**ELSO Award for Excellence in Life Support**

**Center of Excellence Application**

**ECLS Center Path to Excellence Readiness**

**Evaluation**

**2025**



**Instructions and Practical Tips:**

1. This tool is intended to help guide your center when applying for the Center of Excellence designation, whether for the first time or as a renewal.
2. Ideally, ECLS Programs should begin the Application Process several years before the Center applies or reapplies for the Excellence in Life Support Award.
   1. Gather a multi-disciplinary team made up of medical leaders, quality specialists, educators, and administrators
   2. Download the Application Worksheet in addition to this Readiness Tool.
   3. High performing Centers use a team of expert contributors to complete and edit the application
   4. Medical Directors *are required* to attest that they have reviewed the application
3. Information is provided for each question as to how to achieve “Meets” Criteria on the Scoring Tool.
   1. Additional questions, while seemingly repetitive or redundant, are to allow the center to look at the question from a 360-degree aspect
   2. Suggestions are included regarding how to consider the questions more in-depth. Complete descriptions of a robust process may allow your center to receive a higher score.
   3. Specific directions are given that will help to answer the question fully.
4. If your center identifies that all the Award criteria are *not* met, utilize the fields to help you develop an action plan for improvement.
5. *This tool is only a worksheet for your center and is not required*. It should not be submitted to ELSO. Only submit the official ELSO Award of Excellence Application online.
6. If you have any questions, please contact the Award Committee at [Award@elso.org](mailto:Award@elso.org)

# 1. Systems Focus

Supply generalized institutional information

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| Scoring Information: This Section is scored as either “does not meet” or “meets”, with the exception of scope of Coordinator and Medical Directors duties. Your Center will receive points if you follow the Extracorporeal Life Support Guidelines and have answered these questions completely.  While these answers may not change from application to application, consider reviewing the answers to evaluate if there is process improvement to be made. |

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|  | **Criteria** | **How do you achieve the criteria?** | **Are you reviewing your processes?** |
| **1.1** | * Is your center a member of the Extracorporeal Life Support Organization (ELSO)? Are you up to date with your ELSO dues? * How many patients have been supported with ECLS at your center per year in the last 5 years? * *Assure that every patient is submitted since you have become a member of ELSO and that your registry data is up to date prior to submitting your application.* |  |  |
| **1.2** | * Are there other patients in your center that are placed on ECLS (pump and oxygenator) that are not reported to ELSO? * Why not? What is your plan to submit your data on retrospective patients? |  |  |
| **1.3 and 1.4** | * *Review the ELSO Guidelines for ECMO Centers.* * Does your institution have specialty services available for all possible patient needs? Why not? If not, be prepared to explain what your center will do in the event of a need. * Can this be approached within your institution as a need? |  |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **How do you achieve the criteria?** | **Are you reviewing your processes?** |
| **1.5** | * Does your center have access to inter hospital transport services? * Why not? Can this be developed? * *Be prepared to describe your plan for transport needs should they arise.* * How do you transport ECMO patients within your own facility? |  |  |
| **1.6** | * Does your ECMO Center have a designated Medical Director? * What is their scope of responsibility? * *Review the ELSO Guidelines to develop your position. This MD should have overall responsibility for protocols, policies, education of the team, including physicians, patient selection criteria. The director should act as a champion and leader for the ECMO program to upper administration.* |  |  |
| **1.7** | * Does your ECMO Center have a designated position (a coordinator) that is responsible for the implementation of training and education of ECMO Staff, Unit staff, policies, procedures, quality initiatives, data collection, supplies, etc.? * If not, who fulfills this role? * Can you improve this positions’ job description? * *Review the ELSO Guidelines to develop your position. This person should have overall responsibility for protocols, policies, education of the team, equipment, supplies, etc. The coordinator position may be shared. Prepare to explain the total scope everyone involved in administration of the ECMO program, including interactions with upper administration.* |  |  |

# Environmental Focus

Define the facility and equipment available for ECLS

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| Scoring Information: Question 2.1 is marked as either “does not meet” or “meets”. Your Center will receive points if you follow the Extracorporeal Life Support Guidelines and have answered these questions completely. Questions 2.2 and 2.3 require that you have robust systems in place to meet your patient’s needs and are scored between “does not meet” and “exceeds”. As you provide in-depth details regarding your plans, include unique aspects. |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **2.1** | * Is ECLS performed in a designated unit or units? * Are there areas that are not considered ECLS capable? * Does that unit have patients that require transfer to an acceptable area? * *Be prepared to describe each unit where ECLS patients are cared for in detail; as well describe the appropriateness of ECMO being performed in each of the units described.* |  |
| **Review** | **How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Review your process. How are you improving your processes?** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **2.2** | * Do you designate a system backup in the event of emergencies? * Is this system ever used for patient care? * Are there instances where this replacement equipment is not available? * How do you ensure the safety of all ECLS patients in the event of equipment failure if there is no backup system available? * *Be prepared to describe in specific detail all disposable supplies, pumps, etc. in relation to the ECMO Patient.* |  |
| **Review** | **How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Review your process. How are you improving your processes?** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **2.3** | * Do you have a maximum pump capacity? * What do you do in the event of an emergent request if all pumps are utilized? * Do you have an emergency increased census plan? Should you? * What crisis will initiate it? * How do you plan for increased staffing needs? * *Be prepared to describe this plan in great detail.* |  |
| **Review** | **How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Review your process. How are you improving your processes?** |  |

