of the Secretariat with regard to the practical handling of the applications received and does not cover technical aspects related to the ENCePP database of studies *per se*.

3. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Head of the Pharmacovigilance and Risk Management Sector to ensure that this procedure is adhered to within their own sector. The responsibility for the execution of a particular part of this procedure is identified in section **9. Procedure**.

4. Changes since last revision

New SOP.

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5. Documents needed for this SOP

Electronic ENCePP register of studies: http://www.encepp.eu/encepp/studiesDatabase.jsp

ENCePP Database of Research Resources: http://www.encepp.eu/encepp/resourcesDatabase.jsp

Template letter awarding ENCePP Seal: Cabinets/13. Projects/ENCePP/Procedures_WIN/Templates

Template letter rejecting ENCePP Seal: Cabinets/13. Projects/ENCePP/Procedures_WIN/Templates

SOP: Evaluation Procedure - ENCePP Database of Research Resources: Cabinets/Old EDMS Structure/IQM/02 IQM Manual/SOPs and Work Instructions/*3000 - 3999 H (Human)/3363 WIN - Evaluation Procedure - ENCePP Database of Research Resources

6. Related documents

ENCePP Code of Conduct:

http://www.encepp.eu/documents/code_of_conduct/ENCePP%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf

Checklist of the ENCePP Code of Conduct (Annex 2):

http://www.encepp.eu/documents/code_of_conduct/ENCePP%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20Checklist.doc

Declaration on compliance with the ENCePP Code of Conduct (Annex 3)

http://www.encepp.eu/documents/code_of_conduct/ENCePP%20Code%20of%20Conduct_Declaration%20on%20compliance.doc

Checklist of Methodological Standards for ENCePP Study Protocols

http://www.encepp.eu/documents/standards_and_guidances/ENCePP%20Standardsand%20Guidances_Checklist.doc

7. Definitions

Coordinating Study Entity: A legal person, institution or organisation which takes responsibility for the design and/or the management of a study. The (primary) lead investigator is the person authorised to represent the coordinating study entity.

CoRe Requirements: As defined in the ENCePP Code of Conduct these are the requirements that need to be fulfilled by the investigator applying for an ENCePP Seal, namely:

- Code of Conduct: Signed declaration and checklist
- Methodological Standards for ENCePP Study Protocols: Signed checklist

The signed declaration and checklists and the study protocol must be provided to the ENCePP Secretariat before the study commences.
The original and final versions of the protocol will be made publicly available after the final study report.

- E-Register of Studies

The study must be included in the electronic register of studies before it commences.

DREAM: Document Records Electronic Archive Management System

ENCePP: European Network of Centres for Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacovigilance

ENCePP Seal: Graphic symbol displayed in the electronic ENCePP Register of studies to identify ENCePP studies. The seal will make immediately recognisable to the general public that the study was conducted in adherence to the ENCePP research principles and methodological standards.

ENCePP Secretariat: Administrators and Assistants in the Section for Coordination and Networking, coordinating the work of the different bodies of ENCePP, and supporting the communication and information flow between stakeholders, ENCePP partners and any other interested party.

ENCePP Steering Group: Highest authority of ENCePP and final decision making body. It also acts as adjudicator in case of discrepancies or complaints in the context of the ENCePP network.

