

Advanced Training in Ophthalmology

The European School for Advanced Studies in Ophthalmology offers physicians postgraduate training in a variety of subspecialties.

BY GIUSEPPE GUARNACCIA, MD; AND JOSE L. GÜELL, MD

The European School for Advanced Studies in Ophthalmology (ESASO; hosted by the Università della Svizzera italiana USI, Lugano, Switzerland) strives to offer the best postgraduate training in ophthalmology available in Europe. ESASO comprises professors of international standing and holds active cooperation arrangements with important treatment and research centers, including centers in Barcelona, Spain; Munich, Germany; Vienna, Austria; Milan, Italy; and Paris. Borja Corcóstegui, MD, is the President of the ESASO Scientific Council.

The program, which was made possible in part due to contributions from the Department of Education, Culture, and Sport of the Canton of Ticino (Switzerland), the City of Lugano (Switzerland), the Università della Svizzera italiana, and the Swiss Society of Ophthalmology, was conceived in response to the need for effective postgraduate teaching and training for young ophthalmologists in Europe. ESASO aims to satisfy the highest qualitative standards in ophthalmology. A sampling of the programs of study include cornea, refractive, glaucoma, cataract, vitreoretinal pathology, uveitis, oculoplasty, pediatric ophthalmology, and strabismus.

MISSION

The environment in which most surgical training is conducted is fast-paced. There is little time between cases for surgeons to work with residents, which, over the long term, does not help to educate students. Therefore, the mission of ESASO is to create a unique environment that accommodates the needs of our postgraduates. We accomplish this by offering interesting, efficient, and interactive courses; by providing training with respect to market opportunities; and by upholding ESASO's ultimate mission to emphasize the value of human life and the importance of developing



Figure 1. Anterior segment training at ESASO combines theoretical training with wet labs.

solidarity with patients. ESASO not only teaches young surgeons how to perform high-level ocular surgery but also encourages them to share the competencies that they gain at ESASO with other specialists.

OBJECTIVES

ESASO employs a teaching staff of prominent ophthalmologists from all over the world. Our faculty members are well known not only for their scientific qualifications but also for their capacity for human understanding. We believe that we are equipped to educate postgraduates in the best diagnostic and therapeutic approaches for a variety of ocular pathologies. Our aim is to create international relationships and connections among the best ophthalmologists and those who wish to become one of the best. We strive to spread best practices to developing countries by encouraging ophthalmologists from these regions to attend ESASO.

ANTERIOR SEGMENT TRAINING

Anterior segment training is a 1-week course that combines theoretical training in the mornings with wet-lab training in the afternoons. This structure is unique because

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TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

- The ESASO holds active cooperative arrangements with centers in Spain, Germany, Austria, Italy, and France.
- The aim of the program is to accommodate the needs of postgraduates studying ophthalmology.

postgraduate training typically occurs only in the form of a fellowship or half- or full-day courses in ophthalmology at the European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons (ESCRS) Annual Meeting.

The 1-week format is attractive to busy ophthalmologists and is offered only at ESASO. The advantage of this educational structure is that students work intensively with top professors for the entire week. The curriculum encourages interaction between students and professors in the classrooms and wet labs. Often, students and professors have lunch and dinner together, providing students with access to experts and creating a fruitful training experience.

ESCRS INVOLVEMENT

The ESCRS has joined efforts with ESASO. The ESCRS holds meetings twice a year, lasting an average 4 days. Although these meetings help to educate the ESCRS membership with the highest quality standards, this format cannot compare to the intensity or effectiveness of a 1-week training program. The ESCRS recognizes that ESASO's educational program offers an outstanding postgraduate training opportunity and promotes ESASO to its members. Furthermore, many of ESASO's teachers are members of the ESCRS.

For information about ESASO, including admission requirements and the curriculum, please visit www.esaso.ch. ■

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