# Workforce Focus

Describe personnel caring for the patient

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| Scoring Information: This Section is scored between “does not meet” and “exceeds”. Questions should be answered as completely as possible, with attention to detail. Leaving out small facts or giving a detailed answer may impact your ability to achieve a higher score for that question.  **All applications should be submitted as de-identified and anonymous** - the Award Review Committee only has the information that you provide in your application to calculate your score.  As you provide in-depth details regarding your program, including unique aspects, your Center may achieve additional points.  Question 3.2 is not scored, and is only used for data collection and baseline information. |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **3.1** | * How has your center determined the best discipline(s) to staff ECLS pumps? * What education and background are necessary to become a trained ECLS “specialist” in your center? Has this changed? Has this been reviewed recently? * What skill set does this person have to have in place in order to approach the new skills of ECLS? * Do you require a unique feature or skill or assessment of personnel prior to becoming an ECLS Specialist? * *Be prepared to describe all pre-requisites necessary to be trained as an ECLS Specialist,* |  |
| **Review** | **What are your Staffing Requirements/Aims? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Changes needed?** | **Reviewed lately?** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **3.2** | * How has your center determined the staffing requirements for ECLS patients? * Do you have different requirements for staffing different populations? * How do you account for seasonal variances? * If a pre-determined plan is in place, how do you evaluate and adjust to changing staffing needs? |  |  |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **3.3** | * How do you ensure that expertise in pump management is available to ECMO Specialists throughout the ECLS run? * Who fulfills this roll? * Are these resources divided by skill set? Are there multiple positions that fulfill these roles? * Has this been reviewed recently and is this the most effective use of personnel in your center? * What other resources are available to staff for clinical management or emergencies? * *Be prepared to describe other resources available for bedside staff to use. Include written and/or oral resources. Are there unique resources available?* |  |
| **Review** | **What is available? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **3.4** | * Do you have 24-hour medical management of the ECLS patient? * Does this vary unit by unit or by patient population? Should it? * Are advanced medical practitioners used (NP, PA, etc.)? * Who has the ultimate decision in patient management issues? * Has this practice been reviewed recently? * *Be prepared to discuss every medical population ECLS is used for and the medical caregivers for each.* |  |
| **Review** | **What is your medical management plan? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **3.5** | * Who fulfills the role of circuitry priming in your institution 24/7? * Is this provided by an on-call and/or an in-house role? * Is this effective in providing for the needs of the patients? * Have there been occurrences where this role has not been satisfactory? * Has this been reviewed and have there been changes implemented? * *Be prepared to describe the priming capabilities in detail.* |  |
| **Review** | **Who fulfills the role? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **3.6** | * Is there a formal or informal process in place for ECLS staff after critical stressful incidents? * Is it generic for all staff? In which areas? Hospital provided? Unit specific? * Can you develop or improve debriefing and support for your specific staff members? * Do you use other services to provide this for your staff? Formal or informal? * *Be prepared to describe this process in detail, and give an example that will illustrate how this process occurs in your institution.* |  |
| **Review** | **What is available? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **3.7** | * How do you identify and manage patient/family issues that create ethical and moral distress for/in staff? * Is it a hospital wide process? * How do you assure that you meet the needs of staff facing ECLS challenges? * *Be prepared to describe an example that will illustrate how this process occurs in your institution.* |  |
| **Review** | **What is available? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