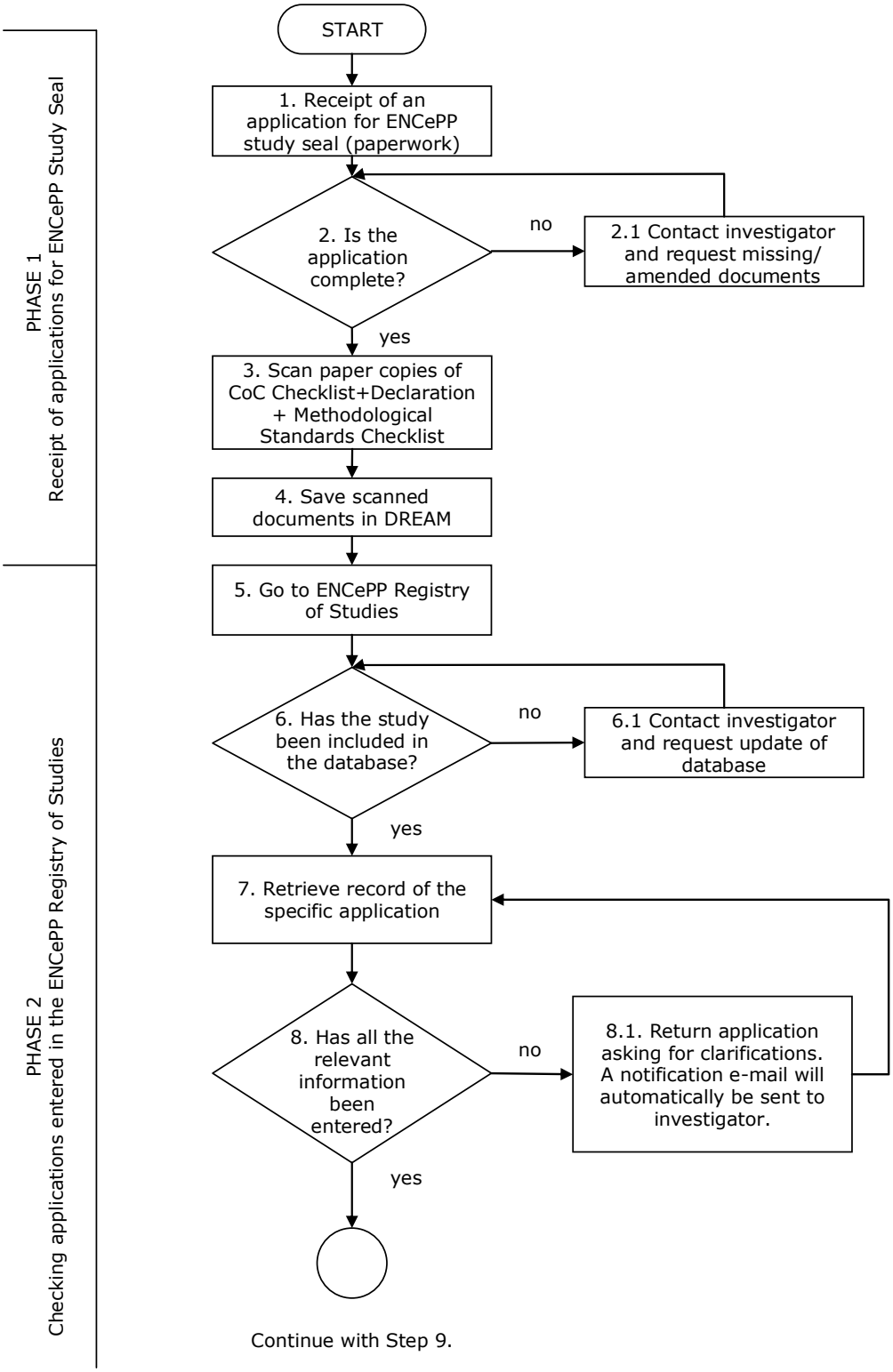
ENCePP Study: Studies, primarily pharmacoepidemiological and pharmacovigilance studies, performed taking into account relevant methodological research standards as agreed by ENCePP and in line with the rules and requirements for the independent and transparent conduct of pharmacoepidemiological and pharmacovigilance research laid down in the ENCePP Code of Conduct, whose (primary) lead investigator belongs to an entity that is included in the ENCePP Inventory of Research Centres, and which are registered before they commence in the ENCePP register of studies.

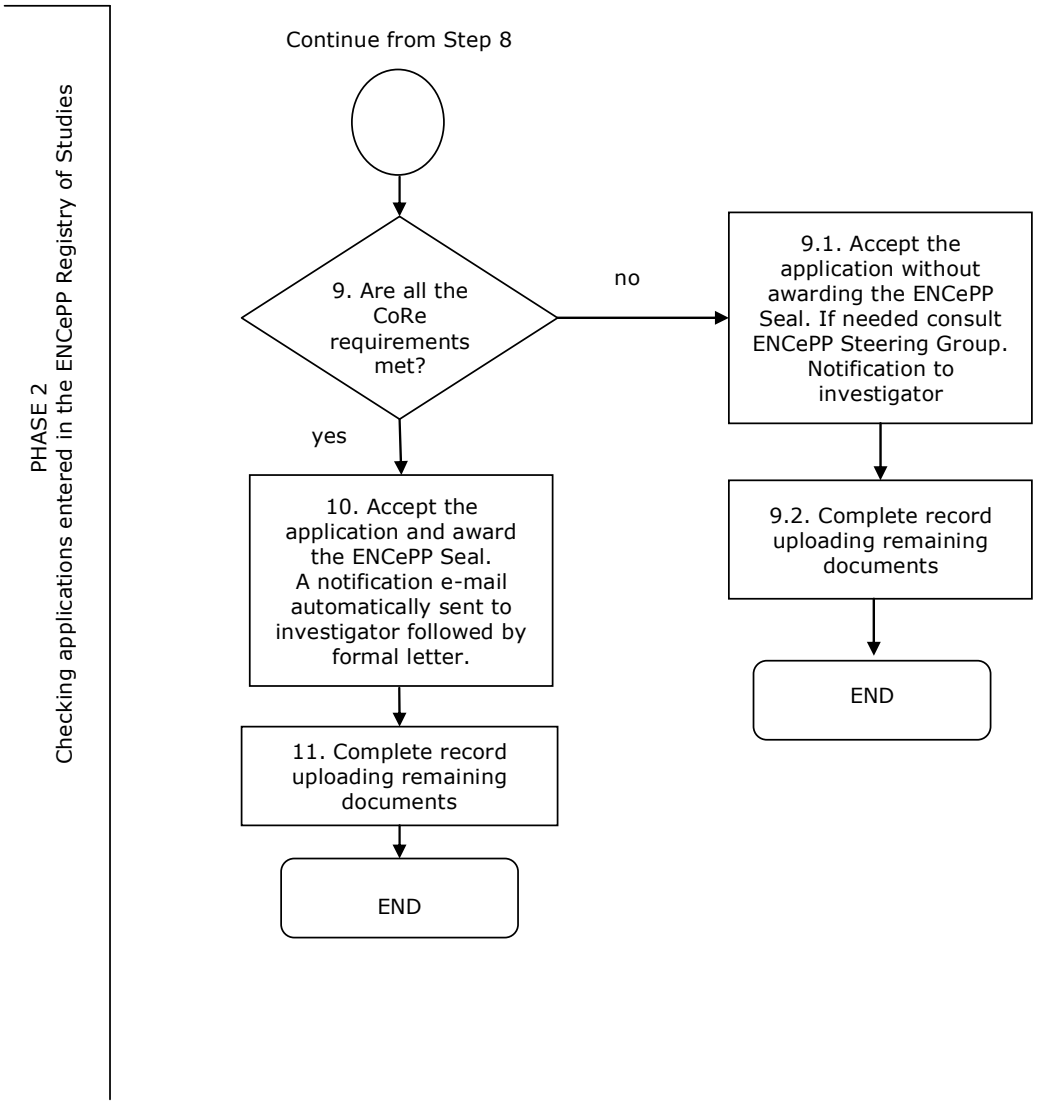
Investigator: For the purpose of this SOP the term investigator identifies the lead or primary lead investigator of the study. According to the ENCePP Code of Conduct this is defined as a person with the scientific background and experience required for the conduct of a particular pharmacoepidemiological or Pharmacovigilance study. The lead investigator is responsible for the conduct of a study at a study site.

If a study is conducted at several study sites by a team of investigators, the (primary) lead investigator is the investigator who has overall responsibility for the study across all sites.

Study Protocol: A document that describes the objective(s), design, methodology, statistical and ethical considerations as well as organisation of a study. The term protocol refers to the initial protocol, successive versions of the protocol and protocol amendments.