# Knowledge Management

Detail specifics on ECLS Team training and competencies

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| Scoring Information: This Section is scored between “does not meet” and “exceeds”. Section 4 is directly related to the ELSO Guidelines for Training and Education. Questions should be answered as completely as possible, with attention to detail. Leaving out small facts may impact your ability to achieve a higher score for that question. Generally, higher performing programs have a robust, highly developed and multi-faceted ECMO specific education program for all staff members – physicians, fellows, advanced practice providers, perfusionists, nurses, and ECMO specialists.  Remember, **all applications should be submitted as de-identified and anonymous** - the Award Review Committee only has the information that you provide in your application to calculate your score. As you provide in-depth details regarding your program, including unique aspects, your Center may achieve additional points.  Centers who are being considered for the Award of Excellence should go above and beyond the guidelines by considering physician and advanced practice provider education, as well as the bedside caregiver. Inclusion of specific ECLS education for primers is also an important component of knowledge management. Completion of an educational degree is not considered specific to ECLS. |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **4.1** | * Does your center require baseline training or education for physicians that provide medical and/or surgical management of the ECLS patient, specific to ECLS? * Has this been reviewed recently, and have changes been implemented? * Does your institution grant privileges or credentialing for ECLS? Should it? * Have you included fellows, residents, attendings? * Do you provide ECLS education to consultative medical personnel? * *Be prepared to list everything MDs attend or are required to have experience in – such as meetings, patient care minimums, prior ECMO experience or training, etc. Is mentoring or orientation a component of ECLS credentialing?* |  |
| **Review** | **What are your educational requirements? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **4.2** | * Does your center require annual continuing education for physicians who provide ECLS care? * What type of education is required? List everything MDs attend – such as meetings, inservices, patient care minimums, prior experience, etc. Is this effective? * Has this been reviewed recently and have changes been implemented? * Have you included fellows, residents, attendings? * Do you provide ECLS education to consultative medical personnel? * *Be prepared to list everything MDs attend or are required to complete – such as meetings, patient care minimums, prior experience, etc., in order to achieve credentials.* |  |
| **Review** | **What are your educational requirements? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **4.3** | * Does your center require annual continuing education for advanced practice providers who deliver ECLS care? * Is this satisfactory for your patients? For your staff? * Has this been reviewed recently and have changes been implemented? * *Be prepared to describe all types of education that is required to begin caring for ECLS patients as well as subsequent years.* |  |
| **Review** | **What are your educational requirements? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **4.4** | * How has your center determined the best plan for the initial training and education of bedside ECLS specialists? * Review the ELSO Guidelines. How is your plan based on the core requirements listed in the ELSO guidelines? * How are learning and development needs identified and translated into your plan? * Have you incorporated new educational techniques recently? * How do you ensure that all staff members are oriented and competent to provide safe care to patients? * How are orientation plans tailored for individual needs? * Do you incorporate evaluated feedback into future training plans? Do you survey? * How do you assess a new ECLS Specialists’ competency? Is it multi-leveled or faceted? * Is the written test comprehensive? Is an oral and/or performance based test required? What is the passing score? * Is there a review process to assess the effectiveness of such a competency evaluation? * If your team is perfusion based, how do you assess competency for the specific skill set of ECLS? |  |
| **Review** | **What are your educational requirements? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **4.5** | * How has your center determined the best plan for the continuing education of bedside ECLS specialists? * Review the ELSO guidelines. How is your plan based on the core requirements listed in the ELSO guidelines? * How are learning and development needs identified and translated into your plan? * Have you incorporated new techniques recently? * How do you ensure that all staff members are competent to provide safe care to patients? * How do your ECLS meetings meet your educational goals? Do you have in-person meetings or virtual? * How have you incorporated water drills or simulations into the continuing education? * Do you have a mechanism to evaluate annual education needs and do you incorporate feedback into future education plans? * Do you maintain attendance and educational records for review? What are the attendance requirements? * Can you detail the journey of a specific ECLS Specialist from initial education through their annual education requirements for several years? |  |
| **Review** | **What are your educational requirements? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **4.6** | * Do you have a method to evaluate staff and determine if they do not meet annual education or competency requirements? What specifics do you require on an annual basis? * Do you have a mechanism to re-train these staff? * Is this mechanism safe and conducive to quality patient care? * Does it promote staff satisfaction? * *Be prepared to discuss what is entailed in the event a staff member does not complete every educational requirement.* |  |
| **Review** | **What are your requirements? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **4.7** | * How has your center determined the best plan for the continuing education of bedside caregivers? * What is this based on? * How are learning and development needs identified and translated into your plan? * Have you incorporated new techniques recently? Discuss these changes. * How do you ensure that all staff members are competent to provide safe care to all ECLS patients? |  |
| **Review** | **What are your educational requirements? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **4.8** | * How do you ensure staff that prime are oriented and competent to provide consistent practice to all patients? * How do you incorporate new staff with previous prime experience into your current practice? * Can you list specifics that must be completed, such as drills, meetings, # of primes, etc. * If your program is perfusion based, how do you assure that all perfusionists are performing to center specific standards? * Do you assess perfusion upon hiring? * How do you assure that perfusionists are competent *specifically for ECMO at your center*? |  |
| **Review** | **What are your educational requirements? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

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|  | **Criteria** | **Processes reviewed?** |
| **4.9** | * How has your center determined the best plan for the continuing education of primers? * What is this based on? * How are learning and development needs identified and translated into your plan? * Can you list specifics that must be completed, such as drills, meetings, # of primes, etc. * Have you incorporated new techniques recently? * If your program is perfusion based, how do you assess that all perfusionists are performing to center specific standards? How do you assure that perfusionists are competent *specifically for ECMO at your center*? |  |
| **Review** | **What are your educational requirements? How do you achieve the criteria? (Who will answer this question?)** |  |
| **Plan** | **Are you meeting your goals? (Describe barriers, opportunities, successes if applicable)** |  |

**End of Document for Path to Excellence Readiness Tool**