8. Process map(s)/ flow chart(s)




PHASE 2
Checking applications entered in the ENCePP Registry of Studies
Continue from Step 8
9. Are all the CoRe requirements met?
no
yes
9.1. Accept the application without awarding the ENCePP Seal. If needed consult ENCePP Steering Group. Notification to investigator
9.2. Complete record uploading remaining documents
END
10. Accept the application and award the ENCePP Seal. A notification e-mail automatically sent to investigator followed by formal letter.
11. Complete record uploading remaining documents
END

9. Procedure

Step	Action	Responsibility
PHASE 1 – Receipt of application for an ENCePP Study Seal The process starts with the receipt of the original signed and stamped paper copies of an application for an ENCePP Study Seal Application.		
1.	**Receipt of an application for an ENCePP Study Seal.** The application is logged in the ENCePP Study Log located at: Cabinets/13. Projects/ENCePP/ENCePP Studies/ENCePP Studies Applications A provisional registration number is assigned to the application received. The number will be in the format *yyyy-nnnn* where *yyyy* equals the year of receipt and *nnnn* the progressive number. Send an e-mail to the (lead) investigator acknowledging receipt of the paper-copy of their ENCePP Study application.	AST
2.	**Check the completeness of the application received.** The following elements of the applications must be checked and fulfilled before the application is considered complete. • Is the coordinating study entity included in the ENCePP Database of Research Resources? • Is the Checklist of the ENCePP Code of Conduct (Annex 2) duly completed and signed? • Is the Declaration on compliance with the ENCePP Code of Conduct (Annex 3) duly completed and signed? • Is the Checklist of Methodological Standards for ENCePP Study Protocols duly completed and signed? If the answer to all of these questions is yes, then go to step 3 If the answer to any of these questions is no, then go to step 2.1	AD
2.1	**Contact investigator for incomplete applications.** If the application is considered incomplete with regards to one or more of the points listed above, the (lead) investigator should be contacted as soon as possible in order to obtain clarifications or missing documents. In the case where the coordinating study entity is not included in the ENCePP Database of Research Resources, the (lead) investigator must be prompted to populate the database with the relevant information. (See also WIN on Evaluation Procedure - ENCePP Database of Research Resources). When clarifications or missing documents are received go back to step 2.	AD

Step	Action	Responsibility
3.	**Scan the received paperwork and convert to PDF files.** The following original signed documents must be scanned and converted into PDF files: • Checklist of the ENCePP Code of Conduct (Annex 2) • Declaration on compliance with the ENCePP Code of Conduct (Annex 3) • Checklist of Methodological Standards for ENCePP Study Protocols If a paper copy of the initial study protocol has been received as part of the application, this must also be scanned and converted into a PDF file.	AST
4.	**Save PDF files of scanned documents in DREAM.** The files must be saved in the subfolder of their relative application located at: ENCePP Studies Applications: Cabinets/13. Projects/ENCePP/ENCePP Studies/ENCePP Studies Applications	AST
PHASE 2 – Checking applications entered in the ENCePP Registry of Studies		
5.	**Review of applications in the database.** Access the ENCePP Registry of Studies through the ENCePP website. In order to process the application, the person responsible for checking the record must log into the Administration area on the ENCePP website.	AD
6.	**Check if study is registered in the database.** Go to the list of "Applications awaiting approval" and check whether the study is included in the list. Those studies for which an application for the ENCePP Seal is pending will have the symbol (s) before their title. If the study is listed among the applications awaiting approval with the (s) symbol before its title go to step 7. If the study is not listed among the applications awaiting approval or if the symbol (s) is missing go to step 6.1.	AD
6.1.	**Request update of the database.** Contact the investigator reminding of the obligation, in order to request the ENCePP Seal, to register the study in the ENCePP Registry of Studies before its start. If the symbol (s) is missing from the application verify with the investigator whether their application for the ENCePP Seal is still valid. Ask the investigator to edit their submitted application by	AD

Step	Action	Responsibility
	selecting "Yes" to question 16 of the data entry form. When clarification is obtained go back to step 6.	
7.	**Retrieve the record for the specific application.** The record will have a registration number automatically assigned by the database in the format ENCEPP/SDPP/nnnn where nnnn is a number randomly created by the database. Update the provisional reference number assigned to the study in DREAM by adding the reference number assigned by the database.	AD
8.	**Check for the completeness of the information submitted.** The database contains some validation tools that should prevent incomplete applications being entered; however a general check on the information entered should be performed. If the information entered is correct go to step 9. If not go to step 8.1.	AD
8.1.	**Return applications requesting clarification.** A notification e-mail is automatically sent to the investigator from the database requesting the resubmission of incorrect or missing information. Instructions on how to retrieve the application and resubmit it are contained in the notification. When the application has been resubmitted go to step 7.	AD
9.	**Check if CoRe Requirements are met.** In particular, the following elements of the applications must be checked and fulfilled before awarding the ENCePP Seal is considered. • Has the study been registered in the database before its start? • Has the initial protocol been uploaded in the database? • Has the composition of the steering group (where applicable) been uploaded in the Database or submitted to the ENCePP Secretariat? • Has the Declaration of Conflict of Interests been uploaded in the Database or submitted to the ENCePP Secretariat? In case of doubt regarding the CoRe Requirements being met, the ENCePP Steering Group should be consulted on the application, via teleconference or written procedure, to decide on awarding the seal. The lead investigator may also be contacted to provide additional clarification or missing documents to inform the decision of the ENCePP Secretariat and, if consulted, of the Steering Group.	AD ENCePP Steering Group

Step	Action	Responsibility
	If the answer to all the above questions is yes go to step 10. If the answer to any of the above questions is no go to step 9.1.	
9.1.	**Accept the application to register the study in the database but without awarding the ENCePP Seal**. If the ENCePP Secretariat or, if consulted, the Steering Group decide that the seal cannot be awarded, on the "Approve resource" screen, the record for the study will be accepted but the checkbox that allows awarding of the ENCePP Seal will be left unchecked. An automatically generated notification e-mail from the database is then sent to the (lead) investigator followed by a formal letter from the ENCePP Secretariat explaining the rationale for not awarding the ENCePP seal. The record for the study will appear on the electronic register without showing the ENCePP Seal. The information entered will be accessible from the ENCePP website and visible to the general public.	AD
9.2.	**Complete the record with other relevant documents.** If applicable, retrieve the approved application and open it for editing. Upload the PDF files of any relevant documents scanned at step 3 of this procedure that have not yet been uploaded by the investigator.	AD
10.	**Accept the application to register the study in the database and award the ENCePP Seal**. If the ENCePP Secretariat or, if consulted, the Steering Group decide that the seal can be awarded, on the "Approve resource" screen, the record for the study will be accepted and the checkbox that allows awarding of the ENCePP Seal must be checked. In the "Approve resource" screen, the record for the study will be accepted and the checkbox that allows awarding of the ENCePP Seal will be checked. An automatically generated notification e-mail is then sent from the database to the (lead) investigator followed by a formal letter from the ENCePP Secretariat detailing the additional obligations associated with the ENCePP seal. The record for the study will appear on the electronic register showing the ENCePP Seal. The information entered will be accessible from the ENCePP website and visible to the general public. The study will be identified as such by displaying the ENCePP logo in the public database and with an "(S)"in the Administrator restricted section.	AD

Step	Action	Responsibility
11.	**Complete the record with other relevant documents.** Retrieve the approved application and open it for editing. Upload the PDF files of any relevant documents scanned at step 3 of this procedure that have not yet been uploaded by the investigator.	AD

10. Records

ENCePP Study applications

Paper copies received are scanned and saved in the following location: ENCePP Studies Applications: Cabinets/13. Projects/ENCePP/ENCePP Studies/ENCePP Studies Applications

All relevant correspondence is also saved in the same location.

The original, signed hard copy of requests are filed in the *'ENCePP Studies applications'* File located in office 1-738.